

A Ghost 231

Chapter 231

Greenhouse, Conservatory, or Glasshouse, are the terms often used to describe the name of a large building with a transparent ceiling, often made of glass or transparent plastic, which is made so plants can grow inside a closed space while still getting the sunlight of every day, while also being protected from the dangerous environment, which might include snow, ice, cold winds, and plagues, perhaps.

But how can we make it? I guess we can make the support out of wood. Still, we don't have any hardcore smithers nor forgers to make things out of metal, and it's not like we got anywhere to find metals unless we begin to collect them from around the ruins... and even then, it wouldn't be enough to make the pillars, so wood it will be.

And then comes the ceiling, glass.

How do we get glass? We have to heat sand and make it... all while shaping it around. I am sure that making such enormous parts out of glass would be a monumental act, but it should be possible, and I could handle it by using shadow tentacles as gently as possible.

I suppose the two fire ghosts can make glass and shape it around, right? They should be able to do that much. It shouldn't be hard. Hell, I will help them out if possible.

Now that I think about it, if they're made of fire, they could also work inside a furnace and melt metals, shape them, and more, right? Hm... although all the big pieces of metal in modern earth are always made inside large factories. I don't know how they did it before factories, as it was mostly made out of stone and wood.

Oh right, stone! We could make the pillars out of stone, I suppose, with some wood support... I guess that might work, yeah... Doesn't sound too hard to pull out, I think.

I quickly shared my thoughts with everyone else, who were in the blue of what to do. Lucifer and a few others knew what it was but had no idea how to even begin the construction, so I gave them my ideas.

“Hm, indeed, making the pillars a combination of stone and wood could work. I am not an architect at all, but it does seem to make sense. I wonder if there is anybody within our people that could help in this regard.” Said Lucifer.

“Yeah, wood and stone sound okay, but... Indeed, I wonder if there could be someone that can help, we got a lot of people. They can’t be all useless traumatized slaves, right?” asked Catarina.

“Catarina, be more sensitive about your words!” said Emeraldine.

“Eeeh? But they’re all pretty useless anyways...” sighed Catarina while crossing her arms.

“Well, they’ll eventually recover and begin helping in the Kingdom by producing things themselves. I am strong, but that’s it. I cannot create food, nor houses, nor anything really useful than offering fighting power, so it’s going to be up to our teamwork and everybody else that we’ll be able to make up this an actual village in the end....” I said.

“Hm, I agree... Anyways, the glass is still a problem.” Said Lucifer.

“Glass... We need sand for glass, right?” asked Partner.

“Yeah, we need a lot of sand. The finest sand there can be as well.” I said.

“We can help at making glass, but we need the sand, though!” said Silvio.

“There is no sand here. It is all snow and frozen dirt.” Said Francesco.

Yeah, that was the biggest issue. Where can we find actual sand? This entire place is filled with just snow and ice. But I quickly remembered that we are near the coasts of the continent, just the area of the coasts closest to a continent filled with ice, Niflheim, so it is cold instead of being a summer-like temperature.

Well, according to Lucifer, it was never this cold, though. He even said that there was vegetation, a lot of grass, and even fruits grew, so there might be a new factor that had emerged in these last years that changed the temperature of the place, and that might also be related to the frozen people's state...

Nonetheless, it is unnecessary to think about this topic for the moment, as we need to concentrate on our current dilemma. We need more vegetables and fruits, but bringing them here from other places will be a pain, so we need to at least have some level of production, even if small and while still needing the support of other duchies or nations that we can still have SOMETHING we are making.

And therefore, we need to make this greenhouse to raise plants in this cold...

And therefore, we need glass to make the damn ceiling.

So, where is sand to make glass? There should be some sand on the coasts near the frozen beaches, right? If not, we'll go into the deep of the ocean and pick some sand from there. Hopefully, we can find some there if we can't find any on the coast...

"Sand? There should be sand on the cold coasts near this place, right? We are near the coasts of the Midgard Continent of the south area, so there should be some sand, even if the beaches are so freaking cold." I said.

"Ah, you're right... I have been thinking in nothing but snow and ice so much that I have completely forgotten about that fact, my bad..." sighed Lucifer.

"So we are taking a trip to the beach?" said Catarina.

"Sounds interesting. I guess I will join too." Said the Goblin Chief, who suddenly entered the room alongside the Goblin Elder and Gofumin.

The Twins also joined, who was with Gofumin.

Bellerine and Syllis also joined. The little rabbit-kin girl began to hop around cutely while her brother walked calmly to join us. A few of my clones quickly brought some food for them.

“We’ll also like to help.” Said Syllis.

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Some more people assembled here. They were actually back in the village working on other things and ended up joining later. We quickly let them sit around the table, which was enormous, and then we served them some food as well. The twins were especially hungry, eating the stew quite quickly.

I don’t know if they know this is made of rat meat. The rat meat thing is actually a secret. A lot of people would get grossed out if we told them the meat they’re eating is coming from giant rats, after all. Even I would be grossed out if I wasn’t a ghost with a weird mind...

We quickly shared our thoughts and also introduced the rest of the people about what we were talking about. Making the gigantic-sized greenhouse, we wanted to make was going to take a lot of collective effort. We also needed the help of various people, so we were planning to do some sort of “talent recruitment” or whatever.

There is also the possibility of moving to a nearby town or duchy in search of resources and the right people we need to make all these sorts of things, but can we really find them so easily as Rimuru did for his town? I don’t know...

“We could go find the right people in other towns as well. If we can’t find anyone that could help here, at the very least, we can make my people help as well. I remember there were a few dwarves in the former slaves that we took care of, although they had been mostly resting and working as small artisans, but perhaps they can know something about metallurgy.” Said the Goblin Chief.

“Oh, you guys are really connected with those people. I guess you spent some time with them... It would be useful if you could find anyone that could help!”

“Sure thing, Lady Maria, leave the work to us, we are here to help you out, and this also will help everyone.” said the Goblin Chief.

"If we can find somebody capable of making metallurgy, we could make metallic pillars. Then the stone and wooden pillars are scratched?" asked Partner.

"It really depends... Even if we don't make the pillars metallic, finding the right people for the work is always nice. Someone that can do metallurgy will always be welcomed." I said.

