

A Ghost 61

Chapter 61

The night continued after we arrived, and we celebrated by eating all sorts of stuff. We still wanted to save some for later, especially for the Goblins, who now had so many mouths to feed... but we still took some food so we could celebrate eating tasty meals. There was Salami, which was very tasty, and even some cheese, which I made into a sandwich with the bread and then warmed over a grill. The result? Molten cheese sandwich with salami. So simple yet so good... There was also booze for everyone, and it tasted extra good with such an amazing sandwich.

The people around us ended up looking at me as I enjoyed this preparation which they had never seen before, and I ended up making way more than I expected. The people loved it, but it was costly, especially because they could not make their own bread, cheese, or Salami... Nevertheless, I believe that it is good to enjoy life's little moments, so everyone enjoyed the crunchy grilled cheese sandwiches that I made for them. They can still sustain themselves by eating grains they had begun to plant from what the merchant had, and hunting is also a good option at the moment as wild boars are not rare around here.

As we all enjoyed the meals, which included a lot of grilled boar, fish, and stew, I sat down with my friends. The goblin chief and Gofumin were here too, alongside Emeraldine and some of the former slaves.

"So what do you plan to do, Maria?" Asked Emeraldine.

"Oh, well, we already defeated that asshole, and the perimeter is mostly cleansed, so we are planning on leaving in a couple of days. We want to make extra sure that you guys can handle things yourselves, so we'll cleanse the area some more in order to get rid of anything suspicious and quite possibly help you out with some other stuff," I explained.

"Eeeh? You're leaving already Auntie?" Asked Gofumin.

"Well, I have a mission to do (that of slaughtering a bunch of bastards), so I cannot stay here forever... Honestly, I would love to settle down and just survive with all of you guys. You're so nice to me... But we

have to keep going for now. I promise you that I will come back. So until then, you have to be a strong girl, like your mommy,” I encouraged her.

“You’ll come back? You promise?” Asked the little goblin girl.

She was such a cutie... we had barely stayed here for almost a week, but she had grown quite attached to me. She really needs a motherly figure, and even though her father is gentle and responsible, it is not the same as having a mommy to hug and spoil her.

“Of course!” I smiled back at her, and she tried to contain the tiny tears coming from her eyes.

“Thank you for all you’ve done, it hasn’t been long, but you’ve helped us tremendously, Maria. We swear to you our loyalty as the tribe of Goblins,” The Chief announced.

“EH? Really?”

“Indeed, you are a worthy leader for our clan,”

“W-Well... T-Thanks! But I won’t be here for a while... I will try to hurry up as much as I can though, alright?”

“Sure, we can wait,” Said the chief.

Wow, I am really becoming a Queen now... This is the ideal Isekai trope! Onwards to Kingdom Building now! ...That’s later, though.

“Hm, we have to get through a few Duchies and then assault the capital of the Kingdom, so I doubt it will take such a short time... At most, half a year... And that’s if we win,” Said Lucifer.

“Huh... D-Don’t listen to this grumpy dragon! Of course, we’ll win. I will level up and evolve a few more times along the way and then beat the big bad guy,” I said, smiling proudly at the achievements I have yet to grasp.

“And Master is not alone,” Said Partner, hugging my chest and pressing her hands over my breasts.

“Mrao!”

Kuro cutely joins the conversation.

“Yeah... Yeah! I am not alone in this. And...”

I noticed that Emeraldine looked at Partner, hugging my chest rather angrily. What’s with that look?

“M-Miss Partner, you shouldn’t be so... daring with your master... M-Maria, are you not bothered by her fondling your breasts like that?” She asked while blushing.

“I think you’re exaggerating. She’s just hugging me, Emeraldine! Right?” I asked Partner.

“Yeah! Hug...!”

Partner continued to grasp them tightly. I have very low sensitivity, and this is actually just a phantom, so it doesn’t feel bad, but I believe others might not think the same.

“She’s a degenerate woman that likes to be used like this,” Said Lucifer.

“Who are you calling degenerate?! I am going to slap your ass!” I roared.

“See?” Lucifer sighed.

“Hahaha... Lucifer, you’re so good with jokes....” Said Emeraldine.

"Ahem! A-Anyways, some people said that they would be slowly moving away as they recover, but there will also be some that will remain with us. I calculate that our population might triple... But, I will also have to encourage everyone to be more active hunters," Said the chief.

"Oh yeah, you gotta just force them to hunt if they want to stay. They have to help the village in some way. No slackers allowed! ...Oh right, Emeraldine, are you staying?" I asked.

"I-I... I wanted to talk about that... P-Partner, could you please..." Emeraldine sighed as she glanced at Partner.

"Partner, dearie, will you cut it off?" I asked.

I made my eyes glow more than usual in order to get her to respect me a bit more.

"A-Ah... S-Sorry master... I just like to hug and touch you...." She muttered.

"Aw... You're forgiven!" I said as I pet her.

"W-Well, Maria..." Emeraldine spoke up once again.

"Yes?"

"I... I want to move out too...." She said.

"Really?"

"W-With you! Can I join your party?" She asked.

"Eh?!"

Everyone ended up staring at her dumbfoundedly.

Maybe she doesn't know the extreme danger of my mission?

Chapter 62

Is Emeraldine okay in the head? Why is she asking to join my party? She's a cute and weak elf... She'll die!

"Emeraldine, I would suggest you go back to Affnaria instead... Our journey is dangerous, and what we are planning to do... is not something that is necessarily correct," I explained.

"But... I agree with some of your thoughts... I also think that this Kingdom is rotten... How can it be so terribly guarded that they let citizens be kidnapped as if it was nothing? I... I want to help you make a change!" She said.

"That is... not really what I am going for. I am not trying to make a change for the Kingdom. What I want is purely selfish revenge... I want to slaughter those that planned the horrible death of my parents and made my life a living hell,"

"I-I see..."

"As you can see... I am not a normal person. I am not a human anymore either... I am a monster—a Ghost—an undead, and so are my three allies. We live in this mortal world attached to our negative desires and emotions. Our drive to kill and avenge those we lost... We are not normal people. And to be honest, we are all insane... You're still sane, dear... you have much to live for. But, I can give you the money so you can have a comfortable life for a couple of years in Affnaria. You don't need to come with us and risk your life," I said.

"..."

Emeraldine looked down rather thoughtfully. Her eyes seemed to be bubbling with emotions.

“Well, we guessed as much,” Said the goblin chief.

“Yeah, it was quite obvious she was like a ghost or something,”

“Indeed,”

Most of the goblins around us already kind of suspected me of being a ghost of sorts.

“You’re weak, elf. You will die if you go at our pace. Accept her offer and be done with this,” Lucifer bluntly suggested.

“Master doesn’t need you,” Said Partner as she was a bit jealous again.

“You don’t have to be so rude, you know?” I said.

“No...”

Emeraldine suddenly said something.

“Eh?”

