

A Ghost 71

Chapter 71

Okay, hold on for a second, I am a slow woman, so I have to process what's going on.

We were leisurely going around the forest, and then my Raven found out that there were two kids running away from a giant wolf chimera thing. This wolf chimera thing intends to capture them with a purple slime that comes out of its open stomach?! What?!

Then, I became a catapult and sent Lucifer away to the rescue. He managed to splatter the entire slime against the ground just as I had totally predicted (I didn't). Now, as I've captured the wolf chimera thing, there's a little black box in it speaking to me.

"Okay, fine, sorry about that, buddy. I'll bring you back the kids. Where do you live?" I asked.

"Phew... You're such a good person. It is tough to find people as decent as you- Hold on a second! I won't fall for that! You want to know where I live!"

Damn it.

"No! I just want to bring them back to you, man. I know how hard it is to find your kids when they get lost. Especially when they're these... chimera kids," I said.

"I am not falling for that! Who do you think I am?!"

"Then we are breaking negotiations, little man," I said.

"I am not little! I am just a halfling!"

"I see, a halfling."

“Ah! S-Shit...”

“Anything else to tell me? We can go on a date if you have the right eye color,”

“Stop messing with me!”

“Okay then, bye-bye~,”

“W-Wait! What are you doing-”

CRASH!

I crushed the black box because his old man voice was very annoying to my phantasmal ears.

“GRAAAWRR!

Suddenly, the wolf chimera freed itself from my shadow entanglement and began to slash at me with all its strength!

SLASH! SLASH! SLASH!

“Ouch!”

I ended up losing over half my HP with three of his attacks which were faster than I could even react to.

Damn! This thing is fast as heck! I quickly conjured a Shadow Wall, but not for me... it was for him!

CLASH!

The entire shadow wall fell onto it and pressed it down against the ground.

“Again! Again! Again!”

CLASH!

CLASH!

CLASH!

Three shadow walls were consecutively conjured as they stacked over the poor chimera thing, which was barking monstrosly at me. It even opened its jaws and released a poisonous gas, but I was totally immune to it.

“You’re pretty pathetic now, huh? Little pupper? How about it, wanna join me?” I asked.

“GRAAWRRRAARRR!”

Oof, he’s definitely not going to become my puppy, I guess. Wait, is this thing even alive? It has the head of a skull, but it has a beating heart and blood. It is even kind of warm, so it is definitely alive... but it also has a skull as its head. It’s quite creepy. It is as if it were a living organism stitched together.

“So, what do you do for a living?”

“GRAAAR!”

“I see, being a dog... Understandable,”

I looked towards Lucifer and saw he was beating the slime to a pulp, but even as pulp, the thing was still somewhat alive. It lacked a core like other slimes, so it was a mystery on how to kill it, but after checking its status, I saw its HP was slowly going down with each hit it received. After that, I noticed Emeraldine healing the two kids.

The stars of this little show were two very strange kids. They looked “human” in appearance but had black horns, and their hair color was multi-color, like, they had different patches of color, which made them look a bit weird. The boy had red, black, and white hair, and the girl was brown, blonde, and orange. I asked Kuro and Partner to slowly chip down the wolf chimera as I went to check on the kids.

“Who are you guys?” I asked.

“Ah! Maria, they were very wounded... They’re so young and they were chased down by monsters... what could this all be about?” wondered Emeraldine.

“Hmm... I don’t know. That’s why I asked them,” I said as I kneeled and looked them in the eyes.

“Ungh... W-We... we are experiments....” Said the girl.

“Huh?”

“Guinea pigs... we were being used... since children... since babies....” She continued.

“What? By who? For what purpose?”

“W-We don’t know....”

“...”

Hmm... This is iffy. We might be jumping down a dangerous rabbit hole.

"Do you know where you two came from?" I asked.

"I... I think I might remember... the way back," She said.

"I see... Well, for now, you two should rest- Oh, she's asleep,"

The girl fell asleep in Emeraldine's embrace.

"They're very tired. Please, Maria, don't ask them any questions for now...."

"Fine, let them rest- Ah, we should clean them and give them proper clothes... which we don't have," I sighed.

"Oi, Maria, this thing keeps saying that he's sorry all the time," Said Lucifer.

"Huh?"