"Hm, Lady Maria knows her stuff. She's right." Said the Goblin Chief.

"Well, even then, where can we find strong metals in here? Do you know a place, Lucifer?" I wondered.

"Ah... Around these areas, the mountains are rare... However, if we move to the southwest... Well... There is... where my family once lived, us dragons... Those mountains are filled with precious metals and jewels that we often ate." Said Lucifer.

"Oh... We could really take a trip there eventually then!" I said.

"Yes... I suppose it should be time to go there and confront my past... I just hope there can be someone alive there..." sighed Lucifer.

I held Lucifer's hand as I smiled back at him.

"I also hope so... Let's go there together and find out... Even if we don't find anyone, at least you won't be alone when you find out." I said.

"Maria... Y-You're being way too corny all of a sudden..." he said while blushing a bit.

"I guess we should go there then for metals and other materials, but that's going to be a long trip, so we could leave it for more later." Said Syllis.

"Yeah, we'll leave it for later. We should concentrate on making the glass," said Lucifer.

“Indeed, let’s concentrate on finding crafters, architects, and also finding sand for glass,” I said.

“Very well, that should be it, right? Then we should begin things immediately after eating.” Said the Goblin Chief.

“Yes, let me finish this tasty stew, and we’ll get there... Hmm, I have not eaten such a nice and chewy meat before...” said the Goblin Elder.

“Hahaha... I-I am glad you like it....” I said while averting my gaze.

“What meat is it?” asked the Goblin Chief.

“Erm... Wolf...” I said.

“Wolf? I never thought a carnivore would have such tender meat.” Said the Goblin Chief.

“Yeah... I didn’t know either! Ahah... Hahaha...” I laughed nervously.

Everyone that knew we were eating rats looked at me while furrowing their eyebrows, but nobody actually told the people that didn’t know.

Deep down, they all knew that if we told them, there would be a big fuss, and perhaps they would get a bit creeped out. After all, we had our rat farm behind the castle where nobody walks through, so it is a desolate area where nobody will ever see our multiplying fat rats.

“Anyways, the food is good,” I said.

In the end, we continued eating until we finished. The children asked for seconds as they were quite spoiled, so we gave in to their demands. The adults were also given seconds anyways, and I got thirds, even.

We ended up emptying the entire pot of stew we had made, and we quickly made our way outside to quickly begin our work. We were about to organize most of the people we had and find out talents and also workers. We don't want them to receive everything for free anymore. Even though it has only been a single week, we really need their cooperation.

We moved swiftly with the help of the two goblin leaders. Their leadership surprised me. Most of the Goblins gathered around them in a few minutes except those that couldn't really work as much, such as mothers, children, and the elderly.

There were a few Hobgoblins mixed in, but mostly there were a lot of small goblins with fiery eyes ready to work.

"Hm, these should be... These are all the workers willing to help with anything. They're not particularly talented at anything, but they can be taught if there is someone knowledgeable enough. At most, they can carry things together. They got good cooperation." Said the Goblin Elder while caressing his long beard.

"We are here to serve your command, Lady Maria!" they said at the same time, almost making it a bit surreal.

"W-Well, I am counting on you guys... and gals...." I said with a nervous smile.

God, I am bad at socializing with so many people...

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The Goblin Chief and the Goblin Elder are two good leaders, better than me. They lack social anxiety and are good at leading people, and they know their way with words as well, unlike me, who is a total nutjob that only gains courage when I go completely insane and kill people. Aside from that, I am very shy with a lot of people. I am really not good with big crowds, and I am used to interacting more with my small group of people...

But there were almost 80 Goblins here, males and females, without discrimination of gender, as females can be just as strong as males if they're not pregnant. They were all kneeling in the cold snow. Of course, Goblins usually barely wear many clothes as they always lived in hot places, but now they all were wearing pants, coats, and covering most of their body in fluffy pelt-made clothes.

The rats also give out a nice and warm pelt, so we'll be making more clothes out of them, which will be mostly black colored too... Maybe that could be our Kingdom's colors, black! How edgy, I like it.

"Thank you, guys... I-I am very happy... T-To have such cooperative people...." I said nervously.

The Goblin's eyes shone brightly as they looked at me with admiration as if I had said some brilliant words despite how nervously I spoke. They all seemed happy to be thanked.

"Lady Maria, you look beautiful today!"

"We'll gladly try to make anything we can for you...."

"Yes, our queen!"

"We are forever in debt with you...."

They were a very grateful race of people.

The Goblin Elder said that they were not particularly talented at anything because they had been mostly living as a wild tribe, living out of hunting and gathering while building tents and all of that. They were not farming or anything. They had some artisans, crafters, and chefs, but nothing too extraordinary aside from the basics.

Due to that, they need someone talented in these fields to guide them well, or they will only do a mediocre job, but they can do the heavy lifting if they cooperate and do some basic work as well, so they're a useful bunch. They're quite not as talented as humans and other races, but they got their "jack of all trades" kind of ability to learn things quickly but never mastered them.

With such amazing talent, what was needed now was someone to guide them and teach them, and I wasn't good for that job. I was terrible at it, in fact! Don't look at me, please. I swear I am not that good!

"Anyways, these are the people that were left with us which we had grown up fond of. This is the dwarf we spoke about. The other two said they didn't want to help for whatever reason and were very grumpy about it. One of them even threw a hammer at me..." sighed the Goblin Chief.

"Hahaha... I-I apologize for my friends... But they had been in a bad mood lately. They refuse to work for other things than doing artisan things and little crafting..." said the dwarf, a small man no bigger than the goblins, only about a meter and a few centimeters tall.

He had small yet very muscular legs and large arms that could probably lift more than his size made up to be. He had a long brown beard below his chin and sharp gray eyes, with a bald head he covered with a yarn hat.

"Name's Darfu, I used to be the owner of a small shop in a faraway town until I got robbed by a group of bandits, and they even enslaved me and sold me off as a blacksmith slave... My two other friends there were the same..." said the gentle dwarf.

"You got robbed?! How long have you been a slave?" I asked.

"Around... four or five years... I had been going from master to master. They often treated me well, just gave me a lot of work... I always wished to rebel, but the damn slave collar would kill you if you took it out forcefully or rebelled against your master." Sighed Darfu.