“I... I want to go anyways... I want to accompany you, and I want to repay you for everything you’ve done for me... for everyone... I have my own abilities too... I can be useful... I even know healing magic and spirit magic, and archery! I... I can show you that I can grow stronger in these days before you leave....” She muttered.

Ah, she really wants to come with me... But why? This is a bit nonsensical, but she’s so dead set on it that it is a bit intimidating.

“Show me? Do you want to train? ...Fine, we’ll stay for one week here. Show me how strong you can grow in that time, and then I will decide if it is enough to come with us or not... But... you’re just recovering, I don’t know if it’s okay to-”

“It’s okay! I will do it!” She said as she tightly grasped my hands, approaching her face to mine.

“I promise you I will do it... I want to become someone worthy to be at your side, Maria....”

Wow, such conviction! Is she an anime main character?!

“F-Fine, I get it!” I gave in and even blushed a bit as she was way too close.

She slowly moved away, and I saw Partner gritting her teeth in anger.

“Thank you... My mother once told me that... When I found someone truly admirable and worthy of being followed, I should never let them go... No matter what,” She said.

“Your mother... Oh, she was the royal guard of your elven kingdom, right?”

“Indeed. It is something I’ve held in my heart ever since then. She’s an honorable woman... And she died honorably too...”

Wow, I never thought Elves held so much warrior’s honor. I guess these guys go completely against the trope, huh. And despite being so cute, Emeraldine is shifting more onto the tomboyish side.

“I see... I guess you can do whatever you want. I cannot stop you... Go ahead and show me your resolve in this single week, Emeraldine. You’re so set on it that I am actually looking forward to it!” I said.

“T-Thank you... I will do my best,” She responded.

I moved near her and hugged her.

“But don’t push yourself too hard though, okay?”

“Uwaahhh... O-Okay...”

She got incredibly red as I hugged her.

“Fufu, what’s wrong? You don’t like hugs?”

“I-Its not that... Y-Your... chest is rubbing on my face....”

“Oh,”

I quickly pulled her off as my breasts were pressing on her face.

My bad. I should have visualized them smaller... But I was always so flat in my previous life that I created a complex and wanted them as big as a mommy... I guess fulfilling my wish comes with disadvantages...

“Y-You should be more mindful... Maria... B-But it is not as if I mind being hugged by you,” She said.

“Oh, sorry about that... Anyways! Let’s forget about the gloomy atmosphere, and let’s celebrate! Everyone, let’s drink booze until we drop dead!”

“Aye, aye!”

“That’s the stuff!”

“Maria, you’re way too good!”

“Drink! Drink! Drink!”

The Goblins cheered for me as I began to drink a wine glass in a single shot. Lucifer was facepalming, while Partner and Emeraldine were looking at me with fascinated eyes.

“Phew... Uegh, this one felt a bit stronger....”

I didn’t get drunk, but I was able to feel a bit of the toxicity that it had... And it had way too much alcohol. Quite the cheap booze, but it still does an excellent job at making me feel a bit good. And that’s what matters! We celebrated until very late at night, and I eventually decided to go take a nap in my own tent that I was given. When I realized Partner and Emeraldine had sneaked to each side of my bed, they were sleeping soundly.

Uwah, two cute girls are sandwiching me...

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Chapter 63

??? POV

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“My lord, there is news... regarding Affnaria,

A subordinate interrupts my concentration as he speaks about that accursed duchy.

“What is it this time? I have already been told that the tomb of the dark witch was robbed, that the duke and two aristocrats that were our biggest buyers were assassinated, and that the whole library was robbed... Oh right, and how the dungeon that awakened there ended being a complete disappointment, with barely any monsters spawning and had an F-Rank in Mana Production... What else could have happened now?”

I was very pissed, honestly. I have been living for hundreds of years, and even then, I am considered a young Vampire by the standards of my ancestors, but I've never had as many headaches as of now.

Affnaria... By merely hearing that name, I want to break this desk into pieces.

All of a sudden... this servant is looking like a very good punching bag...

But I contained my anger. It is not good to treat those that serve me badly, or at least not without a good reason.

He is not at fault for this after all, right? Indeed. I am a benevolent man.

"Greegggh...! Aagghhh...! P-Please... M-My lord... Aghhh..."

Oh. I guess I began strangling him without realizing it.

I quickly let him go.

"Hahh... Hahhh... Ungh..."

"Now tell me what it is if you don't want to become my hand's best friend once more," I said as I was still somewhat angered.

"Y-Yes... This... there is very bad news! The Necromancer that was performing his duties as a Miasma Potion creator was... killed...."

"What?"

This Necromancer, whose name I already don't remember, was a crucial pawn. He generated black potions for us to sell to the aristocrats of the duchies.

“Uaaggh... Gggeeggh...”

Ah, I guess I began to strangle him again.

“My bad,”

I let him go.

“Who killed him? And why? What is going on now? I want answers,” I demanded.

“Y-Yes...! H-He was killed by a group of mysterious individuals... A woman, a man, and... another woman. They looked utterly pale and dead-like, and one of them, a woman who led them, had the power to control shadows and death incredibly well... also, the man was a dragon, apparently. And the other woman might have been a dhampir of sorts.”

“What?! A shadow necromancer, a dragon, and... dhampir?! What a horrid combination. Of course they could have blown off his head easily... That is a terrible match. Wait, how did they find him?! I am already very frustrated, you know? I am trying my hardest to contain this anger boiling inside of me, so be good and quickly tell me,”

“Greaaggh...! Let me go... Please... Aaggh...”

I guess I am beginning to become uncontrollable.

Once more, I began to strangle the subordinate.

I should really try to calm my anger; I have problems with it.

I quickly let him go, and thankfully, he is a Subordinate Vampire, so he can take as many strangles as I want.

"Please, my lord, stop strangling me for everything I say...." He muttered.

"Speak already if you don't want me to kick your head in the opposite direction,"

"Y-Yes! W-We were able to find out about them due to the video runes within the cave where this necromancer lived... but they were destroyed recently, so we can't see anymore. We don't know why they did it... but perhaps they wanted to free the slaves... We don't know where they are now either," He sighed.

Ah, it had to be like this... It had to be the worst situation, huh?

Thankfully, I always have a plan B.

"One is down, but there are more alchemists capable of making miasma potions. They're our greatest strength-boosting drug, so keep making them and send a team to investigate this group's footsteps. I want their heads served on a platter,"

"Yes, my lord, thank you very much for not strangling me again,"

"Now go if you don't want me to do it again."

"S-Sorry!"

The little man ran away.

CLAAASH!

Suddenly, my desk is torn apart. What has happened?

Oh right, I guess my hands did this as I tried to rest them... so annoying.

I guess I do not realize what I am capable of sometimes. It is good that the subordinate ran away, or I would have crushed his head by accident.

But... what an interesting discovery, to think that these three clowns would try to take down my factory of potions just because they're playing the heroes. Foolish mortals.