I walked towards Lucifer and found out that the giant purple slime was about to die.

"I am sorry... I am sorry... Sorryyyyyyy..."

"I've never seen a slime that can speak!" Shouted Emeraldine, dumbfounded.

"Well, there's a first time for everything," I said.

"How odd, I can feel within its soul that it has memories... Is this thing a chimera? Perhaps the results of necromancy of some sort... It has the soul of someone else inside," Lucifer muttered.

"How tragic..." I sighed as I created a shadow spear and ended its misery.

SPLAT!

“Guegh...”

“Did you have to do that?!” Asked Lucifer.

“Yeah, it was suffering, so I put him out of his misery,” I said, grabbing the slime’s soul and inspecting it.

It resembled the faint figure of a man.

“I am sorry... I am sorry....”

“Can you stop being sorry?” I asked.

“Aghhh...! Aaaahhh...! AAAGGH!”

I guess he can’t.

“Emeraldine, purify him for me....” I sighed.

“Exorcising,”

FLASH!

Emeraldine conjured her magic, and the soul was cleansed of miasma before ascending somewhere. It even seemed to have sighed in relief.

“Well, that’s that... Let’s continue for now. It would be nice to get to town so we can find proper beds for the kids. Also clothes, and probably something for their scars,” I said.

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We walked through the forest, following Partner and Kuro, after I finished off the wolf chimera easily by showering it in holes and crushing the large jewel it had on its chest.

With that, and the EXP of the Slime, alongside a swarm of black bats we meet along the way, I gained enough EXP to level up.

Ding!

[Calculating EXP gained...]

[You gained 56000 EXP]

[Your Level has increased from Level 13 to Level 14!]

[Your Level has increased from Level 14 to Level 15!]

[EXP: 23806/28000]

The black bats were the size of dogs, and they were all deadly looking. I don’t know how folks dealt with them, but we slaughtered the 12 we found and each one gave a little EXP. They were named Frenzy Bats, and they were D- Rank monsters with poisonous fangs and claws. We saved the corpses inside my inventory after killing them, and then, after a trip of around four hours, we finally found the town’s gate.

Time for some infiltration...

We also saved the sleeping kids inside my shadow storage alongside Kuro, and then we made our way into the line, waiting to enter. There were mostly common folk, but there were some people with carriages, most likely merchants.

We looked mostly fine, just an odd group of very pale fellows. Lucifer had shapeshifted his body, so he had no horns or anything weird with him, and I made sure to make the color of my skin as less pale as I could, though I still looked quite albino. At least our clothes were pretty, so we didn't look like homeless people or something. I suppressed my auras of course, and it was proven that I didn't kill anyone by merely existing when we got into the waiting line.

Phew, things are going fine.

A few people began to gather behind us as more reached the place through the main roads. There were some young folk from nearby villages and even some shady-looking mercenaries. Also, there were two other merchant carriages. Do you know what would be super cliché now? That those shady-looking guys noticed us and tried to do something to us.

"Hey, beauty..."

"Wow, what a cutie...."

"Look at that elf...."

Suddenly, my reader prediction capabilities kicked in, and it happened.

They were three ugly-ass old men littered with scars. One of them had an eyepatch and looked like a discount pirate without the fancy pirate clothes.

"Please go away," I said.

"Huh? Come on, don't be like that! How about we go to a tavern after we reach town? Look, you three and us three, we match perfectly," Said the bigger of the three.

He had several missing teeth, and he is about to lose a few more.

“Sounds like a good invitation... Do you buy the drinks and food?” I asked.

“Huh? S-Sure...”

“My bro! Then we are going! Do you have some more money as well?” I asked.

“B-Bro? Uh, yeah...” Stuttered the guy.

“Give me some, please. We are lacking in the financial department, so we can’t really pass the gate...
Sigh... it’s hard to be a damsel,” I sighed.

“Ooh... S-Sure!”

The guy was surprisingly nice, most likely because he thought he would get some nice sex as a reward later—Pfff, what a loser.

Lucifer, Partner, and Emeraldine stayed looking at me in disbelief.

“What? Come on! Be nicer with our bros. They’re buying the food and drinks,” I said with a bright smile.

“Hehe...”

The guy slowly tried to grab my breasts, but I gave him a slap that almost broke his hand.

“GRYAAUU...!”