"I see... Well, I am glad you seem to be fine now..." I said.

"Well yeah, it's all thanks to you, missy, for helping me out become a free person again. I didn't want to go back to that accursed town that sold me off, so I stayed with the humble goblin folk. They're nice people and totally not what the society always says about them..." said the dwarf while nodding.

"Haha, Darfu is good at crafting clothes mostly. He made most of these clothes we are wearing." Said the Goblin Chief.

"Yeah, he made this comfortable poncho for me too." Said the Goblin Elder.

"Oh, so you're more of a tailor?" I asked.

"Yeah, a blacksmith is my side job. I am actually better at tailoring stuff. This job is just as important for a dwarf. Where I come from, we valued tailors as much as a blacksmith." Said Darfu.

"You come from somewhere else than that town?" I asked.

"Of course! I came from the small Dwarf Nation at the Gray Peak Mountains. I went out and well... I should have obeyed my parents when they told me that the outside world was unforgiving..." sighed Darfu.

"W-Wait... the Gray Peak Mountains?" asked Lucifer.

"Yeah, sir dragon, do you know it?" asked Darfu.

"That's... where my family and I used to live... Are there any dragons in there?" asked Lucifer.

"A lot of them! Wyrms, Drakes, and a whole lot more of those... They're deadly, but they got their own areas, so we try to not bother them..." said Darfu.

"Oh... Those are lesser races... I wonder if some descendant is alive living between those wilder races of dragons..." sighed Lucifer.

"We'll find out eventually," I said while petting his back.

"Anyways, what's wrong with those two dwarves?" I asked.

“Hmm... W-Well, they’re grumpy...” said the Goblin Chief.

“Is that it? We give them shelter, food, and all, and they throw a hammer at you?” I asked angrily.

“W-Well, it is complicated, miss, don’t be so mean...” said Darfu.

“They’re the mean ones! Why don’t they want to work?” I asked.

“Well, the thing is... they need... something... I am not really that reliant on it, but they really want that, or they won’t work,” said Darfu.

“What do they want?” I asked again.

“Well... Booze.” Said Darfu.

“...”

“...”

Seriously?!”

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Booze, the ambrosia of dwarves. Or, in better words, beer. We got wine here, so why don’t they drink that? We got little, but we can share it if that’s what it takes for these guys to move their asses.

“But why don’t they drink wine? We got some wine.” Said Lucifer, as he just thought the same thing I did.

“Wine... wine... Well, they call it piss.” Said Darfu.

“Piss?! These bastards are really unforgivable!” roared Partner.

“Calm down, don’t go beat them. They’re important...” I said, stopping Partner.

Partner looked at me frustratedly.

“Master, you’re way too nice. Sometimes you have to leave the nasty work to your friends!” she said.

“Yeah, leave the nasty work to us.” Said Emeraldine with an oddly ominous smile. “We’ll get it down in no time... I particularly dislike how Dwarves are so annoyingly prideful and grumpy.”

Damn, is the rivalry between Elves and Dwarves a thing in this world as well? Is Emeraldine secretly racist against Dwarves?! No, she’s just joking or something... I hope.

“No, wait, please, don’t force their hand. If you get on their bad side, we’ll never get them to help us, even if we get beer. Those two are not like me... Th-They’re way older and prideful, they told me that their masters used to torture them when they didn’t want to work, and they just endured the torture! Their entire bodies are covered in scars, and they didn’t care!” said Darfu.

“Those are some hardy little imps.” Said Catarina. “Nothing that some good punching in the face can’t resolve.”

“You didn’t get anything of what he said, didn’t you?” I asked. “We have to be gentle with them, even as strong as I am. Even if I could possess them and force them to work for me, they wouldn’t go along with me, and I don’t know if my possession can work with things related to knowledge and experience... Also, that would be way too cruel, so I won’t do it.”

Everyone looked at me while raising an eyebrow.

“So you could just do that... possess them...” sighed Lucifer. “Just do that then.”

“What? Why? I have to make the line myself, or I am going to just become a completely evil and lunatic woman, I mean....” I muttered. “I gotta have some limit, personal limit! I can be a monster against those that I hate, but I still need to be nice to my people, or what’ll remain of me? I used to be a human after all....”

“Hm, okay, you don’t have to elaborate it so much. We get it, Maria-sama.” Said the Goblin Chief. “We’ll find another way to do it... Like finding Beer.”

“But where can we find some damn beer for those annoying imps?” asked Catarina. “Seriously, trying to please them really pisses me off.”

“Beer... Well, a few dozens of kilometers from here, there is a town. Maybe they got beer there.” Said Lucifer. “Maria, you don’t really have any? You got that item box of yours, and you’re crazy for booze. I really thought you would have some.”

“I drank it all....” I sighed. “I am sorry. I just like to drink alcohol when I am alone.”

Everyone looked at me with surprise.

“Th-That’s not right...” said Takeshi. “Auntie, you need help!”

“Well, she’s a ghost, so she doesn’t really get drunk, Takeshi.” Said Laura. “She’s just in love with the flavor of it.”

“*Sigh* ... A-Anyways, we’ll find beer on its due time. Those dwarves are not really our priority.” Said Lucifer. “Darfu, do you think you know anything about architecture?”

“Architecture? I know a bit. I’ve designed and constructed houses and large treasuries before with fellow friends back in the Nation...” said Darfu. “But I am far from being an expert....”

“That’s better than nothing. You’ll be given the task of making a blueprint for the Greenhouse.” I said.
“We are in your care!”

“Eh?! Me alone? Y-You really just go buy some beer! You can fly, right?” said Darfu. “Those two are good architects and also forgers....”

“Hmm... Maybe... I would have to go meet them first.” I said. “I feel like getting them beer is some sort of stupid side quest.”

“S-Side quest?” wondered Darfu. “What do you mean?”

“No... nothing, never mind.” I sighed. “I will go meet them. Lucifer, Emeraldine, and Partner, come with me. The rest, talk with Darfu and plan out what to do next.”

“Okay!” said the Goblin Chief.

Darfu gave us some indications, and the house where the three Dwarves lived was a mildly large one we had, of course, constructed ourselves. The wood still looked fresh, and there was even a chimney made of stone inside and outside.