I seriously can't understand them, they're so strong, yet they're bothering themselves with rescuing a band of miserable and unfortunate souls? Who would do this in this day and age? Not even their own humans, not even the knights, not even the Kingdom cares about them.

If a normal citizen is taken as a slave, who would care? Nobody, so why do they care? What kind of deal are they doing? What do they get back from this?

Perhaps they wanted the slaves for themselves? It is a possibility. After all, they're high-quality slaves. Many would kill for one of them, so I suppose it is completely understandable that they might want one for themselves.

Slaves that are former citizens specialized in alchemy or other jobs are always more valuable.

Or... they're simply doing a good deed for self-satisfaction?

I am already filled with too many things to do to bother with these foolish idiots, so I will leave the work to that team that will be formed. Hopefully, they can take care of them for me.

And if not... well, I will have to do something else...

Hmm, the interesting thing is that this is happening right outside of Affnaria.

As if everything was somewhat connected together.

Do these individuals have anything to do with the recent events?

I do wonder...

Chapter 64

Since that day, Emeraldine changed. I thought she was the delicate type of girl, but she showed me that she had a very blazing spirit deep down, like that of a warrior. The moment I told her that she had to show me how strong she could grow in a week, she began to work harder than ever. She woke up early in the morning, around 4 AM, and began to do exercises...

Indeed, the beautiful and cute elf was doing sit-ups, squats, push-ups, and running around for around two hours straight without stopping. After that, she stretched her body for half an hour, and then, she took a bath with cold water in the lake and used a bow to hunt in the forest alone.

After two hours of hunting by herself, she brought ten-horned rabbits and even a tiny wolf.

Wow, so efficient! What the heck?! How were these bandits able to restrain her if she was so strong?

Actually... horned rabbits are easy to catch, and even goblin children capture them, so I guess it is not so crazy.

She had some scars on her thighs and arms, so the wolf had bitten and most likely slashed her, but she had healing magic, so she just healed herself and continued her hunt... That's why she only had scars and not open wounds.

Still, it was a bit worrying...

Nonetheless, she gained two levels from it, reaching Level 8.

Unlike pure monsters such as me, Lucifer, or Partner, demi-humans have a variety of ways of growing stronger. They can pick a Job through a special Job-changing crystal inside an Adventurer Guild, and through leveling using that Job, they get extra stats and new Job-exclusive Skills. However, these Jobs can also be taken out and replaced as they progress, depending on how strong the Job was.

Taking it out might reduce their stats as the Jobs evolve with them and grant more stats the higher level they are, but these stats are also bonuses that can also be taken out when the job is replaced by another. The job-exclusive skill can also be taken out unless the user of that Job has completely mastered the skill, in which case they can learn it permanently, alongside a title skill. But aside from Jobs, demi-humans can also evolve.

Majin are said to be beings between monster and demi humans, and therefore, they can evolve and change jobs at the same time. Beast-kin are the same, and similar beings such as Vampires, Werewolves, and even Goblins... However, their evolutions are limited compared to the variety that actual monsters can achieve.

I guess it is a way to balance them? I don't really know....

And between Demi-humans, it is usually impossible to evolve. They can improve themselves through Jobs alone, which is more than enough, but Majin can evolve a couple of times through their development, hastening their maturity and having the edge over them.

I suppose this eventual fear of Majin growing stronger was what made Humanity fight against their expanding Demon Kingdom. However, there are sometimes exceptions, which are called special evolutions. Non-human demi-humans can sometimes evolve too, even if they don't know how. It just happens. Often when they reach a level of power, that vastly changes their appearance.

Elves have been seen to be able to evolve into Fairies, Dryads, or even their dark versions, such as Dark Elves, Nightmare Fairies, and so on... but they're usually scarce individuals. Some powerful elves can live their entire lives fighting and leveling up but never evolve. And due to this, I wonder if Emeraldine could evolve. I guess we'll have to see, but getting two levels in the morning was quite impressive.

I learned this information from Lucifer himself, who had been hunting around these last days, as he wanted to get enough EXP to reach max level and evolve. He had been doing it accompanied by all of us, Kuro included.

I had tried to aid Emeraldine in her hunting, but Lucifer stopped me, telling me that she was undergoing a trial for herself. If I were to help her, the entire intention of the trial would be lost. And so, I saw her exercise and go hunting every day while she interacted with us and spoke about a few things. It was still hard for her to open up to us, but she was trying.

I believe she can do it! I am rooting for her every day as she goes hunting as well!

But, I've been using Undead to guard her from afar though.

Yeeaaah... I don't want her to suddenly die.

Some bone beasts had been lurking a few meters from her as she explored, so I could keep her moderately safe. They will only interrupt if she's about to die for real. But it hasn't happened. Though, sometimes she almost dies but manages to pull through....

On the fifth day, she brought a giant wild boar... Is she a prodigy or something? What is motivating her so much?! Damn, give me some of that motivation, girl!

That day, I saw her status... She was level 16 already... but what I found weird was that there was a cap of level 20. Does she need to change Jobs again? There is no job-changing crystal in this village, so she would have to go to Affnaria to change Jobs.

Her stats had increased quite well, and she got a few new skills and titles to boot... She had gotten more expressive as well and had begun to feed me food sometimes...

"Now, Maria... Say: "Aaahh," please~"

She offered me a slice of grilled meat.

"F-Fine..."

Being served like this certainly feels odd. But I bet Lucifer would wish to have a cute girl serve him like this! Heh.

Though, Partner is now doing the same because she doesn't want to "lose" against her, or something...

And on the seventh day...

"Maria, I think I have evolved!"

Emeraldine suddenly seemed more radiant than other days... like, her hair had turned from dark blonde to a brighter yellowish white. Her eyes shone brighter than usual as well. And her presence seemed more... I don't know how to say it... Spiritual? Holy?

I guess she passed the test... I can't really reject her anymore, she really worked hard for it.

Chapter 65

Woah, woah, hold up for a second. Who's this holy elf right here?

"Maria, how do I look? Am I strong enough to be worthy of being at your side?" She asked, as she held my hands tightly and looked into my eyes.

She was so radiant that my dark composition began to tremble a bit. I think she is damaging by just touching my hands now. It was small, and I could heal myself easily, but it was a bit... well, not even painful, but it tired me and made me a bit fuzzy.

"Ughh... I feel like I am being exorcized by so much holy light...."

I dropped onto the ground, exhausted. Emeraldine suddenly changed her facial expression into that of concern and surprise.

“U-Uwah! M-Maria, are you alright?!” She asked, getting closer to me.

“I am fine. I just feel a bit dizzy. Your holy light aura is strong,” I sighed.

“L-Let me heal you...!” She said, pointing her hands at me as she conjured healing light magic.

“GYAAAH! WAIT!”

FLASH!

The holy light began to touch my body, and I started to dissipate. My HP was dropping like crazy too! I was fragile to holy light! Holy shit!

“Ahh... So this is my end... It was a fun journey, everyone....”

I smiled at everyone. I guess this was the end of my journey.