“Not yet, big boy. Later on, we can have all the fun,” I said.

“Oooh... R-Right!”

We managed to get into the city pretty easily.

Now we didn’t look too weird as we had three average dudes with us, an excellent way to camouflage inside, and they also paid for our entrance fee... Lucifer included, which we said was our butler.

“Maria, I never would doubt your judgment, but... W-What do you think you’re doing?!” Emeraldine asked.

“Come on, let’s go eat something nice before we got to an inn. I am starving,” I said.

“But you don’t have a stomach....” She sighed.

“Don’t be so angry with the boys. They’re inviting us... Right, guys?” I asked them.

“Yeah, ma’am!”

The three began to laugh creepily, with perverted gazes as they said that.

“You’re enjoying this, aren’t you?” Asked Lucifer.

“Eh? Me? Noooo...”

“Master, can I suck their blood already?” Asked Partner.

“Later, later~,” I said.

We finally got into the city, and it looked like a lovely and typical medieval fantasy city. There were several paved streets, big and colorful houses, and a bunch of people walking in and out.

There were primarily humans, but elves and other races were not uncommon either.

“Come on, guys, let’s go here! Here!” I shouted.

“Alright!”

“Let’s get them drunk....”

“Hehe...”

The tavern was bustling with people everywhere, and it was a nice place to eat and drink.

As we entered, we received the glares of many people, but the three guys that we came with quickly made them avert their gazes... They were like a charm of anti-attention!

“Alright! I want everything on the menu, miss,” I said.

“E-Eh? All of it?” Asked the girl that came for our orders.

“W-Wait, that’s a bit too much...” Said the guy.

“Come on, dear, didn’t you say you would buy us food?” I asked while winking at him.

“A-Ah... Y-Yeah!”

And like that, they brought us a massive feast, and we began to dig in. I ate everything with tons of enthusiasm.

“Hehe, you eat an awful lot for a little lady....” Commented the old guy.

“Yeah, the food’s good,” I responded before drinking a whole cup of wine.

“Bring some more wine!” I shouted.

In the end, we emptied these guys’ wallets, and we ended up walking out of the tavern after a massive feast.

“Phew, I am stuffed.” I sighed as we walked near a closed and dark alley.

“S-So, what do we do now? Don’t tell me you want to do it here? I don’t mind! Hehe...”

“Huh? Ah, you’re still here?” I asked.

“GRAARR!”

Suddenly, Partner leaped out of my shadow towards him and began to tear his throat apart.

“Grryyyaaaaggh...!”

The other guys didn’t have an easy end either, as one of them was crushed to death by Lucifer’s dragon claw, and the last one was eaten alive by Kuro.

I created a barrier of shadows, and no one saw a thing.

Oh yeah, the three guys were used as fresh blood for Partner as well.

So, everyone had their fill!

Chapter 73

I'll never forget you guys! The food was good, and you were pretty nice. You almost caught my heart as well... Too bad Partner was getting thirsty for blood, though.

Oh well, let's not blame Partner for everything. I was also at fault for this. I have done a sinful act; killing is bad! I shouldn't have done this... Now, guilt is eating me away!

Oh, please, god, have mercy on my soul... I am so, so, so guilty...!

...Joking.

It is better not to think about this anymore. They were assholes anyway, and when I learned more about them, they had a history as bandits of some sort. They were not a big group, but they had assaulted adventurers that went alone into the forest. Wow, that's kind of awful. They had even violated several girls and left them to die in the forest.

Super awful...

I just read their minds through their souls and damn man, how terrible can you get? Is there any limit for them? I look like a saint in comparison now. And what's with these men's obsession with violating women? Fucking animals.

Well, that's just the trash of the world. Not all men are like this. The Goblin males were all good people, and the other guys I've met too. Only just bandits are rotten, I guess. What's going on with that, to be honest? How do they become so terrible at being people? I sometimes think I am fucked up, but then I learn there are people like this, and I begin to think I am not as bad.

But maybe that's just my delusion... How bad is it to kill someone compared to robbing or violating someone? I guess killing is a major sin. I remember that killing a person was punished more than violating someone in my previous life... but... Of course, if there's context such as self-defense, it might not even be punished...

So let's say it was all in self-defense! I bet you can't violate someone in self-defense though, so your sin is worse!