“Seriously, Maria-sama, why do we have to please these stupid dwarves?” asked Partner. “Let’s just smack them.”

“Partner, you already heard Maria. She doesn’t want to smack nor possess her way out of this. Even as inefficient as that sounds, I can find some reason behind it...” said Lucifer. “And think about the perspective of those two. They endured torture and still kept their pride as dwarves... They must be incredibly powerful men.”

“Huh... Dwarves can be very annoying sometimes...” said Emeraldine. “I remember there was a group of annoying dwarves back in town that always bullied us elves. They were always racists and called us knife ears all the time while calling our women desperate for sex when nobody had ever tried any of that....”

“Eh? Th-They’re that bad? I am sure that was just a band of thugs....” I said. “Come on. You can’t just generalize.”

“Hmm... Maybe you’re right. I shouldn’t generalize. All people are different even if they might be of the same race...” said Emeraldine. “But still... Remembering them really makes me angry.”

“Elves and Dwarves have a deep grudge with one another due to the past. The two continents where Dwarves and Elves originate from once were in a large war...” said Lucifer.

“I-Is that so? Oh well... I guess?” I said. “Anyways, we are here....”

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Although Lucifer said something very interesting, I really wasn’t in the mood to hear about war history and how two races are deeply racist against one another for something of the past. I already had a great deal of stuff like that from Earth, and I wasn’t in the mood to listen to the fantasy world version of it.

We reached the little home, and I opened the door. I could just pass through the door, but where would the other three with me enter? I have to be considerate.

“Hello~ Is there somebody here?” I asked, turning the candle on as I found a large hammer flying to my head with great precision.

“UWAAH!”

CLANK!

“AGH!”

The hammer actually passed through my body and hit Lucifer, throwing him down on the floor.

“Eh?! Lucifer!” I cried. “What happened?! Ah... Eh?! They really just threw me a hammer in the face!”

The rumors were true. They really throw a hammer to the face of anyone that enters their house. What the heck is wrong with them? Do they not throw it to Darfu, or does he just evade it?

“I-I am fine.” Said Lucifer. “I am resilient enough to take several hammers at once anyways....”

“Still! This is not okay! If they got throwing hammers at people’s faces, they’d ultimately hurt somebody lethally!” said Emeraldine. “You pair of lazy men, stand up and greet Maria-sama, your benefactor and savior!”

“Yeah! Bastards! I am going to butcher you two! Maybe if they covert you into ghosts, you can be of any use for us!” roared Partner. “Get up already!”

The two girls began to scream angrily at the two dwarves resting over their beds. I took a closer look at them. One of them had a gray beard and was bald, covered in wrinkles and scars. He looked very old. The other had an eyepatch on his left eye and had black hair with many white hairs. He was also incredibly old like the other.

They’re really old Dwarves, wow.

“Nnngh... Who the heck is it now?”

One of them sat down over his bed and looked at us while crossing his arms.

“Hey Baldor, just throw them another hammer. I want to sleep some more...” sighed the other. “Zzzz...”

“Oi, wake up. These people are important...” said Baldor. “Wake up already, old man! Balladur!!!”

SMACK!

Baldor, the silver-haired one, hit the head of the one with an eye patch, Balladur. The Dwarf quickly woke up and sat down over the bed, looking at our party with eyes wide open.

“What the heck was that for?! To show me this freak show?!” roared Balladur. “Who the heck are these guys anyway?”

“They’re important folk! That woman is a ghost, she’s... Maria-sama...? Or something.” said Baldor. “She says she’s our major benefactor. I think the little green guy talks about her a lot.”

“Ooooh! Maria! Okay, well, hello, sorry for... Acting rudely?” said Balladur. “What do you want?”

He was sorry for acting rudely, but he goes and acts like that again anyways! Seriously, what are Dwarves up to nowadays?

I looked at the two dwarves. They seemed to be rather domineering in their presence. They were old and covered in scars, prideful to the core to the point they didn’t even act respectfully over their benefactors, the ones that freed them from slavery and even gave them shelter and food.

Naturally, my friends didn’t like their attitude as well.

“You bastards! I am going to chop you down into pieces!” roared Partner. “How dare you treat my beloved Master like this?! You’re really digging your own graves now!”

“That’s it, Maria-sama, I cannot tolerate it anymore...” said Emeraldine. “Please let me teach these insolent dwarves a small lesson about etiquette.”

“You two calm down a bit! You can’t just try to kill them!” I said.

“We can!” said Partner.

"We can try..." said Emeraldine.

I stopped the two before they lost their sanity completely as the dwarves looked at the scene and laughed.

"Bahwahaha! We are grateful, though! We craft clothes and other little things for the people with Darfu..." said Baldor.

"What more do you want? We are old men. If you really want to kill us, go ahead." Said Ballardur.

They're serious. These guys just don't give a damn. They're really manly dwarves!

"Don't worry. Master can make you keep on even after death. You'll become more serviceable as zombies." Said Partner, as she licked the tip of her spear.

"Wait! Wait, Partner! Partner bad! Bad girl!" I said as I smacked her head gently, and she pouted at me cutely.

"Calm down, leave this to me, please...." I sighed.

Partner just sighed.

I walked towards the two dwarves. As Lucifer made his way to my side, he was calmer than the two hormonal girls at our side, and as a fellow old geezer, he might want to negotiate with them.

"Darfu spoke to me about you guys. He said you guys are amazing architects and blacksmiths. Is that real?" I asked.

"Oh? Yeah, we are." Said Baldor.

“We worked in constructing most of the renovations made in the Dwarf Nation, and we also reconstructed the King’s castle. We also made the blueprints for the walls and even the underwater sewage.” Said, Ballardur.

“Then how the heck did you end as slaves?” I asked.

“Ah... Well, that’s a long story.” Said Baldor.

“Resuming it, we were on a trip to another small town where a friend was living, but we got drunk as fuck, and we ended up getting caught by bandits midway through the road. We were drunk, but we fought a lot though. We killed more than half the bandits, but they ended up using some paralyzing poison and finally took us down... and then...” sighed Ballardur.

“Here we are, long story short, we were enslaved for roughly six years... I think.” Said Baldor.