It was filled with hardships, but I guess I had my fun.

I suppose this is it...

Perhaps the purification had cleansed my mind from the negative thoughts.

I feel so in peace with myself.

“I think I am going to heaven... Partner, make sure to take care of Kuro and Lucifer for me....”

“WAIT!” Cried Partner.

“W-What the heck is going on?!” Asked Lucifer.

“MRAO!” Cried Kuro.

“Uwawawawahh...! Maria, I am sorry!” Emeraldine apologized profusely as she began to cry.

“Don’t be sorry... This is for the better... I think... I can finally rest... Take good care of everything, alright? I am counting on you.”

“NO! Please don’t die!”

“Shut up that stupid elf already! Just keep pouring death mana into her... Maria, can’t you heal yourself?!” Roared Lucifer as he, Partner, and Kuro began to shower me with their phantasmal auras.

I began to slowly feel better.

“EH? What was happening just now?” I asked.

I feel confused...

“You almost died! Damn Elf! I hate you!” Roared Partner, hitting Emeraldine in the head.

“Ouch! I am sorry... I deserve this punishment...! *Sniff*” Cried Emeraldine.

“You dork, you almost died in the most anti-climactic way possible,” Said Lucifer.

"Mrao!" Said Kuro, adding a lot to the conversation.

"Is that so? Haha... I guess the holy light made me dizzy indeed. It was like one of those nice drugs that you know it can kill you, but you still take them because it makes you feel so nice," I muttered.

"How can you compare holy light that literally exorcises you with weed?!" Asked Lucifer.

"HEY! You know weed?" I asked.

"Well, of course, we dragons used to enjoy a series of special herbs to pass the time of our millenary lives and- T-That's not the point!"

"Damn, now I want to meet with some dragons and smoke some weed,"

"This conversation is spiraling into a topic I don't feel comfortable speaking about,"

Emeraldine suddenly kneeled before me and began to supplicate me to forgive her.

"Sorry! I am so sorry, Maria! I-I didn't realize healing magic damages Undead... And I didn't realize that my Holy Light Aura was automatically activated... I-I already deactivated it...." She continued to cry.

"Oh! That's good then. It was mostly my fault for not realizing sooner," I said.

"N-No, I cannot easily be forgiven... Please punish me," Cried Emeraldine as she looked at me with a perverted look.

O-Oi, what is she thinking?

"I can punish her for you, Master..."

Partner came walking in, while carrying her spear.

“W-Wait a second, that’s not good, she’s not an Undead, you can’t be too rough on her!”

“Don’t worry... you can always make her a zombie elf,” Said Partner, readying her spear.

I managed to take the spear away from her and ended this discussion as quickly as possible before it were to turn annoying. I forgave Emeraldine and decided to just tell her to be more mindful of her abilities. As they ended up being the opposite of me, she could damage me badly if she got a close shot on me. I am particularly weaker to this element because I am a ghost of darkness and death; unlike zombies, I don’t have a physical body to shield me, so I receive even more damage. The [Holy Light Aura] was a spell she gained after her recent evolution... I checked her status while she was apologizing, and it looked like this:

...

[Name: [Emeraldine]

[Race: [High Spiritual Light Elf]

[Job: [Spiritual Archer]

[Level: [1/50]

[Rank: [C+]

[Status: [Evolved]

[HP: [620/620]

[MP: [2100/2100]

[Attack: [750]

[Defense: [220]

[Magic: [1700]

[Agility: [1026]

Characteristic Skills:

[Nature Element: Lv-]

[Holy Light Element: Lv-]

[Royal Elven Lineage: Lv-]

[Beloved by Spirits: Lv-]

[Elven Language: Lv-]

[Charming Beauty: Lv3]

Resistance Skills:

[Status Effect Resistance: Lv4]

[Magic Damage Resistance: Lv3]

[Light Resistance: Lv3]

[Darkness Resistance: Lv3]

[Fear Resistance: Lv4]

[Hunger Resistance: Lv5]

Normal Skills:

[Foraging: Lv7]

[Archery: Lv8]

[Hunting: Lv6]

[Alchemy: Lv4]

[Cooking: Lv6]

[Agriculture: Lv5]

[Dismantling: Lv6]

[Spirit Summon: Lv6]

[Holy Healing Light: Lv4]

[Druid: Lv4]

[Entangling Vines: Lv4]

[Hard Wood Bark: Lv3]

[Holy Light Aura: Lv1]

[Regenerating Light: Lv1]

[Flashing Light Beam: Lv1]

Title Skills:

[Huntress: Lv4]

[Spirit Mediator: Lv3]

[Forager: Lv3]

[Priestess: Lv1]

...

Damn, she looks mighty fine with those stats and skills. She has such a different build from all of us. Demi-humans are truly varied and unique in this aspect. I can't help but admit it!

She has so much light-related stuff... And her Mana and Magic are abnormally high. She's talented at archery too, and she has a high level of cooking as well. She's pretty good for our team, and she can adapt to any terrain as well.

“I guess we welcome you as a new party member!”

“R-Really? Oh, Maria, I am so happy!”

Emeraldine hugged me tightly as I pet her head.

“You worked pretty hard, dear.”

Chapter 66

Today in the morning, after the incident with Emeraldine, we had breakfast with the goblins and the rest of the people. The majority had already begun to recover and had been joining the goblins with hunting and fishing, while others had started to use alchemy to help the goblins create potions using herbs and monster blood. The remaining even worked on enhancing clothes and such.

However, there is still a large group that is gradually leaving the place. Some just simply wanted to go back home, so we couldn't stop them, but I made them swear an oath not to say anything regarding us, and to make it better, it was through a curse etched into their very souls.

If they speak about me or anything that has happened here, they'll die. As simple as that. It's their choice if they want to live or not, just don't go talking about shit no one cares about, and you'll be fine—that kind of deal. After scouting, hunting, and foraging the entire area for a week, we were kind of ready to depart.

Oh man, we spent just half a month here, but we made some excellent memories...

The people here were so nice, and it completely changed my perspective of what my original world used to depict goblins as. I guess they're just good and honest people trying to survive in this harsh world. I don't know why I am getting so heroic all of a sudden, but if it is within my power, I want to give them the home they deserve. So I will come back here eventually, and I will bring them all with me so we can live together in a place where no one will come to annoy us.

At that point, the story will give a dramatic shift, and it will become a slice of life! Uwah, I can't wait... But for now, we are in survival and action, so I can't lower my guard nor slow my pace. Most things are packed up, and most things have been taken care of... Oh right, Lucifer evolved... I forgot to talk about him.

Changes? Not many; he just got a bit darker in scale color when he transforms into a dragon. His horn became bigger though, and I believe his wings are more repaired and could possibly fly if he puts in the effort. But he's still a chunky guy as a dragon, so I doubt this lazy ass can flap his wings.