Moving on, I grabbed these three guys' souls and devoured them. They tasted awful; it was as if being trash made them taste bitter. I got some of their memories but instantly deleted all the disgusting stuff from my mind as those awful things are not staying in my hard drive. I learned tons of info on this town, such as where there was a good Inn, the Adventurer Guild, a few shops, and so on.

We wasted most of the money of these guys, but we also had some of their equipment to sell, and well, we got a lot of monster parts, including their magic crystals, pelt, and so on, to sell as well. Oh right, we also had the exclusive merchandise of the brainwashed merchant inside of my Shadow Storage. He's still there, groaning about... I had completely forgotten about him.

While we saved the remains of the devoured trio of idiots, I freed the merchant and quickly told him to lead us to the nearest Inn and pay stuff for us as a façade. Always having a normal-looking human with us will make us not stand out as much because if we go alone, we really look like a squad of oddly pale goths plus a very bright elf.

"Maria, did you really have to kill them?" Asked Emeraldine as she seemed worried.

"Emeraldine, their plan was to get us drunk, so they could use our bodies to their heart's content. Why wouldn't we kill them?" I asked.

"O-Oh, I guess you're right... But still, it felt a tad bit brutal," She muttered.

"These were the same type of people who did all the same things to you before being enslaved, and even after that... Don't be too nice. I know you're a good-hearted girl, and I like you because of that, but sometimes, there's people that just don't deserve any type of compassion,"

"Y-You're right..." She sighed.

"I know you're not used to it, so don't worry. There are people that are more fitting for certain jobs than others," I consoled her.

"I won't mind killing any humans you want," Said Lucifer.

"See? He's a nice guy," I said.

"I-I guess..." Emeraldine muttered once again.

"Blood was bad, bitter, disgusting...." Partner commented.

"Now, now, young girl, don't get too cocky. Those three sacrificed their lives to feed your thirst for blood," I said.

"Sorry..." Sighed Partner.

We reached an Inn with the merchant leading us, and we entered quickly after. An adult woman seemingly in her early 40's greeted us. She had a motherly aura to her, with long brown hair and gentle emerald eyes.

"Ah, welcome to my Inn. Do you want to stay for the night?"

She was very friendly.

"Ah, yes, a room with two beds, please," Said the merchant.

"O-Only one? But you're five," Said the woman.

"We are all going to sleep together, don't worry," I said.

"I-I see... But this isn't a hotel, you know? So if possible... Don't do anything lewd...." She said.

"Eh?! Who are you taking us for, hookers?!" I asked while slapping the table.

"Ah! N-no! S-Sorry!" She quickly apologized.

"Because we aren't! We are actually all married with this big stud. And this old man is his father, so he will sleep alone," I said as I caressed the chest of Lucifer.

"Eh?!"

"Y-Yeah! That..." Said Emeraldine.

"Huh? I am not- Mwuh...!"

Partner was about to give us away, so I covered her mouth.

"Y-You have three women?" Asked the woman.

"I... Ah..." Lucifer looked at me, and I winked back.

"Y-Yeah..." He muttered, sounding very unsure.

"Well, you're very handsome, so I guess it makes sense... It's not like I haven't seen some talented young adventurers with parties full of women, although most of the time they're slaves... Anyways, here are your keys. We can also offer meals if you want. Oh, there's a bath pass for an extra coin as well," She said.

“Sure, we’ll take it all,” I said, as the merchant paid it before thanking her.

We walked upstairs leisurely afterward.

Infiltration complete! We are living the Isekai dream now.

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Chapter 74

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We entered the Inn, and I jumped onto the bed when I finally saw it, saving the merchant inside my shadow storage.

POMF!

“Hahh... An actual good bed... And it’s so comfy!”

“You don’t even feel physically tired. Why are you implying you were?” Asked Lucifer.

“Well, shut up already! I can enjoy whatever I want, you know?” I asked.

“I feel like this whole trip has been just pure nonsense.” Sighed Lucifer.

“You’re my Undead, so you do what I want! Now, rest on your bed,”

“Fine...”

Lucifer sat on the bed.

"Hmm... Well, it is comfortable, I have to admit," He muttered, as he fully rested over it and even stretched his legs.

"I could get used to this,"

"See?! Beds are good! I used to laze around on my bed all the time," I said.