“Yeah, rough years, much torture, stupid aristocrat pigs, they think that because we are their slaves, we’ll do anything they say.” Said Baldor.

“They tried to force us, but we didn’t do it, so they tortured us, but do you think that matters to us, Dwarves? As long as the Goddess of Earth is with us, our grit is endless!” said Ballardur.

“We resisted it like champs, and we eventually got out of it, so here we are, keeping the pride of the dwarves high!” said Baldor.

“Wow, you guys are really insane....” I said.

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These two dwarves were absolutely insane. It wasn't that they were just prideful. They were straight out insane to the core. They were tortured so much they were left with scars all over their bodies, but they still didn't work for it.

I don't know if I can even convince their souls to work for me even if they die and I make them ghosts. Their will seems so strong and unmovable, like a stone pillar... And they also talked about some Earth Goddess... Is she their goddess?

Wait...

By checking their Status, I saw a lot of the talents they got, Hammer Technique, Master Blacksmith, Smith Magic, and... They are blessed by the Goddess of Earth and the God of Forge.

So that's it...

They're actually so strong-willed and resilient because they're the Heralds of Gods, apostles of two gods to boot, and both of them! Wait, I think they're blood-related. Could they be siblings? Twins?

"Are you guys twins?" I wondered. "Also, by checking your status, you got blessed by the Goddess of Earth and the God of Forge...."

The two dwarves stood there looking at me in disbelief. They seemed both disappointed and angered at me for some reason! Did I do something wrong? I just checked their Status! What's wrong with that?

"You can check status?!" asked Baldor. "That's very rude! You can't just check the shape of our souls like that. Even if you're a ghost!"

"Yeah, that's very offensive..." said Ballardur. "But yeah, we are twins and blessed at the same time. We were blessed the same day we were born, together, and since then, we have been bros that have never separated from one another."

"That's right! Bros until the end!" said Baldor. "We have always stuck together. Our Divine Protections makes it so we are inseparable."

"Is that so?" I asked. "Do you even go to the bathroom together?"

"No, we don't! We hate when someone jokes with that!" said Baldor. "Also, we ain't helping you anyway."

"Yeah, do you think we'll help you just because you have helped us?" asked Ballardur. "We have done more than enough, making clothes and other things for you with that kid Darfu... We ain't forging for ya!"

"Come on! You can't be that much of an asshole, can't you?" I asked. "It doesn't cost you anything, and you'll be helping good people."

"We have helped them enough," said Baldor. "That's enough for me."

"That's right, we have helped enough," said Ballardur. "That's also enough for me."

"You guys begin speaking at the same time sometimes." Said Emeraldine. "Typical Dwarf behavior...."

Emeraldine began cursing in a low voice while the Dwarves completely ignored her. Meanwhile, Partner was constantly emanating a strong presence of black and red color, and she was quite frightening.

"You two... You also come from the same place as Darfu, right?" asked Lucifer. "Who are you exactly? Were you important figures? Doing all the things you said... You mustn't be normal at all."

Lucifer surprisingly spoke in a respectful tone of voice to the two dwarves, who looked at him while squinting their eyes and then nodded.

"Yeah, we come from the Gray Mountains too. We are the famous Redstone Brothers." Said Baldur. "We did many things, and we taught a lot of the kids there...."

“Compared to our age Darfu is just a young kid... We are over three hundred years old.” Said Ballardur.
“But I still feel like new, though!”

“T-Three hundred years old?!” asked Emeraldine. “I didn’t know Dwarves could live so long!”

The two dwarves nodded; they didn’t seem to be particularly angered at Emeraldine for being an elf, so they even answered her questions.

“Yeah, we are pretty old.” Said Baldur.

“Usually, people of our race can live up to two hundred years... But those that receive a Divine Protection can live way more than that.” Said, Ballardur.

“Each Divine Protection can give you some extra lifespan because we both got two Divine Protections. We got a lot of extra lifespan to go around,” said Baldur.

“Yeah, we have outlived some of our friends...” sighed Ballardur.

“Well, they’re now in the embrace of the Goddess of Earth anyways.” Said Baldur.

“Hm!” said Ballardur.

They were also quite religious with their Goddess of Earth, and they were probably talking about being buried in the dirt? Maybe... Well, whatever the case, Lucifer seemed to have the intention of negotiating with them, but I don’t really know how that will fare.

“I am an ancient dragon that has lived hundreds of years, probably almost a thousand years if not some more. I used to live in the very place where you dwarves are living now.” Said Lucifer.

As he began to unleash his entire potential outside of his body, an enormous aura of pressure and phantasmal power emerged behind him, shaping itself into his dragon form, resembling a deadly specter.

The two dwarves looked in shock at the scene for a few seconds before going back to their usual expressionless selves.

"I see, so?" asked Baldur. "What about it?"

"You're an old Dragon and an Undead... What happened to you?" wondered Ballardur. "Ah, not like I care if you don't answer...."

"Eh?! Well... It didn't work. I thought that Dwarves respected dragons..." sighed Lucifer. "Anyways, I guess I can ask you some other things later. For now, what Maria wants to do is employ you two as her forgers and architects."

"That's not possible." Said Baldur. "We retired from that heavy lifting job and all of that."

"Even if others do the lifting, I ain't working." Said, Ballardur. "Unless..."

"Unless..." said Baldur. "Unless you bring booze."

"Of the nice one, though." Said, Ballardur. "Maybe we'll think about helping by then."

"Oh, you're picky too? You don't want any Beer, but the best we can find?" I asked. "You're a bit too expensive, but I am beginning to think there's no other way around it...."

The two dwarves were quite the expensive workers... asking for something like high-quality beer... I hope we can find some.

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Chapter 237

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We walked outside of their home after the whole discussion was over. I was getting tired of how arrogant they were. I could tell that everyone was doing their best to maintain their composure, but it was indeed very hard.

"Thanks for your patience, you three... I guess at the end. We were not able to convince them that much. Those guys are way too grumpy for me to handle...." I sighed.

"And they seem to only want beer and nothing else." Said Emeraldine. "I seriously don't get how a dwarf's brain works. Well, Darfu is a nice person, at least."