Nonetheless, Lucifer is an important ally, and I already consider him my good friend. Despite his aggressive and often annoying personality, that's because he's tsundere, deep down, he's very soft and gentle, and he shows it primarily with the goblins whenever we are not around.

I've spied on him a couple of times... He even let the children play on his dragon body, and he enjoys being gentle with the goblins, helping them hunt or even farm. He even shared his scales with them so they could make strong dragon scale armor. So he's a nice guy that covers his gentle core in a rugged and cold shell. I guess you can't blame him after all the shit he has gone through... I would probably be the same...

I guess we all have shells. Mine is that of a dork. Perhaps that way, I can find some joy in this new "life"...

Hm, we are getting too off track.

Alright! Here are his stats:

...

[Name: [Lucifer]

[Race: [Dark Dracolich Chimera]

[Level: [1/50]

[Rank: [C+]

[Status: [Secretly Sorrowful]

[HP: [2400/2400]

[MP: [940/940]

[Attack: [1550]

[Defense: [1215]

[Magic: [850]

[Agility: [920]

Characteristic Skills:

[Undead: Lv-]

[Dragon: Lv-]

[Chimera: Lv-]

[Dark Element: Lv-]

[Death Element: Lv-]

[Fire Element: Lv-]

[Artificial Elemental Cores: Lv-]

[Morph: Lv-]

[Fiend Language: Lv4]

[Shapeshift: Lv4]

[Self-Regeneration: Lv5]

[Flesh Consumption: Lv4]

[Hardened Dragon Scales: Lv4]

Resistance Skills:

[Status Effect Immunity: Lv-]

[Physical Damage Resistance: Lv4]

[Magic Damage Resistance: Lv4]

[Elemental Damage Resistance: Lv3]

Normal Skills:

[Life Drain: Lv5]

[Phantasmal Flames Breath: Lv6]

[Phantom Claws: Lv5]

[Fireball: Lv4]

[Dark Sphere: Lv4]

[Mana Mastery: Lv4]

[Intimidating Aura: Lv6]

[Dark Shadow Spear: Lv1]

[Venomous Dragon Scale Powder: Lv1]

Title Skills:

[Servant of the Dark Witch: Lv-]

[Fallen Dragon: Lv-]

[Protector of Goblins: Lv1]

...

He got pretty strong! Look at those stats, holy shit. He truly became the tank he said he would be. And to boot, he got all his skills leveled up quite nicely as well. Additionally, he got two new skills. He can

create a giant shadow spear to throw at an enemy or use as a weapon in his humanoid form, and also generate a scale powder by flapping his dragon wings, which is venomous and can cause paralysis.

Also, he got an adorable Title... "Protector of Goblins," which says a lot about what he had been doing lately, hehe. None of us got this Title, so he had done way more than I did to get it! Grr, now I am a bit jealous. Maybe he could become a decent King too. He seems old, wise, and more serious than me. Perhaps I could let him govern them in the future while I work in the shadows... Or not? Who cares anyway.

"Auntie Maria, are you really leaving? You don't like living with us?"

Gofumin approached me as she tried to contain her tears.

"No dearie, I have to get going because I have a very important mission to accomplish... I told you I would come back in due time... Until then, you have to be strong and train with your papa, alright? I will be back in no time, so I want to see you all strong by then!" I encouraged her.

"Oohh... A-Alright! I will train hard like Emeraldine...!" Said Gofumin.

"That's the spirit!" I said, petting her head and kissing her forehead.

"Take care,"

"Auntie, I want to kiss you too!" She said.

"Oh? F-Fine then..."

She cutely kissed my nose from all places, and I couldn't contain myself as I petted her silky hair while caressing her cute and long goblin ears.

"Thanks for everything," Said the goblin chief.

“No problem, chief, we’ll be right back, so for now, hold down the fort,”

“Very well, we’ll be waiting for you then!”

We walked down the road once more as we waved our hands at the collection of monsters.

I’ve left a lot of Undead with them, which will guard them and protect them from anything that could possibly be life-threatening...

In the worst-case scenario, they can also be used as mounts and will carry them away at a fast speed too, so if things get bad, they can escape and relocate elsewhere safely with the bone beasts and the zombies. Of course, they won’t go crazy just because I am not there. Wherever they are, my undead will always be loyal to me and will obey me, so I am confident that things will be alright... I hope.

The thing I fear the most is someone chasing us down from somewhere, so I better get out of here before they find our footsteps near this village or something. The farther away we go, the better it is for the goblins so they don’t get caught in whatever might happen to us. It’s for the best...

And here we go, moving on.

Our next stop is... The Duchy of Benettina!

Chapter 67

It has been a whole week since we left the goblin village, and I already miss them all... *Sigh*... We crossed the grasslands on our loyal steed, Kuro, and after around four days, we reached a dense forest named the Evergreen Forest, which is surrounded by two mountains. The duchy where we are moving towards is in between these two mountains.

It seems that there are big mining agencies extracting magical metals from it, such as mithril and the like, which is the primary source of income for the duchy of Benettina. This forest seems to be a mildly dangerous one. But, It has a road where merchants cross, which are often aided by adventurers or mercenaries.

And this forest is mildly dangerous because, although deadly monsters roam around, it is often cleansed by the adventurers themselves, who come here to slay monsters for their magic crystals and corpses to sell.

I mean, that's what adventurers do; they're glorified hunters. In addition to the Mithril Mines and the Spirit Stones Mines, Benettina has two dungeons on each side of the forest, separated by the road I mentioned earlier. Both dungeons are around D-Rank, nothing too special, and we won't get much EXP out of them either, so I am not interested in dungeon-diving especially because it becomes boring after the first experience unless it is a very high-level dungeon where it is a better challenge.

We have been traveling for about three days without stopping. Although we Undead didn't feel physically tired, we needed to take a break to calm our minds as we have exhaustion and stress from time to time. Plus, Emeraldine was barely hanging out. I thought she would resist it better, but not sleeping for three days made her look exhausted... Which she most likely was. Before moving forward into the deeper parts of the forest, we decided to make a camp and pass the night there.

"Hahh... What a relief...." Sighed Emeraldine as she rested on my shoulder.

"You should go sleep after we finish eating. We can't have you falling asleep as we advance through the forest, alright?" I asked.

"Yesshh... Zzzz..."

And she fell asleep. She had already finished her plate of boar stew, so I guess she was good to go. I held her with my arms and put her in the tent, covering her with bedsheets, turning her into a cute burrito. She was sleeping with a relaxed look...

"Master, I want more!"

Partner quickly averts my attention from Emeraldine as she asks for more stew.

"Alright... Though, don't you need blood?" I asked her.

"Monster blood is fine," She said while nodding.

"I guess? What do you think, Lucifer?"

"My blood is rotten, so I can't give her fresh dragon blood... Ummmm... You don't have blood, to begin with... but Emeraldine could become our source of blood for Partner," Said Lucifer, as he smiled maliciously at the innocent elf sleeping in the tent.

"Eh?!"

"Hmmm... Fresh elf blood...." Partner had begun to look at Emeraldine differently.

