

A Ghost 391

Chapter 391 Finally Back Home

"It will be a pain to lose such a capable fighter in our ranks though! But we got Darkbound now and Mercury, both are B+ Rank and are plenty strong, so I think we should be alright for now." I said with a smile.

"I can really go anywhere I want now?" She asked in disbelief. I saw Lucifer, Partner, and Emeraldine smiling happily.

"Yeah, you can. I don't really want to do the same they did to you when you were alive... I don't want to restrict you or order you around, you've helped more than enough, dear." I said, petting her head again. "Just make sure to take care of yourself, and don't do anything reckless, okay? You're a bit of a rowdy girl sometimes, be more cautious out there."

"Thanks... I will be." She said.

"But not now though!" I said, stopping Catarina who was so excited she even was thinking about jumping out of Lucifer's back.

"Eh? But I wanna go!" She cried.

"Geez, you're too careless! We'll go back to the village and you'll say your goodbyes to everybody first, and then, I'll give you a new set of equipment, a lot of items to take care of yourself, and even a small companion." I said.

"Companion?" She asked.

"Like... any Undead you want, I can make it for you." I said.

"Like a pet?!" Catarina became even happier.

“Yeah, I guess?” I wondered.

“T-Then I want a wolf!” She said. “Big enough that I can use the beast as a mount!”

“Haha, alright.” I said. “A wolf it is.”

And like that, we spent the next hours chatting with Catarina. Emeraldine and Partner became more friendly now, realizing that Catarina was just teasing me and that her truest desire was to be as free as the wind. Perhaps a dream she have always had was to explore the vast world of Yggdrasil as she pleased. I also kind of want to do that at some point, but I am slightly busy right now.

When we arrived at the region where our village was, the cold snow began to fall from the sky, while the wind was getting colder and stronger too. It was getting pretty cold! But I am a ghost so I don't really find or feel any difference. When we arrived at the front of our village, I saw many things had changed. The walls were now fully repaired thanks to my Undead working tirelessly for weeks and months, and the gates were tightly closed, so wild animals didn't sneaked inside anymore.

Aside from that, the ruins in front of the village had been almost completely dismantled by now, and we were planning in reconstructing the houses from the base after we extracted all the rotting wood in them. Eventually everybody would have stone houses, but for now, we are all setting down with wooden cabins, which are actually warmer.

And the castle looked way better now as well, it has been mostly repaired by now by the effort of my skeletons and spider undead, and also it seems that dwarves have helped as well, so everybody had put their own effort into repairing everything and leaving things quite well and nicely.

When we reached the front of the gates, Lucifer's enormous draconic form quickly made everyone clear that we were back, the gates opened in an instant, as a group of people of all colors, shapes, and sizes, ran forward.

“Lady Maria, you're back!”

“We have missed you for so long! It was so sad you never summoned us to request our aid!”

A pair of fiery ghosts emerged, their ghostly appearances would be quite frightening to anybody that were to see them, as they were Fire Ghosts, ghosts that were completely made out of fire.

But I knew these two goofballs very well, they were Silvio and Francisco!

"You guys! Been a while!" I said, as I quickly hugged them both. They got quite happy I hugged them. Their warm bodies were really refreshing to feel in a tight hug. The two also greeted everybody else and Catarina too, who had been summoned away without previous warning, making them worried she just got lost or escaped or something.

"So you ended being summoned away by Lady Maria! Such a privilege..." Sighed Silvio.

"Yeah... I am now rather jealous." Sighed Francisco.

"You two dorks have nothing to be jealous about, it wasn't anything good, we almost got crushed by a giant meatball. What's good about that?" Sighed Catarina.

The Goblin Chief, the Goblin Elder, and Gofumin came right after them, rushing to greet us alongside most of the goblin population behind them.

"We greet our queen!" The goblins, who were very loyal to me, suddenly kneeled.

"You guys! Don't kneel for me, that's embarrassing..." I sighed.

"You can stand back up again then, guys!" The Goblin Chief said, as the goblins confusedly stood up. They really didn't understand my humbleness sometimes.

"It is nice to meet you again, Lady Maria. How was your travel? We heard a few things from your familiars, there was a big battle, right?" Asked the Goblin Chief.

"Yep, it was arduous but we pulled through just barely." I sighed.

“It must have been hard, you should rest there for now and take it easy for the next few days.” He said.

“Yeah, I plan to!” I said. “Though... there’s a lot to do even here, so it won’t be that easy either, haha...”

“Oho! I missed those big ones!” The Goblin Elder looked at my chest with his eyes popping out. “T-They grew! I am sure they grew-GYA!”

SMACK!

Partner once more karate chopped the Elder like before.

“E-Elder!”

“Hang in there!”

“T-This is the third time this year...”

“Perverted old man!” Partner said angrily. “Does he never learn his lesson?”

“Hahaha... Go easy on him...” I sighed, as I saw Emeraldine healing the Elder.

“Auntieeee!”

An adorable little Goblin girl ran to my side- Wait, she wasn’t that small anymore.

Chapter 392 The Twins Evolution

—

“Auntieeee!”

An adorable little Goblin girl ran to my side- Wait, she wasn't that small anymore! It has only been around a month since I didn't see her, but I am pretty sure she grew up a lot.

"Gofumin!" I said with surprise, finding her looking at least twenty centimeters taller, almost the same height as a 7 year old girl from her former size that was no bigger than 4 years old.

"You got so big in this time! What the heck happened?" I asked in surprise, as I hugged her tightly and petted her head.

"I grew up!" She said. "Papa said I am slowly reaching goblin growth spur!"

"Goblin Growth Spur?" I wondered.

"We Goblins don't live as long as humans, usually our lifespan is of around 30 or 40 years, so we grow faster than humans." Said the Chief.

"Yeah, children usually get a growth spur around the age of four or five" The Elder answered while feeling better after being healed. "Whenever she reaches six years of age, Gofumin will begin her puberty and will grow the last time."

"Ah... I see, so this is why you're so small even when you grow so fast..." I said. "Wait, what age does a mother usually have when they have a child?!" I wondered with forbid curiosity.