"Yeah, that Darfu is our only home for the moment. It doesn't seem that there is anyone more qualified as him around the people we got." Said Partner. "So that'll do. He'll do it for us."

"Hmmm... Well, it shouldn't be hard to take a fast trip to the nearest town to pick up some resources, we should buy a lot of food on the way, and Beer, all the beer we can find, and give it to them, we'll see which one they like..." said Lucifer. "We might also buy the recipe of how to make beer and the ingredients necessary to make it as well."

Lucifer had a good idea. I think if we could make beer here, it would keep them refilled with their beer meter while we work on our own stuff as well. Everyone wins! I think that's the best thing we can do as of now, I really don't want to meddle any more with these annoying dwarves, so I am throwing them to the back of my mind for the moment.

"Good idea, Lucifer, we'll do that... I guess we can go to the town tomorrow morning. We'll leave Catarina and the other two fire ghosts protecting the place, plus all the Undead." I said.

"Yeah, there are monsters sometimes coming. Most of the time, they try to get inside the city, so it is good to leave some strong people to defend the village..." said Emeraldine. "Although, without a healer like me, I am worried something bad might happen, and I won't be there to heal them...."

"Don't worry. We won't go out for more than two days. I think it will be a short trip. We can fly so it will be fast." I said. "I promise."

"Okay then..." said Emeraldine with a sweet smile.

There are Undead roaming the entire village all the time, they often carry out rocks and debris spread around, and some others are slowly tearing apart the houses for usable wood to burn and also to feed the rats.

Some others are gathering anything shiny and valuable from the houses before they're turned into pieces of wood. Sometimes there are portraits of people or their stuff. We save all of that to one day give it back to the frozen people.

Our people were already used to Undead from way back when we rescued them. The Undead had been helping them ever since, and I am an Undead too, so they're used to them as "people" and not as "monsters" although if they ever encounter Undead outside of the village, they're probably not the friendly kind, so we made sure to tell them to differentiate well.

Once more, we moved towards the castle, where we found Darfu and the goblins. He was currently brainstorming ideas on how to make the greenhouse's architecture. He wasn't the best at it, but he knew all the basics, and he had to just put up some effort into it.

"Hmm... I think we can do this... Perhaps internal pillars would also be good if you want it to be big... The glass we'll need for the ceilings will be a lot... Maria-sama has to make sure to bring as much sand as possible, the whole beach if necessary." Said Darfu.

The Goblins nodded as they heard his words. Some even knew how to write, so they were writing down notes about it and more.

When Darfu noticed we came back, he spoke to us.

"So, how did it go?" he asked.

"Bad... Very bad, they're assholes," I said.

"I-I told you it wouldn't work... I am glad nothing bad happened to them, though..." said Darfu.

“Yeah, I stopped these two dorks from hitting them several times. They really should calm themselves sometimes.” I sighed. “Anyways, how are things going?”

“They’re fine, we have already done some work, but I am still having some complications... I am not the best at this. I might take a week to make a proper blueprint... Sorry.” Apologized Darfu.

“Oh, don’t worry, we got all the time in the world now that we are far away from danger... I think.” I said. “Although we are going tomorrow to the nearest town to find some food and beer and perhaps other materials we could harvest.”

“That sounds great. Could I go with you?” wondered Darfu. “We need some serious materials to start off our construction, nails above all, and different tools... Do you got the money?”

“Yeah, we got enough money to buy stuff, and if not, we can steal it using ghostly powers,” I said with a smirk. “Although I am trying to not steal everything now....”

“I-I see...” said Darfu. “Ghosts are really unique beings....”

“Anyways, do you know how that town works? From which duchy are they?” asked Partner.

“They’re not from the Albraun Kingdom. We have already walked past their territory. This town belongs to the Iceland Kingdom, a small Kingdom with just two duchies that is located in these frozen lands.” Said Lucifer. “I am impressed they have kept up for so long, even after the war against the Demon King where they were our supporters. I guess because they’re human, they somehow managed to survive and not get slaughtered... Good for them.”

“The Iceland Kingdom is a friendly Kingdom to our Dwarf Nation. They always make trades. They got some fertile lands where they grow plants, but it is said that they’re cooperating with tribes of Ice Giants to grow special plants that even thrive in ice...” said Darfu.

“What? Really? Maybe we could find those plants then!” I said. “Maybe they’re expensive?”

"I wouldn't recommend it, they're rare, and the Ice Giants are not fond of people... If you try to get things from them forcefully, they'll rage." Said Darfu. "It is dangerous."

"Hmm..."

So there are even Ice Giants here...

Chapter 238

The Iceland Kingdom, the Kingdom nearest to our town, and a small Kingdom where people had been surviving for years, hundreds of years, apparently, but that has barely changed in shape, form, architecture, or even territory. They seem to always have two duchies all this time, and they're not getting any more either...

They're a Kingdom of survivors, pretty much. To be able to withstand these cold temperatures and maintain the entire Kingdom for so many years is insane by itself. There are barely any invaders in these frozen lands, so it is understandable that they had not been invaded, but I would guess that magic and other things like those have kept them alive for a long time.

According to Darfu, the only friendly dwarf we have ever met in our lives and a new friend, it appears that the Iceland Kingdom has some sort of friendly relationship with a tribe of Ice Giants... But what are Ice Giants? Looking back at Norse Mythology, they're one of the children of Ymir, the primordial giant and the father of all giants.

There is a Continent named Jotunheim here, which seems to be the place where all the damn Ice Giants are located. It is an interesting place I would like to visit. Alongside Ice Giants, there might be their "normal" variety named Mountain Giants, and in Muspelheim, there are also the other Giants, often considered evil, the Fire Giants.

All these Giants seem mysterious. We had never interacted with them. Maybe Lucifer because he's super old, but the rest of us are in the blue. Even Darfu seems to have no idea what they are up to aside

from saying that the Ice Giants are very secretive and dislike being too near civilizations because they're hunted down as monsters.

However, some years ago, the Iceland Kingdom began friendly transactions with the Ice Giants, where they provided all sorts of resources the Ice Giants had begun to lack. At the same time, the Ice Giants share the special Ice Plants they raise, which seem to have their origin in Jotunheim and Niflheim, special edible plants that can grow in cold temperatures!