"She's too holy for that. She'll burn your tongue!" I said, stopping her and grabbing her from the belly.

"Gehh... I want some blood now...." She said teasingly.

"Come on, don't assault her, or I'll get mad,"

"Buhh..."

Partner pouted as she sat down again.

"I want you two to get along, alright? You and Lucifer are already good friends, so Emeraldine has to get along with you too. In fact, Lucifer has already accepted her!" I said.

"I just don't care," Said Lucifer.

"See? ...Wait, what?"

"I don't care," Lucifer repeated himself.

"You don't care about anything? What are you? A Nihilist?" I sighed.

"You could say that," Said Lucifer pridefully.

Being a nihilist is nothing to be proud of!

"Right, right, whatever you say, guardian of the goblins-san," I laughed.

"T-That title is false! I am no such thing," Lucifer tried to refute.

We ignored Lucifer's ramblings and enjoyed a wild boar steak.

Monsters had barely appeared through our travel as the grass plains are mostly freed from them. They're often quite rare around there due to there being such open spaces. Monsters prefer places where they can hide and not reveal themselves as easily.

However, now that we are in this accursed forest, we must expect monsters at any time! So we can't lower our guards. Kuro is watching most of the time, but I decided to make some extra backup Undead to watch our backs an additional time.

I made two Netherworld Beasts with the materials of the Necromancer, which were both at C-Rank. Of course, they were weaker than us but combined, they made up for two decent extra fighters. Additionally, I raised a scouting Undead through a method named Contract Summon. I summoned an Undead Crow Familiar by using a crow we hunted by accident, thinking it was a fattier and tastier bird, and some of the scriptures, rune incantations, and a magic circle I made up on the go thanks to the knowledge I acquired by eating the soul of the necromancer.

These three new friends have yet to get any name, but I'll keep it simple for now. I'll call them Bone Beast Alpha and Omega, and the Crow shall be named Raven. Oh my, I am such a good, fantastic user of naming! I was thinking that with enough preparations I could raise a bigger army of Undead, but I don't see any point in slaughtering a whole city. I guess there's the EXP, but I would feel bad by killing innocents that had nothing to do with all of this.

At most, I could strategically use my Undead by summoning them in certain areas with soldiers to distract them or outright kill them... But... soldiers are different, they're ready to fight and are paid to protect a place, so they're willing to die fighting.

However, I intend my work to be stealthy, so I will sneak into the duchy whenever we reach there and then look for clues as to where I could find the pigs I must kill. With that said and done, the night flew by, and the morning quickly came.

Chapter 68

Today, early in the morning, I checked my stats... I had not leveled up once since the Necromancer. Don't blame me! I have barely found anything worth the EXP. But at least I've been steadily developing and practicing my abilities. And I even managed to get a few new Skills, level up most of my Skills at least once, and even get some new talents. Plus, don't forget the Staff I got from him. It's the one I keep equipped the most due to the Mana bonus it offers, which is stupendous... And well, the magic bonus is great as well.

Here are my stats for reference:

...

[Name: [Maria Fuentes Belles]

[Race: [Pandora]

[Level: [13/40]

[EXP: 17806/24000]

[Rank: [C+]

[Status: [Strengthened, Cursed]

[HP: [1020/1020]

[MP: [4700/4700]{+2720}

[Attack: [560]{+100}

[Defense: [430]

[Magic: [4300]{+2617}

[Agility: [1250]{+575}

Characteristic Skills:

[Unique Skill: Supreme Magic]

[Unique Skill: Mana Siphon]

[Unique Skill: System]

[Unique Skill: Goddess] (Sealed)

[Undead: Lv-]

[Dark Element: Lv-]

[Death Element: Lv-]

[Fiend Language: Lv6]

[Shadow Sneak: Lv7]

[Abyssal Body: Lv4]

Resistance Skills:

[Status Effect Immunity: Lv-]

[Magic Damage Resistance: Lv7]

[Darkness Resistance: Lv6]

[Fear Resistance: Lv5]

[Elemental Resistance: Lv4]

Normal Skills:

[Ghost Touch: Lv7]

[Lesser Curse: Lv7]

[Life Drain: Lv7]

[Possession: Lv6]

[Dark Sphere: Lv8]

[Dark Gale: Lv7]

[Shadow Spear Arrow: Lv5]

[Materialized Shadow Barrier: Lv1] (New!)

[Shadow Manipulation: Lv6]

[Shadow Storage: Lv5]

[Undead Healing: Lv4]

[Fake Life: Lv6]

[Erase Presence: Lv3]

[Soul Eater: Lv3]

[Stealth: Lv7]

[Summon: Lv3]

[Aura of Famine: Lv2]

[Disease and Poison Creation: Lv2]

[Pandora's Box: Lv2]

[Materialization: Lv4]

[Cooking: Lv1] (New!)

[Hunting: Lv1] (New!)

[Blade Slash: Lv1] (New!)

Title Skills:

[The Dark Witch: Lv-]

[Dungeon Conqueror: Lv-]

[Big Game Slayer: Lv-]

[Taboo Mark: Lv-]

[Bringer of Misfortune: Lv5]

[Undead Queen: Lv4]

[Evil of the World: Lv2]

[Pickpocket: Lv2]

[Apprentice Swordsman: Lv1] (New!)

Divine Protections:

[Hel's Divine Protection]

Equipment:

[Weapon:

[Deadly Necrolord Staff: Lv10 (B-Grade)]

+2500 MP

+2500 Magic

+100 Attack

+500 Agility

+200 Dark & Death Damage

...

Oh right, I've been unlocking my inner potential with the blade too. Although I only use it when I am about to kill something to gain Sword Proficiency, as I keep the staff equipped because it expands my mana pool by quite a lot.

The staff is fantastic worthy of being a piece of B-Grade equipment at Level 10. It means the guy put a lot of dedication to the point that the weapon itself leveled up all the way to Level 10 by constantly upgrading it with materials and a blacksmith.

All types of equipment have Levels, which increase when you upgrade them with a Blacksmith's help and use materials as the surplus to trigger the level up.

There's also a chance it might fail, in which case the weapon might risk being destroyed in the process... which is why you gotta find good blacksmiths.

Anyways, after a week of using the Demon Blade, I gained [Blade Slash] and then [Apprentice Swordsman] as skills. Both are enhanced by my ability to use the cursed blade, which is somewhat alive as it has evil spirits inside, the same as this staff.

Usually, people who were not allowed to wield them would be immediately attacked and cursed. And that is what happened back then, but I just was like... immune to their feeble curses and ended taming the spirits using Undead Queen, so I Uno Reverse Carded them.

Oh right, after a bit of practice, I had also acquired the [Materialized Shadow Barrier: Lv1] Skill, which is the powerful and intricate conjuration of a wall made of shadows that I can bend to my will. But, it cannot only be used to protect, but I can just launch it at an enemy in stacks and crush them with the weight of actual brick walls made of materialized shadow magic.