"Eh? We usually pair around the age of ten." Said the chief. "I am actually around fifteen, I had Gofumin five years ago, she was abnormally small but finally got her first growth spur this last month, she's really happy."

"Yeah! I am big now!" Gofumin said while raising her tiny arms- well, not so tiny anymore. She was still enchantingly adorable.

"I see! I am glad for you, dear. You'll grow up into a beautiful woman like your mommy." I said with a smile.

It seems that Goblins grow very fast and die fast as well... Which is a bit sad. But I am sure that if they level up and evolve into Hobgoblins, they can live longer as the Elder once said their ancestor lived for 300 years while serving the Demon King.

So they officially reach sexual maturity around the age of six or seven? Wow that's so early... And they officially get paired at the age of ten as well. That's already a third of their life. Damn, so my little Gofumin will have kids in just a few years?! That's a big change of image I'll have to go through in my mind.

"You may have grown a bit but you're still my little Gofumin." I quickly held her in my arms and then sat her over my shoulders. She was completely covered in clothes made of fluffy fur to cover herself from the unforgiving cold, but she still managed to fit there.

I have grown attached to her quite a lot, I am quite weak with kids... I might have unintentionally adopted this girl alongside the twins- Wait, where are the twins?

I suddenly saw them walking towards us, they first greeted the rest of my party before greeting me with hugs.

"Big sis, you're back!" Takeshi said, as I noticed he had a black lizard-like tail popping out of his back which waved happily.

"Welcome back!" Laura said. "How was everything?" I also noticed the same tail in her.

"Good! I missed you two so much as well!" I sighed. "I am glad you're safe and sound... Mooch!"

I kissed both of them on the cheeks and hugged them tightly.

"Everything went well, but what about you guys?! You got two tails out of nowhere!" I said.

"Oh... this." Said Laura.

"I grew a tail the other day!" Takeshi said happily.

"But why?" I wondered.

"I don't know the reason, but as we joined the hunting party and began earning EXP daily, we suddenly reached Level five and then evolved." Said Laura. "Our races now are "Half-Devils"... I don't know why but it sounds quite eerie... The tail came with it. We also began feeling less pain from our chest's cores. The Mana we have is also not being constantly drained either, it seems we improved after evolution." Laura explained.

"Evolution is cool, we got super strong!" Takeshi said.

"I was never told you joined the hunting team..." I sighed. "Oh well, it is good you guys evolved and feel stronger and better. That's good. I knew that evolving might help you adapt to your own powers... But half-devils? Not Majin?"

"There isn't any Majin named Devil." Said Lucifer. "They're different entities altogether, I would assume. A new race of people."

"A new race?!" Asked Takeshi. "That's great, right?"

"Yeah, it is great!" Lucifer said, trying to cheer up the kids.

"I feel slightly worried about what I am becoming... I am a bit afraid too..." Sighed Laura. "But... I guess that as long as I am with everyone here, we can bear with it."

"You two are true survivors, so I am sure that'll you manage. I'll do everything I can to help you out too, so don't worry." I tried to reassure the children that everything was going to be alright. Takeshi seemed to be childish but he died as a kid and was reincarnated, so his mental maturity is not big enough to comprehend the dangerousness of his own body. Laura, who died while being a way older, is very smart, so she knows there's something fishy about all of this.

After greeting the children, I walked back to the city where I saw the group of Rabbit-kin gathered, I saw Syllis and his little sister Bellerine, who had not come to greet me because they were currently busy in here attending several things in my absence.

“It is nice to meet you again, Lady Maria. I had begun to grow worried about you...” Syllis said with his angelic voice and face, he really looked precious.

“I am alright, don’t worry dear. I’m thankful you’ve kept everything going for me. You’re an amazing hard worker.” I said with a smile, petting his head as he was now smaller than me.

“Big brother is very hard worker! He always thinks about you! So please marry him, okay?” Bellerine asked while dragging my dress.

“Eh?! Bellerine! D-Don’t say such things!” Syllis sighed in embarrassment as his rabbit ears began to flap around due to his frustration over his sister’s words.

“But it’s true! Big brother is a good match! He will give you tons of children!” Said Bellerine, as she was suddenly shut down by Syllis who covered her face. “Mmfffggh!”

“Hahaha! She’s really lively.” I giggled.

“I’m so sorry... She’s reaching her puberty already so she doesn’t stop talking about nasty stuff...” Syllis apologized.

Chapter 393 A Celebratory Feast

—

After meeting with everybody, we had a big feast celebrating our return, where we decided to use some of the dismantled meat I got from the various monsters we hunted in our dungeon raid. The meat of the grotesque final boss which had become something like the Dungeon Core’s Avatar was also dismantled and cut into pieces, it was quite delicious when roasted alongside some salt and pepper.

“Oh, this meat is a bit... It’s so good! It goes so well with the beer!”

“Yeah, what’s up with the flavor? It really brings me back home when our mother used to make us roasted wyvern fillet for lunch!”

“You’re right brother! Can’t believe you found dragon-type monster meat, lad!”

The trio of dwarves, Darfu and the twins Baldur and Balladur noticed that the meat was similar to wyvern or lesser drake meat, which seem to be dragon-type monsters that are rather common in the Gray Ash Mountains where the Dwarf Kingdom where they come from originated.

“Hahaha! I am glad you guys are enjoying it. It came from a giant dragon-type monster we fought in that one dungeon infected with miasma that the Vampires provoked. It was near immortal because it was being controlled by the Dungeon Core.” I laughed.

“Oh, I see! Must have been a pain to kill, Dungeon Cores are a real problem for us.” Said Darfu.

“In the mountains where we live, there are dozens of enormous mountains that cover thousands of kilometers, it is not uncommon for dungeons to suddenly pop up when we are mining them. Usually flooding us with their monsters, which is annoying as hell!” Said Baldur.

“Well, you end up leveling up a fair bit when mining due to the annoying dungeon monsters getting in the way, sometimes we only got our pickaxes to fight! Hahaha, recalling our younger years really bring me a bit of happiness. We really were getting ourselves into trouble all the time!” Balladur recalled.

“You did?” I wondered curiously.