If we could bring some of those, we could really solve part of the problem, although, to be honest, I would still build a greenhouse. I really want one, and nobody is stopping me from getting one!

However, I wonder how these Ice Plants are working and more... and I wonder if they could be used with the help of Emeraldine's nature spirit. Maybe she could help both parties by boosting the growth of the plants? And we get some payment in the form of more plants... But getting to do that seems to be a big pain, so maybe it will take time.

"Have you heard about the ice giants, Lucifer?" I asked. "You're pretty old, so you know a lot."

"W-Who are you calling, old man? I am actually quite young compared to the most Ancient Dragons. My father was thousands of years old. I am barely one thousand years old. I am in the prime of my youth- Ah, I am dead... I guess it's all canceled out by that." Said Lucifer. "Anyways, yeah, I do know them a bit. My family used to interact with Mountain Giants and Ice Giants that lived in the gray mountains... No idea if they're up there now, but they were mostly a seclusive race. They dislike being with other people and even felt better around us dragons than humans, elves, or even dwarves."

"Yeah, I told you so. Giants are just very shy people..." sighed Darfu. "Although there might be another reason behind that."

"What reason?" wondered Partner. "Wait, let me guess... Because humans chase them down or something, right?"

"Bingo. You're sharp, Vampire girl." Said Darfu. "Giants have a long history with humans, elves, and dwarves, often referred to as the "three races" who are the most "commonly seen" around the land. They were always chased down by them and treated like monsters such as Ogres or Trolls because of some similarities they share...."

“T-That’s harsh... How can they even call them monsters? Ah, it feels just like Majin, a race of people created by the Gods that are called monsters because they’re simply different physically...” sighed Emeraldine. “People can be really awful....”

“Yep... Although we are not completely innocent either, our races all originate from different areas of the continent. Each race belonged to a different continent at the origin of the world...” said Darfu. “But a lot of races spread everywhere in every direction as the years passed, wars, trades, and more ended up spreading tribes all over the world, and because of the nice temperatures of this continent, Midgard ended up with a wide variety of races from other continents, although it originally belonged to the humans. Well, to be honest, it still does.”

“Indeed, it still does. You know? This is pretty damn awful... Humans can be real jerks sometimes, and I know it well because I used to be one.” I said. “But I guess it all comes down to the many wars of the past, which only made the humans hatred for other races increase... the church discriminating against them and using other races as an outlet for the people to direct their anger instead than the corrupt governments doesn’t help.”

“Yeah, we all demi-humans got it rough, but this place you’re building... Maybe it has potential. If we all work together, we can make of these frozen lands where nobody steps into a paradise for us to live on.” said Darfu. “I kind of want to believe in your resolve, especially because you’re damn strong, and you got a bunch of strong companions too, and strength is everything at the end of the day... So long as you got strength, you’ll be able to protect the town.”

“True... I guess we have to just keep working hard! I just want a place where we can all live peacefully and prosper.” I said. “It is a dumb dream, but it is shared by many....”

Chapter 239

“The Dwarf Nation is one of the few prosperous places, but we live peacefully because we are surrounded by dragon monsters everywhere and giants, perhaps...” said Darfu. “The terrain is also hard for the humans to step on and advance their troops, and through our fortresses, we built there, we always have a strong strategic advantage.”

"O-Oh... Did something happen in your history?" I wondered. "Did they attack the Dwarf Nation?"

"Yes, plenty of times, the Albraun Kingdom, the Solstice Kingdom, and the Rose Garden Kingdom, the trio of human Kingdoms that govern this entire Continent led by the Empire ruled by the church, attempted to attack our Dwarf Nation on several occasions, but all failed..." said Darfu. "I don't like to brag about it, but Dwarf Military Power is impressive. You'll see the artifacts and magical machinery we can build when we finally got the time and tools to make it."

"M-Machinery?" I asked in surprise.

Are you telling me these dwarves are the cool steampunk ones?! Holy fucking shit.

"Yeah, we can make magic technology and build machinery. It is our specialty, giant magic cannons, bazookas, arachnid tanks, and all of that. We blasted all three of the major kingdoms, and not even the strongest of priests with their stupid holy magic could do anything against our Machine Golems! Gahahaha!" laughed Darfu. "...But I never experienced that. I was still inside my father's balls back then. It was long, long ago... After that, the humans stopped annoying us. They simply gave up."

"I-Incredible... Lucifer, were Dwarves doing that when you were alive?" I asked. "Did they?"

"...Not that I remember. Perhaps we never truly met? I believe the Dwarves settled down after the Demon Kingdom was destroyed pretty much... But I never saw Dwarves doing that. I do remember there was this one underground city of Dwarves right down the mountain- Wait, are you guys those ones?" wondered Lucifer. "I guess you moved to the mountains... Fair enough, it was empty, I bet."

"I don't know about that, but they say that we came from the underground." Said Darfu. "I'll stop babbling for the moment and resume work. If you excuse me... Alright guys, gather around me again".

Darfu quickly moved back to where the goblins were as he began to guide them and command them. He said he wasn't really good at this, but he's already pretty amazing, and he's considered a child by those two idiots? I am impressed. I am really impressed.

“Well, that was a lot of interesting info tidbits.” Said Emeraldine. “We should really talk more with Darfu. He is a keeper in your council!”

“I agree. He’s a fun little guy.” Said Partner. “What do you think, old man?”

“Don’t call me old man! What’s up with being called old now all out of the sudden?!” asked Lucifer angrily. “...Darfu is a resourceful young Dwarf, I would gladly have him at my side, but he’s gotta show more of what’s he’s capable of through time, so don’t jump to conclusions right away.”

“You’re right. I also liked the guy, so we’ll see what we do....” I said. “For now, we should rest and move tomorrow... I think I said I wanted to go now, but I got lazy after those two idiots made me a bit depressed.”

“D-Don’t get like that...” said Emeraldine. “Come on, cheer up. We’ll go tomorrow morning then.”

“Y-Yeah! Just ignore those two idiots, Master!” said Partner. “They’re not worth half of what they make themselves cost.”

“You two are very harsh on them, but you’re right, I am also the one that didn’t want to force them nor kill them, so I have to bear with their hurtful words....” I sighed. “For now, let’s go back to the castle to laze around for a bit.”