With these new Skills and my improved stats, I feel pretty prepared for any challenge, as long as it is manageable.

I glanced at my other secondary weapon, which I switched around with the staff, the Demon Blade.

...

[Spectral Accursed Demon Blade: Lv4 (B-Grade)]

+1000 MP

+1000 Magic

+2400 Attack

+640 Agility

+140 Dark & Death Damage

...

It might not be as good magically, but it shines with that +2400 attack! Oh baby, that looks sweet.

I use it to slashy slash and stabby stab anything in my way. Giant Wild Boars died with a single slash as they were sliced in half. Mind you; these creatures are often up to three-meters-tall... Unless a Hero-level guy shows up, I am pretty confident.

And even if a dangerous enemy shows up, I can always hide in the shadows and escape as fast as possible while saving everyone inside my Shadow Storage... so that is my backup escape plan there.

But due to this very reason, I don't want to cause a commotion that might arise the emergence of a hero I cannot handle to come slay me. Because of that, stealthy and sneaky assassin creed-style assassinations are necessary... Although the latest games were not even about classic assassins... But anyway, it's kind of like that. If I can just get in, kill the guys I want to kill, feel some joy from it, get some info, then that would be ideal. Storming the entire city while laughing everywhere is bound to bring a Yuusha-sama (Hero) to kill me.

"Fwahn... It was a good sleep... I feel refreshed," Said Emeraldine, smiling cutely at me.

"Burrito," I said.

"Huh?"

She noticed she was wrapped like a little silkworm.

"Ungh... I can't get out... help... Maria..." She cried out as she began to move like a worm...

"Calm down..." I sighed.

"She's awake at last? Then let's get going. I crave more books to read. These ones had been emptied... My mind craves more knowledge and fiction!" Lucifer complained.

He had been reading all the books I got from the bookstore to pass the time...

"I want to have fun. Can we enter the city like normal people?" Asked Partner.

"Hmm... Maybe? I guess we could pretend...."

Yeah, maybe getting around while suppressing my dark aura?

"I want to go to the bathroom first...." Sighed Emeraldine.

Ugh, the living and their bathroom problems. Who can understand them?

"Maria, there's a giant Undead Crow glaring at me!" Emeraldine cried out.

"That's Raven. He's a friend. He scouts for us, so don't worry, he's just watching over you," I said.

“B-But my privacy!”

“Privacy or safety? Your choice...” I said.

“Privacy!”

“Fine... Raven, come here....”

“CRAA!”

A giant one-meter-tall Undead Crow flew towards me, and I began to caress his fluffy belly.

“Who’s the cutest birb?”

“Craaa!”

“Yes, you are!”

“Craaa~”

Raven likes me to caress below his chin too. He’s such a cutie.

“Mrao...”

Kuro suddenly gets jealous.

“I have not forgotten about you....” I sighed, as I caressed his big head, and he licked my face.

“Craaa!”

“Ah, you too~ Of course!”

Hehehe... Petting cute animals is the best... I never thought I would have such cute pets in this life. Well, they're reanimated corpses... But still!

Chapter 69

—

Within the vast Evergreen Forest, a pair of young kids ran barefoot. Their bodies were covered in scars, and they were only wearing tatters. They were both pale white, and their eyes glowed with different colors. Their hair was also of different colors, with each one having different colored patches that were unmatched and seemed random as if artificially made that way.

And on their faces, they had strange runic tattoos and both with one large spiraling black horn, each one on the opposite side of the other's head. There was a large black and red jewel on their chests, spreading an accursed essence into their bodies, fueling their strength to run away.

However, despite how bizarre they looked, they were not monstrous. Their eyes were filled with fear and desperation, their teeth grit, their feet covered in dirt and wounds, and they seemed exhausted.

“Hahh... Hahhh... I am tired...”

The little boy began to gasp for air as he almost fell onto his knees on the ground. The girl quickly caught him and looked him in the eyes.

“We have to go, Takeshi! You can't rest!”

“But... I don't think I can keep going, Laura....”

“No... D-Don't give up! We can escape... We are so close!”

“My body... it hurts all over....”

“CRAAA!”

Suddenly, the girl was startled by the sound of a raven in the distance, flying upwards and circling them both.

“Huh?”

“CRAA!”

The raven then flew away.

“ARRROOOOO!”

Suddenly, the two heard the voice of the accursed abomination that had been following them ever since they escaped the laboratory...

“I-It’s here!” Cried the boy.

“It can’t be... I am sure that he fell off that cliff! H-How?!” Cried the girl.

“He’s a monster... he was made like us... but he’s made to chase others....” The boy muttered before glancing back at the girl.

“Takeshi, come on!”

Laura, the girl, grabbed Takeshi, the boy, with her hands, and began to pull him, making him rest on her back as she tightly grabbed his ankles.

“L-Laura... stop... Let me stay here... I can buy you some time...” Muttered the boy.

“No! I-I told you that we were going to... get out together!” She shouted in response.

“Laura...”

The little girl grit her teeth as her crimson-red eye, and her yellowish-gold eye suddenly shone with bright lights. The strange jewel in her chest filled her with the last remnants of energy as her little legs began to run through the mud and on the hard rocks of the forest floor.

“AARRGR!”

However, she heard the accursed creature’s bark once more. Its enormous razor-sharp teeth began to crackle menacingly as it got closer.

Her heart began to beat faster and faster as the boy was barely hanging on with his consciousness, on the brink of falling unconscious...

‘I won’t... I won’t let them catch me again!’ Thought the girl.

“GRRRAARR!”

However, the monstrous creature detected them at long last. It leaped towards the pair with incredible speed and accuracy. Its body was enhanced by its mana, and then, it suddenly appeared right before the duo.

CLASH!

“Gyyaaah!”

The girl lost her balance due to the surprise, as she fell onto a puddle of mud, the boy barely being able to see what was happening. The monstrous creature looked at the two with its wolf skull head and two

glowing red eyes in each socket. Its body was like that of a wolf and covered in dark fur, but it had multiple tails, each one having the head of a different-colored snake.

They even hissed at the two!

“Ggrrrr...!”

The wolf-like chimera slowly began to move towards the girl cautiously as it had a good reason.

“G-Get away from us!!!”

The girl cried loudly as she pointed her tiny hands at the monster. A sudden burst of black electricity came out, clashing with the wolf’s face!

CLASH!

“GRAARR...!”

The wolf, however, remained almost untouched. The power she had was too weak now that she had barely any energy...

“GRAA...!”

The creature moved further as a mass of purple slime suddenly came out from below its belly, extending viciously towards the girl.

“Aggh...!”

Suddenly, a man’s voice came out of the wolf chimera’s head, which had a strange artifact in it resembling a black box the size of a peanut.

“Kuahaha! I finally found you two, little ones! I cannot possibly lose you from my grasp! This will be the last time you’ll escape from me! I’ll make sure to cut your limbs one by one, so you won’t be able to run away ever again....”