“Yeah, you see, these two old men are well known for being big troublemakers in their younger years.” Laughed Darfu. “I remember always hearing tales about what they did. There was one time they stole an egg from a Red Wyvern and the wyvern ended coming to the city and stormed the entire place looking for her egg...”

“HAHAHAHA! Yeah, that one was funny!”

“We still didn’t gave the egg back, we needed its hard and metallic shell to make a special accessory for mother. The old lady used to love her ornaments back then, you see... We couldn’t fail our old lady.”

The twins recalled their parents, which probably were already dead by judging their age.

“I wonder if they’re still kicking.”

“Last time I heard about them, they were alright...”

“Eh?! How long do your parents have lived?” I asked.

“Hm? Well they’re pretty old, almost 280 years.” Said Baldur.

“Yeah, we ain’t that old!” Laughed Ballardur.

“Seriously... You all look old to me.” Partner said while raising an eyebrow.

Regarding the Greenhouse, we had already discussed about this before the feast began. Apparently they had made four enormous Greenhouses while I was out, using all the materials I sent to them and a few others they went to buy themselves, apparently using the money I left behind.

The four greenhouses were almost 200 meters each, enough to plant as many veggies as we wanted, and in fact some of the talented people that were found to be able to conjure Earth, Life, and Nature Magic helped at nourishing the soil. Emeraldine had already left a big sack with nourished soil using her spirits, but they all worked hard to get something done when I came back. In the next days we’ll begin our farming schedule, I hope I can learn some interesting skills by trying to connect with nature, fufufu~

“Ugh...”

Lucifer was rather doubtful about eating the flesh of this creature was it was made out of the leftover bones he had in the dungeon. He seemed to be looking at it constantly.

"What's wrong big guy?" I asked.

"I-I don't want to eat this! Wasn't this made with my bones though?!" He asked.

"Yeah, but it's not you. Are you telling me that Partner is me because she has my bones?" I sighed.

"Hm... W-Well, certainly there's no way I would ever find her attractive... You're right, it must be different..." Sighed Lucifer, deciding to give it a try.

"You decided to eat it just with that comparison?!" Partner complained angrily. "A-And I am super pretty and desirable!"

"Yeah, yeah." Sighed Lucifer, ignoring her.

"Uugh! I am going to smack you!" Partner roared angrily, getting all red.

"Calm down, Partner. Lucifer has a point..." Emeraldine said. I thought she was trying to make things better, but that wasn't the case.

"Eh?! You too, Emeraldine?!" Partner cried, heartbroken. "Buaaah! Master, they're so mean with me out of nowhere!" Partner ran to my side and hugged me while rubbing her face over my breasts. I caressed her head motherly and calmed her down.

"There, there. They're just drunk. Don't worry, you can also badmouth them." I said while giving her my thumbs up. I was actually against them treating each other like this, but we were all family here so joking and teasing one another wasn't something bad if done with moderation.

"Ahh... I feel more calm in this cushion though..." Partner sighed in relief, rubbing my breasts greedily.

"Hahah..." I giggled a bit nervously, as I could notice Lucifer and Emeraldine's jealous stares. It seems that Partner knew other ways to provoke them and tease them...

Anyways, Lucifer ended trying out the meat, and began tasting it more and more, less timidly. With the mashed potatoes, the gravy, and the other veggies at the sides adding more flavor, he quickly began to enjoy it thoroughly.

“Oh! This meat is not bad at all for coming from a monster made out of my bones...” He said in surprise.

“Yeah, your meat rod is also quite tasty.” I added.

“PFFFF...!”

Lucifer ended falling unconscious over my out of place comment.

“Sir Lucifer! Are you okay?!”

“He passed out?”

“Just what happened?!”

Well, I might be a bit drunk as well.

Chapter 394 My Current Goals

—

After the feast, I ended waking up in my royal bed. As we had taken over the old castle of the demon king as my home, I had the privilege of sleeping in a big bed we cleansed thoroughly, which was filled with spiderwebs and bugs before. Of course, we had to change a lot of it for new stuff, but still, it is a very big bed where I can sleep very comfily with Lucifer, Emeraldine, and Partner.

Emeraldine and Partner were greedily hugging me from both sides, while Lucifer was thrown away into the distance sleeping to the opposite direction of Emeraldine. He is quite gentlemanly for not trying to touch the other girls while they sleep, but he already stated he dislikes Partner and I don't know about Emeraldine, but he seems to have no interest either.

Must be because he's a very old man, so he's not a horndog like a stupid teenager would be. Well, I'm fairly sure there's still horndogs way past their teens, like twenty, thirty, forty, and from fifty and beyond they kind of begin to not get very horny anymore. Probably the age. He already had a wife and a daughter, so he's also quite reserved.

Without much to do, I quickly turned into my phantasmal form and passed through the solid objects in front of me, getting behind Lucifer and hugging him from behind.

"Hm?"

"Good morning."

"Ah... Maria..."

Lucifer covered himself with more blankets as he lazily continued sleeping.

So cute... My husband is the cutest man alive.

I petted his head and kissed his cheek, and then I did the same for Partner and Emeraldine, who were like the sun that illuminates my daily life.

After that, I flew off and let them rest, I noticed my materialized body had some soot around my armpits and below my belly, so I decided to wash myself. I might not get sweat or anything like the living, but I don't want any soot in my bed.

Well, this "soot" is not truly the normal soot we all know about, it is more like residual materialization of darkness and phantasmal essence. The system classified it as a Necromancer Material for the creation of Undead named [Dark Phantom Soot] and it might be used to create Ghost-type Undead of stronger categories. I think I could even create a Dark Ghost like the one I used to be with these! I had thought about raising an army of Ghosts with me too, of each element so I can get more elemental coverage. But having to level them up and all is surely a pain and making high ranked one's costs more than soot.

"Phew...! This is really life." I sighed in relief.

I had my head a bit dizzy, but I am fairly sure we did a lot of love last night after the feast. Hehe, Lucifer was less timid this time, and was more active. I liked how he took the rails and pushed me down and made me his... Partner and Emeraldine continued doing their teamwork, this time licking almost every part of my body... Do they think I am a delicacy or something?

The warm water really washed out all my accumulated exhaustion and stress, as I saw the outside world through the small window. The sky was as cloudy as ever, but there was still sunlight coming down, which the greenhouses depend on. I wish we could get something like artificial sunlight but that doesn't seem possible for now.