"When you were alive, Maria?" Asked Emeraldine.

"Erm... Yeah,"

I don't even remember what I did when I was alive in this life, but I liked to laze over a comfortable bed while reading and eating snacks in my previous life... I was such a lazy person. I am thankful I have a ghost body, so I don't actually feel physically tired, or I wouldn't do half of the things I do. Though I still get mental exhaustion.

"Hahh~ Anyways, let's get to business," I said as I kicked Lucifer out of his bed.

"Oi!"

"Sorry, but we got babies to take care of now."

I opened my Shadow Storage and took two little kids out of it; these weird kids were the ones we just rescued by chance. I don't know why I keep getting into trouble like this, but here we are with some chimera kids. When I checked their status, what I got surprised me. They were not even a normal race but were called "Homunculus" instead. Does this means they were made through alchemy?! Is this Full Metal Alchemist now? Will they be called according to Sins? I hope not. That would be a big copyright infringement.

"They're homunculus?! By the gods... to think that such experiments are real... these kids were made through forbidden Magic and Alchemy...." Muttered Emeraldine.

“Do you know anything about it?” I asked as I watched the two babies sleep.

They looked to be around 7 or 8, so for me, they were babies.

“Homunculus... Yes, I know. I’ve heard from places, and I’ve read it from books. They existed in the past and were living beings of humanoid appearances made completely out of alchemy. It is like creating life... It is said they’re made with using the power of a Philosopher’s Stone— a malefic stone made out of the souls of hundreds of innocent people,” Emeraldine explained.

“Yikes. And why would they even make them to begin with? What’s the purpose behind it? As soldiers? As warriors? Just as puppets? Toys? I remember that guy saying these kids were his “items” and his properties... Was he a crazy scientist type of guy?” I asked.

“He was probably their creator... Those monsters that came to capture them were something similar to Homunculus, perhaps. They were Chimeras made using materials and alchemy... They were perhaps a more primitive way of creating homunculus life,”

“Yeah, they could have been that. I remember that they were not dead. They were both alive. Even the skull-faced wolf... the one that created them, is also proficient at using Death Magic because the souls these chimera possessed were those of people,” Lucifer added.

“Good observation, I think the same. The purple slime had the soul of a person too, and so did the wolf chimera. But both of their minds were warped and made insane....” I said.

“Most likely because they couldn’t adapt to their new bodies and felt their minds being warped through it... We all felt their souls being those of people and not native to a monster... Whatever made them is a skilled Necromancer, an Alchemist, and perhaps a Life Mage too....” Said Lucifer.

“What kind of guy could be so talented? Oh well, maybe he has the tools to do it without needing all of those Skills. Or perhaps he has assistants with different talents doing the work for him. Who knows?” I muttered.

“Well, what’s important now is to check on these kids and see if they’re alright,” Said Lucifer.

We ended up looking at him.

“What? I-I am only worried because you’ve already got us into this mess!” He said shyly.

Well, Lucifer had a sweet spot for children as he let the kids in the goblin village climb his dragon body, and he even told tales to them. Sometimes he even went into the wild with them and protected them while showing off his power by hunting big boars and then giving the meat to their families.

He’s deep down a good man and also has a father complex as he acts very fatherly.

Maybe because he was...? He did say he once had children.

“Alright~ Anyways, what do we do? They’re still sleeping... I am not so good with the living. Can you tell me anything, Emeraldine?” I asked.

“Hmm... I think they’re fine for now, but we should bring a pot with warm water and wash their bodies a little bit. They’re so nasty and smelly....” She suggested.

“Wouldn’t it be better for them to just wake up?” Asked Lucifer.

“Right... Let’s see....”

We tried waking up the kids for a few minutes, and after insisting for a while, they slowly opened their colorful eyes.

“Huh?”

“Ah... W-Where are we?!”

The boy didn't see us saving them, so he was pretty scared at first, but the girl explained everything to him. We chose not to ask them anything for now because they were too tired, so we told them that they were in good hands. I then brought them to the bath with the token I got for a copper coin through my shadow storage.

Arriving there, we bathed them with Partner and Emeraldine, and the elf healed any tiny wound she missed before. Also, I noticed the two kids had strange crystals stuck to their chests... what could they be? They emanated a strong and dark presence.