“No! Leave us alone!”

“I can’t! You’re important for my research, after all. I must work to please my master. And well, also to please my endless craving for knowledge and research....”

“Blob!”

The purple slime extended its tentacles as it wrapped itself around the girl’s body and her tiny limbs began to be slowly pulled!

“I am sorry... I am sorry...” Muttered the slime with the voice of an agonizing man.

“Nooo! Please stop!!!”

“I am sorryyyyyyyyyy!!!”

“GRRYAAAGGGH...!”

SPLAT!

...

“Huh?”

While thinking that the girl's limbs were going to be pulled out horrendously, she suddenly felt like the grip of the slime's tentacles loosened around her limbs as she fell onto the mud again. She glanced at the ground and saw the slime splattered across the mud, with a large dragon sitting atop its remaining pieces.

"E-Ehh?!"

The dragon was dark-scaled and looked menacing.

"Maria! Did you have to throw me like a ball here?!" He roared.

"Sorry! I was testing my Shadow Catapult! It is pretty fun, but goddamn, it drains MP like crazy,"

The voice of a mischievous woman resonated across the forest as a mass of shadows wrapped itself around the wolf chimera before it was to take the boy away!

"AWROOO!"

And from the shadows, a beautiful yet lugubrious-looking woman came out.

"What do we have here... Oh! These are kids?!" She exclaimed as several figures jumped out of her shadows, including a beautiful blonde elf.

"Are you okay? Oh dear, look at your wounds... I'll heal you right away!"

"Eh?"

The girl was left completely dumbfounded.

Chapter 70

When Emeraldine finished her bathroom and we had breakfast, we quickly marched into the forest at a high speed. We had to quickly cross this boring forest and get to the duchy. We already planned that we were going to pretend to be goody-two-shoe normies for a change of pace. Partner wanted to see a city without lurking at night, and I agreed with her. We should also do it in order to gain more knowledge about this world's society and how everything is structured.

We won't spend our entire lifetimes there, or something, just a one-day or two-day trip around, and that's it. Mostly, I just want to see if they got any restaurants or food stalls to eat the endemic food of this world that is not just stew or grilled meat. I don't even feel hunger, but I am still gluttonous because eating is fun, I have to admit it, so I want to see if there is any noodles, rice, or something. Hell, even freshly baked bread, cheese, and ham is fine.

As we walked through the forest at a moderate speed, I sent Raven to go look for anything ahead, and if he finds something, he'll rush back and alert us.

"Look, Maria, a mushroom,"

Emeraldine saw a small family of mushrooms growing in the roots of a tree, and I used [Analyze] on them.

...

[Para-Para Mushroom (Quality: C+ Grade)]

Yellow-colored mushrooms which drain nutrients from the roots of trees causing the trees to stop making fruits. They're specially delicious when fried but need to be well cooked; otherwise, their paralyzing poison might remain within them.

An item that can be used in Alchemy to make Paralyzing Poison, Paralyzing Poison Antidote, and more.

...

[Yumi Mushroom (Quality: D Grade)]

Purple-colored mushrooms with white stripes. They are poisonous and deadly and shouldn't be consumed by any means. They can be dried and then fermented into a strong poisonous toxin that is often coated in weapons. It can also make for a great disinfectant due to the dissolving effects of the poison extraction.

...

[Gaparumu Mushroom (Quality: F Grade)]

A small Living Mushroom that is yet to become a Mushroom Monster. At this stage, it cannot move, and it drains nutrients from the soil and the roots of trees. It is considered a cheap delicacy before becoming an adult. This is because the mushroom has yet to produce poisonous spores and can be safely eaten after being cooked.

...

Wow, it feels like I am playing an Atelier game.

"Hmm, these ones are tasty," Said Emeraldine as she looked at them.

"You know a lot about this stuff. It must be the [Foraging] Skill, right?"

"Indeed, it built up after I lived around the forests for some time. You see... Sometimes I didn't have enough money to buy food, so I just gathered what nature could offer... Haha..." She chuckled.

"Make sure not to eat the purple one though. That one could kill you," I said.

"Eh?! Is it? I thought it was edible. It looks just like the ones I used to eat...." She said.

“Maybe it is similar, but it is not the same. See? I just saved your life there- Eh?”

“CRAA!”

Raven suddenly came flying at us rapidly before landing on the ground. It looked at me as its soul connected to me through a phantasmal force, and I saw what it saw, two very weird kids running away from a giant wolf chimera thingy.

Oh boy, what the heck?

Hahhhh...

Alright, time to play hero once more. Not that I dislike it... That wolf looks like a good sack of EXP anyways.

“We need to get there quickly though... Hmm...”

I looked at Lucifer, who was silently looking at me.

“What?”

“Hmmm...”

...

“Wait! This... you can’t do this!” Lucifer cried as he was being placed on a large catapult I made using [Shadow Manipulation] and [Materialization].

The catapult itself was also my own body which I shapeshifted. I am pretty amazing, aren’t I? It was very rough, but it should be able to launch something very fast, very quickly. Plus, it only took 30 seconds to make.

Thank you, thank you... I am a genius, I know.

“Hold on!” He cried out.

“Calm down, turn into a dragon, and you’ll be fine,” I said.

“WAIT!”

“And there you go!”

“I’ll never forget thisssss...!” He shouted, his voice trailing off the farther he went.

BOOOOMMM!!!

And he was sent through the skies.

SPLASH!

Oh, it seems like he hit something. Sweet.

I quickly expanded my shadows and let everyone inside,

FLAAAAASSSH!

“Maria! Did you have to throw me like a ball here?!”

I heard Lucifer roar at me, which I answered quite calmly.

“Sorry! I was testing my Shadow Catapult! It is pretty fun, but goddamn, it drains MP like crazy,”

I flew towards the direction that Raven was pointing me at as the first thing I found was an ugly wolf wearing a skull on its face, trying to munch on a little unconscious boy.

“Come here, EXP bag!”

“WAARGH?!”

I expanded my shadows into tentacles and wrapped them around his limbs, pulling him off of the ground and hitting its body against the mud several times.

CLASH! CLASH! CLASH! CLASH!

“AWRROOO...!”

It cried in agony.

“What do we have here... Oh! These are kids?!”

I let everyone outside, and Emeraldine noticed the girl that Lucifer had just saved. He fell onto a big purple slime that was doing something pretty weird to her... Let’s not go into any further details. This is not an R-18 story, ladies and gentlemen.

“Are you okay? Oh dear, look at your wounds... I’ll heal you right away!” Emeraldine said, as she ran towards the girl in the ground, who was trembling as if she had gone through a horrifying experience.

And suddenly, the wolf chimera began to scream angrily with me from within a black box covering its head.

“W-Who are you?! How dare you interrupt my hunt! You thieves! Don’t you dare take away my items from me!” He shouted.

“Items? Are you calling two little kids as items? And who the heck are you? I don’t even know you,”

“I would say the same!”