Well now, I got a bunch of thing to do. And one of the most important ones to buy time until next year are three in my list. I need to prioritize what to do first, and probably to do all three before the year ends, if possible.

1] Go to the Gray Ash Mountains and visit the Dwarf Kingdom, seek if there's any clue regarding Lucifer's family while also getting to know the dwarves while trying to get some business with them, and perhaps bring some to my town. Alongside that, acquire more resources, we need a lot of ores and metals if we want to reinforce our walls and also make more Greenhouses.

2] Seek the Ice Giants to dispel the Curse that has happened to the few survivors of this town. They're still alive, so they can be uncursed by some mean. I have to either deal with this myself or find the culprit and punish them. I am honestly quite furious because they made my Lucifer cry, so whoever it was, I am going to beat the shit out of them.

3] Find my brother and our aunt with them. Julia said they had safely immigrated to another nation which is more peaceful but also "freer" in the things that can be done. The thing is, it is incredibly far away from here, literally at the other side of the continent where temperatures are hot and there are even deserts and arid mountains and canyons. The nation leads to the beautiful shores in there though, which is the nation's best source of income through importation. The seas are way calmer there compared to this side of the continent, where they're wild and cold. Currently, we have no idea where they might be, so if we ever go, we'll have no clues and might be going in circles for a long while. Maybe I need to ask Julia to employ some sort of spy to find them, the Dark Knights might help. If I am a Noble now, it might actually work.

And well, there's a fourth which is not so essential, about going to the floating island and see what's there, and also to visit Emeraldine's hometown, which is not a priority but that I would really like to do.

“Sigh... I have to discuss this with everybody to come out with a proper conclusion.” I sighed rather saddened. I had still a lot to do, and stress was once more boiling inside of my head. Well, the warm bath was still nice.

Chapter 395 Sorrowful Thoughts

—

As I came out of the bath, I ran back to my room and dried myself. I decided to wear a dress that Julia bought for me, I looked quite noble lady-like with it, and it truly made me quite happy. I’ve always dreamed of being a noble in my previous life. Like all those privileged women I saw in the Otome games I used to play, or just in some medieval fantasy romance setting stories... Oh well, I actually got my wish after dying, but I ended dying again due to the schemes of some bastards. And now I am a ghost and went through my good deal of shit myself to the point where I am right now.

After discussing things with myself for a while, I decided to quickly gather everybody after breakfast to talk about what I had in mind. This time I brought all the adults that I thought had a high level of responsibility in this village. Of course, Lucifer, Emeraldine, and Partner were with me, but I had invited the three dwarves, the Goblin Chief and the Elder and Syllis. Catarina wasn’t here because she was going out in a few days from now, I had already told everybody that I was letting her go and do as she pleased, it could be said to be my gift of “gratitude” to her.

“I get that you’re worried about the entire village’s development and all, lass, but why call us all here?”
Asked Darfu.

“Yeah, what’s going on?” Baldur.

“Are we that important?” Asked Ballardur.

“You guys are really important, you’re already part of the town and a big help to everybody, so of course I called you here. And well, what I wanted to talk about is...”

I explained everything I had in mind to everybody around me, as they quickly understood my indecisiveness. I wanted to use their help, make them something like a “council” that can give me the aid I need to make a decision of what to do now.

“Hm, so you want to get that done in less than a year, it’s gonna be hard, but the easiest thing you could do right now is going to our Kingdom.” Said Darfu.

“Yeah, if you go there you can gather clues about the dragon, we know a few things going on in there, so there might be some traces of what you’re looking for.” Said Baldur.

“Alongside that, we got some connections with the ice giants as dwarves, so you could find more clues about this “Tear” girl or whoever she is.” Said Ballardur.

“I agree with the three of them, Lady Maria.” Said Syllis. “Although I do agree that searching for your lost brother would be a thing to prioritize over everything else, he had gone to a faraway nation and it seems that without proper clues, you won’t really find much of an answer for now... It would be better to wait for that Duchess to give you more information. Requesting a special spy to search for them might also be a good idea.”

“Hm, it might be painful but we should go there.” Said Emeraldine.

“If it were up to you I would bring you there immediately.” Said Lucifer. “But I understand that without any clues, we’ll be looking around too much hopelessly, especially because you lack a proper image of the boy at his current age.”

“True...” I sighed.

“For now we should go to the farms...” Said Partner. “And after a sizable rest, we’ll go to the dwarves. How about it?”

“I think it is alright, yeah.” I said with a nod. “I think that’s enough...”

I sighed a bit, feeling slightly down.

“You can go now, sorry to bother you guys with this... I think I need a bit of a time alone.” I said, as I quickly transformed into phantasmal essence and flew away.

“W-Wait, Maria!” Lucifer called for me but I went to the rooftop of the castle by myself.

The cold breeze was quite calming.

I looked into the horizon while sitting over the top of the castle.

The clouds covering the sky, and the snowy mountains at the distance decorated this beautiful winter scenery with a lot of natural grace.

I knew it was like that, I knew that there wasn't a chance I would find him like this. I had asked the System, there were special skills that I could buy named [Tracking] and [Search] but none of them would help me find anybody unless I've already seen them or touched them.

All the portraits of our family were burned alongside our manor, according to what Julia investigated. So I don't even know how my little brother looks like right now.

In fact, I have little idea how I actually looked like while I was alive. Partner surely looks way too different, so I doubt I would had looked like her.

It just... It really kind of saddens me.

I... I know I should be facing things more maturely, and I am.

But even then, it is hard to contain my emotions.

Even more when I am a ghost, driven by madness and resentment.

Even now, as I've evolved so far, this resentment, this madness, and this dark abyss of negative emotions continue to grow larger and larger, like an endless void.

Maybe because I am a ghost, I might be pretty strong... but also, even now, I feel so empty sometimes.

My existence... Undead are really like this, huh?

I am glad that Lucifer and Partner were able to evolve into “living” species.

Perhaps they no longer feel this emptiness anymore... I hope.

Will I really be able to evolve into something that can be alive? I have no body unlike them.