For the moment, I decided to laze around until tomorrow. Throughout the entire week, we had been working very hard, so it is justified that we finally take a little break, although Undead is restless, and that’s why how we made those houses so fast because I employed my Undead friends.

Lucifer wanted to continue helping outside, and probably he was going to play with the kids of the town after that. He has a very soft spot for children, after all. So I ended up with Emeraldine and Partner.

It has been some time since I kissed Emeraldine, and we haven’t done it since then. It also seems that our tension has calmed itself a little bit, but I am damn sure I still got strong feelings for her, but it just feels like our relationship is slowly advancing. I-I mean, not more than a month has passed, so I don’t think it is going too slow either!

Meanwhile, Partner and I... well, our relationship is pretty good as well, she's clingy and always lovely, she said she wanted a relationship with me, and... I kind of also want it. She's cute, and I have wondered how it could feel to kiss her... Ahh, I am really a pervert, aren't I?

These two girls are really like my sun and my moon, always illuminating the day and the night for me. They're part of... my treasure. Part of my life, and I can't really imagine my life without them at each of my sides anymore, all while Lucifer is often behind me watching my back, silent, like a regal knight or something. He's less clingy and corny than the girls, but his love is also very intense, and his devotion is as strong as that of a knight... I also love him.

Uwah, it is hard to balance life with two beautiful girls and a handsome dragon... All while managing a growing village, trying to grow stronger, and attempting to resolve the problems that surge at every corner of my life...

It really is...

For the moment, I kept resting over the bed while chatting with the girls and practicing darkness magic.

Chapter 240

Darkness Magic, the ability to harbor Darkness, the element opposite to light. With it, I had been even able to fight against the powerful holy light that the priests of the Light God are able to wield. Unlike Death Magic, which is very complex, and it controls an entire concept, which I have a lot to learn from yet, Darkness Magic is way simpler.

And thanks to my Unique Skill, my cheat ability named "Supreme Magic" I can easily shape magic itself, which seems to be an incredibly hard work even with the aid of the Soul Book's Skills to most of the people here, they often depend solely on the Skills they learn, which they can conjure almost immediately, but shaping magic itself and just generate new Skills out of new Spells is seem to be an extremely hard thing to do.

I guess due to the existence of Skills within the Soul Books, the actual ability of shaping magic became rather obsolete in some areas. Although I am sure that other races such as Elves might have an easier time conjuring conventional magic and might be able to do it better.

However, unlike Death Magic where I have to think deeply what I want it to be used into, Darkness Magic lacks that much complexity that comes from such a primordial element such as Death, so it is easy to shape, it is just conjuring darkness and shaping it, like you shape light, water, wind, fire, and so on, it is way less complex than a concept by itself like Death is.

FLAAASH!

And while being over my bed (well, the Demon King's bed which were washed), I began to conjure darkness out of my hands and shape it. Supreme Magic lets me shape it however I want, and I've already made several new Spells in the past that ended turning into Skills, but there are also several other ways I have used it and did not turn into a Skill, I guess not always will spells go into converting into Skills.

Let's see... Darkness Thread!

FLASH!

The darkness quickly compacted itself and tightened into a long and thin thread extending all around the room, it was beautiful and not so complex to create. These threads could help me at doing traps and wrapping around foes to stop them from moving. I have tried using tentacles, shadows, and so on, but incredibly hard and sharp threads might work better, especially if I could even cut them down into pieces with them.

Sharp enough threads can be a powerful weapon by itself! Just thinking about those anime characters that use threads to fight and are very deadly... it is the perfect combination between refined fighting style and also a strong and lethal weapon... all in just some sharp thread.

I know it is quite unrealistic, there is no way thread can cut down people into pieces, even the sharpest thread will only leave wounds over the skin and won't probably pass through the fat or muscles completely, even less the bone.

But it is nice to imagine... And in this fantasy world, I can make a thread out of darkness, so nothing is too crazy in my opinion. Also, by using the Materialization Skill, I can temporarily materialize this thread and through my magic manipulation, make it as sharp as I possibly can.

I directed it towards a nearby furniture and quickly tried to slice it into pieces.

SLASH!

And as I wrapped it around the thread and then pressed the thread against it, the entire wooden furniture exploded into sliced chunks... Wow.

“W-What was that? Oh?!” asked Emeraldine. “Maria, have you made a new Spell? Is this... thread?”

“Yeah, don’t touch it or it might hurt you...” I said. “It is a deadly thread I’ve made out of Dark Magic, it can slice through things although I don’t know if it can ignore defense, it probably can’t because it is a physical object after I use Materialization on it, so defensive enough foes could possibly break it... but for weaklings, it is a nice way to use my magic to slice them up easily. Just blasting them with dark magic is sometimes not the best option out of it, so you sometimes need to bring new ways to kill people.”

“T-That’s a bit eerie-sounding but I agree, sometimes wasting too much Mana into killing armies is exhausting,” said Emeraldine. “When we were being chased out by that duchy’s army, we had to use a lot of energy and mana to keep them away from us... And you had to constantly raise them into Undead to fight against their own army because they were too many.”

“They were all mobs though, there was no single soldier that stood a chance against us!” said Partner. “Even those Generals died in one hit of my Blood Spears.” Partner smiled devilishly showing me her sharp vampire fangs, she had grown quite sadistic.

“Hm... Yeah, I had thought about setting up some traps with this, but I fear that the people of our town might fall for them too, so we’ll see. At most I will use them in an emergency if we are ever attacked... I don’t think they’ll work in cutting off that Curse Ice, that was clearly conjured by something stronger than me...” I sighed. “To free these people from the ice, we’ll need to find the source and ask it to free them... be it by force or gently.”

“Yeah... Well, maybe we can find clues in the Iceland Kingdom, we can find more information there, so don’t lose hope, Maria.” Said Emeraldine, as she sat down near me in bed, and began to hug me and caress my head.

“That’s right, Master.” Said Partner. “We can find clues slowly, don’t get sad over it, at least they’re alive, right?” Partner also sat down to my other side, hugging me as well and caressing my head too.

“You two girls spoil me too much...” I sighed. “I think I’m gonna nap until tomorrow... If anything is needed, just wake me up.”