What flesh can I even get? What can I even become now?

I wish I could remember who I was... I wish... I could remember the face of my family.

Without realizing it, I was crying.

Are these tears... even real?

“Maria...”

Suddenly, I heard the voice of Lucifer behind me, and I saw him, Partner, and Emeraldine.

Chapter 396 You Fill My Void

—

The trio quickly sat down near me, Lucifer sat behind me and Partner and Emeraldine to the left and right. I told them I wanted to have some time alone by myself, but they ended getting in here and following me around.

“Master, why are you crying?” Asked Partner while getting saddened herself.

"I-It's nothing..." I said, quickly cleaning the tears from my eyes. It felt surreal to even be able to cry while I was a ghost... I suppose I've become something more than one, but I am still dead.

"Are you sad about your brother?" Asked Emeraldine. "W-We'll make sure to find him, please, have faith in us as well... I promise you we'll find him."

Emeraldine looked at me her almost angelic eyes, as she held my hands tightly. She was so warm that it comforted me ever so slightly.

"It's okay... I know you'll help me. I am just silly. I was just... crying because I am silly." I sighed.

"I am sure that his state is troubling your heart quite a lot, Maria. However... I know there might be something else troubling you. Can you tell us?" Lucifer asked respectfully, petting my shoulders.

"I... Well, I was just thinking about a few things... I am just frustrated I don't remember a single thing about my family... Not even their faces. I know the tragedy that happened to my parents but even then... I lack the knowledge of why I loved them so much for this resentment and madness to continue to grow inside of my soul the more I learn about the injustices they went through." I said.

"It's just... there's this emptiness that it is so hard to get out of me, it keeps looming over my life, each time I try to relax, this feeling comes back... I... It must be related to the true nature of my existence. Ghosts are like this, we keep our souls in the mortal world by cursing ourselves, our anger, resentment, and fury continues to boil almost endlessly, as we evolve, this curse evolves with us. I am forever a cursed being... I might never stop feeling this empty, I might... never stop feeling so terrible with myself."

"Master... I never imagined you were feeling this way..." Partner said.

"Have you... been hiding this from us?" Asked Emeraldine.

"I didn't wanted to worry you about my personal problems... After all, it's just all drama that shouldn't even be bothering anybody of you... They're all my problems, I know I should simply carry them with myself." I sighed, looking at my own foot.

“What? No! You shouldn’t do that...!” Said Partner. “Y-You should tell me- us. I-I... I love you very much so I want to know what’s troubling you so I can... help however I can, even if it might be a little, I want to help.”

“Partner is right. You shouldn’t keep this away from us.” Emeraldine replied. “After I’ve entrusted you my heart, the least I would expect from you is that you would also do the same...”

“Maria, don’t fear our reaction to such things. We won’t find it “useless drama” at all. We are past the point where we joked about things, and we are way past the point where I was trying to simply not have relationships because I resigned to be an Undead. Now that I’ve become something more at your side, the only purpose I have is to see you happy... I only want to see you smile. I had long ago... given up to most of my desires while I remained sealed and then slowly rotted to death. You... You were the one that brought life to me for the first time in hundreds of years.” Lucifer said with a calm smile.

“You guys...” I sighed, as I suddenly feel the embrace of Lucifer’s large arms, and then of Partner and Emeraldine’s thin arms, their warmth slowly began to cover my entire body.

I couldn’t help it anymore; I couldn’t contain it. I began to cry again, like a baby. Like the silly woman I am. I let it all out and put my face over Lucifer’s chest while they all hugged me tightly.

“I’m sorry... I should had told you about how I felt...”

“It’s alright.” Emeraldine said motherly, as she caressed my head.

“Yeah, it is okay.” Partner replied quickly after.

“Were you containing these tears all this time?” Lucifer asked.

“Maybe...” I sighed.

“It must be hard... You’re indeed a very unique being. But I am sure that there is a path you have yet to take.” Said Lucifer.

"A path?" I asked.

"Evolution is not a linear thing, Maria. There are paths. Until now, you've been choosing the path to power, but there are many other paths. The path to power has worsened your curse, but it has given you the strength to survive and protect those close to you, right?" Asked Lucifer.

"R-Right..." I sighed.

"You may say you're dead, but to me, you're the liveliest person I've ever met in my entire life." Said Lucifer.

"I think the same. I've never met someone like you either, Maria... You even told us you have memories of living in another world completely different than this one. You're someone very unique..." Emeraldine said.

"Without you, I wouldn't be alive right now, Master... I was created from the bones you left behind, but I feel like... I've always been your other half. I want to complement all the things you lack, and help you feel whole again." Partner said.

"You guys are getting too corny... I am dying of embarrassment..."

"That's good then." Lucifer said. "You should choose your path wisely the next time you manage to evolve, Maria. There is a path that might bring the wish you desire, you have to embrace such a path though, and perhaps, even lose something in exchange... However, at the end, that might be what will finally make you feel complete once more. Until then, we'll dedicate ourselves to make you feel better. And even after that, we'll continue doing so."

"Damn you, you're so good with words..." I sighed. "Well, okay! I get it... Now let's go to the farm already. I am done crying like a baby... As long as I got you with me, I think I can do anything."

I guess I am really a lucky ghost to have the three of them at my side.

Chapter 397 There's Nothing Better Than Farming To Relax!

A vast field expanded before my vision, as rich soil emanated a small aura of mana that made it sparkle. Despite the unforgiving cold of the outside world, the greenhouse interior was rather temperate and slightly warm, this was all thanks to the magic crystals and fire-attribute spirit stones used in the construction of these buildings, which make them so they remain warm inside, an ideal temperature to combat the ice cold from the outside. The plants also feel better in here than outside, where only pine trees can survive the cold so much.

“The dwarves did an amazing job in these greenhouses! They’re so big and warm... It feels completely different than in the outside world.” Said Emeraldine, feeling way happier in this area.

“Yeah, this is way better.” Partner sighed.

“Well, for now, we should start with the basics!” The goblin chief said, commanding the group of people. Goblins, although nomadic in nature, were also proficient farmers. Apparently the chief used to live in another town where they settled for years by raising plants in the rich soil, these plants were infused with their Mana and grew abnormally fast as well.

“The wife of the Elder used to be a proficient Druid. She was a woman connected to nature. It was thanks to her that we learned the ways of Mana Infusion in plants, and she helped us rise them for many years.” The Chief said.

“Oh, so that’s what it was...” I said. “She must have been an amazing woman.”

“She really was!” The chief said.

The chief quickly decided to lead us into how to prepare the soil. We all grabbed farming tools that the dwarves already crafted with iron ingots they got from melting any tool we have found around, mostly rusted stuff, and shaped them into farming tools.

“With that shovel, bring the soil up from the ground so the nutrients below the soil are exposed. Like this!” the chief said, hitting the soil with the shovel and then gently upping a large piece of soil, rolling it out as if it were a pancake. The rich soil from below, which was sparkling even more, was revealed. This

was probably the ideal soil to put the seeds on. if you leave the seeds over the dry and nutrient-less soil, it won't grow into a plant at all. "It take some practice to do it right but try it out!"

"Alright! Heave ho!" I cried, graving my shovel and then delicate pushing up the ground. "Nnggh...!"

POOF!

Suddenly, over a meter of dirt was lifted off the ground.

"Oops..."

"Y-You have to control your strength a bit more, lady." Said the chief. "Come on, put that back, that won't do."

"Sorry!" I cried. "I am usually super weak physically, how come I am so strong with this? I can't control my strength?"

"Erm, how much Strength stat do you have, Lady Maria?" Asked the chief, while everybody else looked at me.

"Erm... I think it is over 15000? Not much, right? Lucifer has over forty thousand." I said while nodding.

"F-Fifteen thousand Strength?!" The chief suddenly dropped over his butt. "I-I only have barely a thousand..."

"Oh? You have? But haven't you been growing stronger?" I wondered.

"Yeah... but not as much, lady Maria..." Sighed the chief, as he quickly stood up again, everybody was looking at me with strangely new eyes.

"Not only she's amazing at magic, but she's also a monster in strength as well.."

“Our lady is truly an all-rounder. Is there something she can’t do?”

“Indeed, there is nothing!”

“You guys realize I am failing at this farming stuff, right?” I sighed.

And like that, I kept practicing and trying, until finally, something remotely similar to the technique that the Chief did was finally made. It was barely that, and it took me more effort than I had ever expected.

“Phew... GEH?!”

However, I already saw that my line of the field was way behind everybody else, as I saw the chief at the front while everybody else was following him quickly, even Lucifer, Emeraldine, and Partner were doing better than me?!

Am I the only one that just sucks at farming?!

“There’s no way I am going to lose to you all!”

I roared my lungs out, unleashing my fury. I infused Mana into the Shovel and then began to repeat the same thing I did before, finally replicating it almost perfectly! This was all thanks to my amazing memory and the ability to insert motion memory into my body because my soul contained all of my mind, and because my entire body is my soul, this wasn’t so hard to pull out.

POOF! POOF! POOF!

I continued moving the soil as I moved forward, quickly catching up with everybody else and coming right after the chief.

“I did it! Ugh... I feel mentally exhausted... Repeating the same motion over and over again is really a pain.” I sighed.

“S-So fast!” The chief muttered. “Excellent work, Lady Maria! ...However, you kind of messed up a bit.” The chief pointed behind me as I realize di had left an enormous hole through the entire line... I had not done it correctly at all.

Maybe I applied too much force as well, I shouldn’t had put mana into the shovel.

“Ugh, let me do it again...”

At the end, a few hours went by and I finally kind of learned a bit about how to do it. I had also calmed down my anxiety a bit and learned to remain calm and serene while controlling my own strength, so it wouldn’t get out of control.

And at the of that, we decided to take a small rest while Emeraldine and a few other magicians with her affinity began to work. They channeled a domain of life and nature with her help, as her two spirits began to float around the entire field, blessing it. The seeds for the plants were already planted, so they quickly received the blessing of the spirits.

Ding!

[You learned the [Farming: Lv1] Skill]

[You acquired the [Little Farmer: Lv1] Title Skill]

Oh?!

Chapter 398 New Farming Skills & Emeraldine's A Magic Teacher?!

—

As if rewarding me for a day of a lot of efforts, the System suddenly showed up two new Skills! Farming and... Little Farmer? So that’s a Title, huh. But didn’t I learned it too fast this time around? I am fairly sure that I am not that good at it to learn it so quickly. So why?

[After your last evolution, the Soul Grimoire had also evolved]

[Now it has become easier to acquire Skills that were harder to acquire before. Due to your strong affinity with death and darkness, it was particularly harder to learn things such as Farming-type Skills, which require some affinity with nature]

[After seeing the performance of Emeraldine, you've gained a slight amount of the comprehension of nature and life, so you've learned the two Skills quickly after]

[As the System's voice, I didn't simply granted them to you, this is merely your talents awakening within your Soul Grimoire]

"Oooh! I see..." I said silently. "Welp, let's check what these new "Talents" are all about..."

--

[Farming: Lv1]

A Skill learned after arduous hours of farming and mastering the art of planting and harvesting. While farming, this Skill grants a +30% enhancement in proficiency and mastery over farming tools while also giving a greater insight at looking at plants and detecting soil's richness. Mana can also be used to enchant Plants and increase their growth speed. However, if overused, it might be detrimental to the plants, or even mutate them into plant-type monsters.

--

Eh? So this makes me better at farming? Well thanks! With this I can detect the soil's richness, and even how plants are doing and everything else... Hell, I can even enchant them with my Mana even when my mana is dark and death attribute? Maybe by using this Skill, the mana goes back to being attribute-less?

--

[Little Farmer: Lv1]

A Title given to a small-time novice farmer that has worked very hard on their farm. The wielder of this Title acquires an enhancement of +20% more proficiency at farming and using farming tools, while also being able to detect and appraise plants, the higher the level, the better the effects and the more higher ranked plants can be appraised. Additionally, there's a small chance that plants planted by the user of this title might end up evolving into magical plants.

Oh, this one is similar to the Farming Skill, I guess. However, there's a few certain things that make it different thought, such as Plant Appraisal. I guess that would be more useful to a real farmer because I got my System Analysis that can pretty much analyze anything around me with ease. But this small chance to turn a plant into a magical plant seems pretty interesting! If I can continue doing this farming work and level these Skills up, there might be some chance that a plant turn magical or something, and it might have special properties.

"Well, this really put a smile on my face." I sighed with a slight nod, as I moved outside of the greenhouse after we finished watering the plants. There were still several more greenhouses we had to attend, so after a quick lunch where I put my [Cooking] Skill to good use until it leveled up again out of the sudden, we went to attend the other farms.

I felt as if I was slowly accumulating more experience as a farmer, and the Skills really upped my ability to comprehend these techniques I had so little talent over. When they day had ended, both Skills had gained a level, and I couldn't help but feel happy over my hard work.

With that done, we moved back home to have some dinner. This time I decided to prepare the meat of the giant lizards we fought before, their meat was rather flavorful, but it was very tough, so I had to use a hammer to smash it so it would become softer and loose out into the roughness.

Nonetheless, I also used their bones to make some delicious broth, which I mixed with veggies and small chunks of meat. With the help of Emeraldine and Partner that had become more interested into cooking with me, we made up a delicious dinner.

Now that people had become more independent, we are no longer preparing communal food, and everyone seems capable of preparing their own three meals a day for their families. I owe this to the dwarves as well, as they had crafted a lot of plates and cooking utensils, alongside building furnaces and kitchens inside most houses, they're amazing architects, forgers, and literally everything else. I am way too lucky to have them with me.

And well, because of this, we got all the good for ourselves, we cooked only for the four of us- no, six of us. The twins are obviously living with us as they're literally our adopted children, so the two also dine with us, have lunch, and most of the time spend their day with us. However, Laura had become interested in learning about this world some more and also about magic usage, so she and Takeshi had begun to learn how to read with the help of Emeraldine.

"Big sis, can we learn magic tomorrow? We don't really know much..." Laura said as she drank some soup.

"Yeah! Magic!" Said Takeshi.

"Erm... Well, I am not that good at teaching it... I got a cheat skill that allow me to use it without even learning how to use it." I said.

"Eh?! Is that your Unique Skill?" Asked Laura.

"One of them... Sorry, I might seem proficient, but I kind of suck at actually teaching it." I laughed a bit.

"Well, I can teach you the basics, children. I might even teach you as well, Maria. I believe you could learn more magic if you perfect the craft and learn its true principles." Emeraldine said.

"Oh?! I never thought of you as a magic teacher. Sure, I'll join the classes and see what's up." I said with a nod, enjoying the grilled fillet covered in gravy.

Chapter 399 Magic Classes

—

"I hate to admit it, Maria, but magic is not your thing." Emeraldine said reluctantly. "Somehow, despite being able to conjure "magic" with your Unique Skill, if you try any traditional approach you just... you simply can't."

"Eh?!"

I was currently inside a large room within the Demon King's Castle. Yesterday Emeraldine had said she would include me in the Magic Conjunction Classes. There were several people with talent for that, some adults, and some children. Even my twins were here learning magic!

However, things ended turning badly as I tried using the conjurations, which were a complicated mess to use! You have to somehow combine runes you create through words and then gather them inside a magic circle... and then infuse mana again to create magic! Seriously?! How can I do that in just a few seconds like Emeraldine does?

She gets help from the Spirits, of course! S-So that's why I am failing there!

...Or I am just relying on my Unique Skills so much that my actual talent for magic is just atrophied.

That's also a possibility.

"I-I've already made you try the lowest possible Darkness Attribute Spell, Black Dot, and you still can't bring it traditionally... I would say your Magic is something akin to what I would call "Imagination Magic" which is still fairly limited. You can intuitively learn and use magic spells of your attributes." Said Emeraldine. "But traditional spell casting, with its intricacies and more, seems hopeless for you."

"Ugh... You're so ruthless with me..." I sighed, feeling down. I wanted to use traditional magic because I had heard that if I combine it with Skills, even stronger magic can come out. However, it appears I am terribly untalented at it.

"Auntie, look!" Takeshi called me, as he suddenly generated a basic magic circle, and then another, and another. His limit was three, and they all shone bright blue. In mere seconds, three spears made of water emerged. "I learned Spiraling Water Spear!"

“G-Good job, Takeshi! I am so proud of you...!” I said while containing my disappointment on myself for being outperformed by a child. Takeshi seemed to be naturally gifted with good memory and magic comprehension, so he was able to bring out magic easily.

“And this too!”

Suddenly, he conjured Darkness Magic, several small spheres of darkness named Black Dot, which can be used as small bullets. They all floated around his other hand. Wow, this child was a genius magician! And he still got that magical fishing rod thingy too...

“I seem to also have Darkness Attribute affinity!” Laura quickly spoke after Takeshi, as if she wanted my attention or that of Emeraldine. She went one step ahead, generating arrows made of darkness and then conjuring floating Fireballs. “And Fire!”

“That’s amazing... Well done, Laura!” I said with a forced smile.

Wow, must be nice to have colorful elements such as Water and Fire! I only got dark, dark, and more dark- Well, actually, I have Darkness, Death, Poison, and Illusion.

But even trying my best affinity, Darkness, was futile. So trying the other elements through a traditional way would be probably quite hopeless. I just suck at this.

“Children, it seems all of you are quite good at this!” Emeraldine said, quickly trying to ignore my gloomy face as she praised everybody else. Everyone except me managed to bring out their magic potential and got new Skills out of it. I even saw some with Life and Light Magic, we had more variety than we thought.

“Yaaaay!”

Everyone seemed happy about their lessons and continued practicing magic. Emeraldine was quite versed for someone that can only use Light and Nature elements. It seems she had learned a lot back in her village, and with the many books I had stolen before, we had a lot of source for the creation of magic circles of various elements.

When Classes ended, Emeraldine sat down at my side and began caressing my head as if I was a lost puppy or something. I might be slightly sad again but not for her to just pity me!

"It's alright, we can keep trying tomorrow." Emeraldine said with a gentle smile.

"Ugh... Okay." I sighed.

Honestly I didn't wanted to continue trying. It was getting stressful... But I can't say no to that smile.

"I believe your talent at using traditional magic has simply been... slightly atrophied." Said Emeraldine. "I am sure that you'll eventually awaken it. In that moment, when you merge your Magic Skills with Traditional Magic Circles, you will be able to unleash even stronger magic, and also make it more complicated, surpassing what you can actually imagine within the limits of your powers."

Emeraldine seemed very decided to teach me magic, I wasn't going to be able to escape from her grasp, no matter how hard I would try.

"Okay, teacher, I'll do my best. Are there any books with Death, Poison, and Illusion Magic spells?" I wondered. "My imagination regarding them is limited to be honest. I need a bit more of examples to increase what I can bring with them."

"Ah yes! Are you going to study? Then these, this one as well! And this!" Emeraldine threw a pile of five books over my desk. "These should be good!"

"A-Ah... I guess I will, thank you." I sighed, grabbing them, and storing them inside my Inventory.

I suppose delving in the true origins of magic, how people discovered it alongside their Soul Books, and everything else, will be rather important for me to figure out ways to make my magic even stronger than merely leveling up. We'll be going to the Dwarf territory in about a month from now, so I'll use this opportunity to grow stronger as much as I can.

Monsters around here are rare though, and if we find them, they give pitiful amounts of EXP as well. Slaying my Dungeon Monsters also give pitiful amounts of EXP, so there's no other way for me than to

sit and wait for a challenge to come my way one day. I believe the Dwarves might have some dungeons there.

Chapter 400 A Hard Week And A Helpful Skill

It has been roughly a week since the first magic classes with Emeraldine, I've not only reading these books over and over again, but I've also helped her and the other people at the Greenhouses Fields, which had already begun to sprout with life as multiple plants began to grow. They were growing incredibly fast, a single week for them to grow up to twenty centimeters wasn't something normal at all, and I blamed Emeraldine's Magic and her Spirits alongside my own Skills I had acquired [Farming] and the [Little Farmer] Title, both boosted plant growth and even had a chance to turn the plant magical.

...Which actually seems to be happening. A few dozen of these plants were slowly turning brighter and sparkling with light. I was actually quite shocked at first when I saw them, but they were growing abnormally faster, and their entire bodies were shining as if they were an Atelier Game material ready to pick up. However, I had to contain my desire to take them out of the ground and check their qualities, as Emeraldine wanted to see how far they could grow.

The plants that turned magical were all the most basic things, such as potatoes, carrots, some onions, and tomato fruits. Thanks to magic, plant growth is accelerated so they probably don't need to wait for spring to blossom and summer to give out fruits. Of course, as long as it is not cold enough, potatoes, carrots, and onions, which are tubers, can easily grow and be eaten without having to wait for them to produce seeds or something.

According to Emeraldine, who was rather good at this as well due to her village doing farming for self-sustenance, veggies that grow underground usually grow in "colonies" of many small clones, as they're connected to the roots. Usually you'll cut down the bigger ones to eat and leave the smaller ones back to the ground so they can continue growing and at the same time produce more offshoots.

That said, I've also been studying diligently. I've been reading several books concentrated for a while, not only those of magic but I also put the time and effort to read other things, researching the world, its various continents, the people that lives here, and more. Although this information seems outdated, it gave me a general feeling of things that I lacked before. Alongside that, of course, I also studied magic circles. Thanks to Emeraldine's recommendations, I began memorizing the magic circles with surprisingly good results. Thanks to the [Parallel Mind] Skill I had, I suddenly realized I had kind of an amazing photographic memory.

Although I cannot completely understand or comprehend complicated magic right away, if I memorize how the things look and the text that explains them, I can always recall it inside of my mind, trying to figure out this advanced math-like magical formula. But god, I was bad at math. I've been trying my best and even after a week, there are no results at all, but I think that soon enough, I might grasp True Magic.

Meanwhile, I've been trying to figure out the creation of new Skills as the System had told me, my priority was Alchemy, but Emeraldine had been busy dealing with teaching magic for the entire week, and because she's not a tireless undead or something, after she was done she would have dinner and then go to sleep at our bed. I couldn't really bring myself to force her to help me learn the Skill, so I decided to wait for her.

But ultimately, as I spent another night reading books and trying to grasp something...

Ding!

[You have acquired the [Bookworm: Lv1] Title Skill]

"Eh?! What's with this stupid Title? And why did it took so long?" I wondered.

[Some Skills have better affinities than others]

"But didn't you said I could learn Skills way easier now?"

[Indeed, this is a Skill you would had never been able to learn, your affinity with books and reading is just terrible]

"..."

That really broke my heart.

The System is really ruthless sometimes, damn bastard.

Also this is just another Title that is making fun of me, but even those got some interesting effects, so let's see this one...

[Bookworm: Lv1]

A Title Skill acquired by someone that has read so many books that they don't know anything else in life than reading and simply thinking about books and staying inside a library. Aside from becoming a weirdo, it increases your Reading Comprehension of any Book you're reading by +50% (With an additional +10% with each Title Skill Level). You might also develop the ability to write, maybe.

"Eh?! Isn't this just really making fun of me?! System, did you wrote the description?"

[...]

"Silence, huh?! Bastard... You're getting really cocky lately!"

[...]

"Hah~ It's hopeless to argue with him." I sighed, looking back at the Title Skill.

Come to think of it, it is not bad at all. +50% Reading Comprehension is an insane boost. It was probably like 1% before seeing how slow I am, but now that I got an insane 51%, things might change for the better now! Let's continue reading books! I might even write my own book about being a Ghost to the masses.

...Well, yeah, no. I better not do that.

I looked into the window and it was still dark, it might be around 4 AM right now... I better go back to reading. A benefit of being a ghost is that as long as I don't use too much Mana, I can keep myself awake all I want without feeling tired or sleepy.

As the hours went by and I saw Emeraldine moving around my bed with Partner who usually rolled over the bed like tens of times every night, I continued reading.

For some times, I looked back at them and saw Lucifer sleeping on his own smaller bed. He had requested a personal bed for himself to be put at the side of mine, as he didn't wanted to sleep with the other girls. I guess he just wants his own space.

When it was already 10 AM, I closed the book I was reading and suddenly felt something.

It was like... a spark!