Chapter 75

Knock, knock.

As we were cleaning the kids and giving them new clothes to change into, the girl that attended the Inn brought us the dinner for four that we bought for two copper coins.

The whole night cost one copper coin per person, but if we all stayed in the same room, it was reduced to half. She also offered a dinner for four for two copper coins and a bath token, which can be exchanged to an old woman near the bath for a pass inside for another copper coin. So in total, the whole night cost like four copper coins, including these meals and the bath.

I didn't need a bath at all. After all, I was a ghost, and my body doesn't get dirty. Oh well, there's this soot that accumulates around my phantasmal body, which is like a dried-out shadow and dark mana, but I can clean it off by shaping my body around. Nonetheless! I materialized my body and enjoyed the warm water, and it felt like I had a fleshy body... It was a nice and relaxing bath.

We also washed the two kids who were very stinky and covered in dirt. Emeraldine healed the terrible wounds they had under their little feet, which were all infected with dirt. It hurt them a bit when we washed them with a lot of soap, but it was the only way to disinfect them properly.

After that, Emeraldine once more proved her usefulness as she healed them, something I wouldn't be able to do with my [Undead Healing]. Having a Live Healer like her around is very useful in this situation.

We bought them some simple clothes on the way to the Inn, it was nothing too much, just a dress for the girl, pants and shirt for the boy, and their underwear, alongside socks and shoes.

We only guessed their shoe size, but it fit in the end, so I was relieved.

“Huh?”

Partner lightly opened the door as the girl greeted her.

“Ah, hello, here’s your dinner for four. This is our secret recipe, boar stew, some slices of bread, boiled potatoes, and coffee,” She said.

“Thank you,” Said Partner rather awkwardly, as she grabbed the large tray and closed the door right away in order to not let the girl see the kids inside.

After taking such a relaxing bath and having their wounds attended to, the sleepy and tired kids sensed the smell of the soup and the boiled potatoes and quickly woke up from their daze.

“Here you go, we already ate plenty before, so eat to your heart’s content!” I said.

“Uwaa... N-Nee-sama... Thank you so much...” Said the girl.

“Thank you!” Cried the boy as he began to drink the soup.

This stew was made most likely of boar bones as it had some small pieces of meat here and there, but it mostly had carrots and potatoes to fill one’s belly. It also had a bit of a creaminess to it, which was most likely due to them adding milk and cheese.

I tasted it a bit, and it was indeed creamy, with a bit of cheese and boar taste. The carrots and potatoes were what filled the belly the most, but it was a decent meal for the poor, and four plates of it for two copper coins was pretty cheap.

There were also four boiled potatoes if you ended up still hungry. They were recently boiled and were emanating some vapor. They had a generous topping of butter on top, and so the kids devoured each one and then drank the bitter yet comforting coffee without much difficulty.

This coffee was probably made out of a cheap one, so it wasn't the best quality. I drank a cup myself; it wasn't anything special compared to my beloved Earth's authentic, delicious Cuban coffee, but it was okay as a warm drink to fill you with energy.

The bread was hard, but not too hard, so it was decent, and they included another block of butter on the side in order to eat it with the bread. Overall, it was a decent meal, although I only tasted the things here and there and let the kids eat most of it.

When the kids finished eating, they ended up exhausted and immediately fell asleep next to each other. We covered them in blankets and let them sleep peacefully.

I feel like I am playing mother simulator now!

Well, secretly, I've always wanted to be a mother, but in my previous life, I died way too young to get to it!

I-I know that being over 30 is not young, but I was waiting for the chosen one!

...Which never came. I was ugly and a nerd. Perhaps if I were pretty and a nerd, all the guys would be crazy for me, but I wasn't. I was skinny, ugly, had messy hair and big rat-like teeth...

I didn't even have big "assets" to compensate for my ugly face. My breasts were almost flat, and I had no hips to talk about. I was the opposite of my sister, so I was like a skeleton while she was a gorilla.

Mother, our genes were fucked up... but I still love you.

I guess I've made my appearance what I've always wanted to look like...

In the Necromancer's books, I read that ghosts can take the form of their true selves, of what they seem themselves as. This is why some ghosts remain with visible wounds in their phantasmal bodies because the trauma of their deaths makes them see themselves with such wounds on their bodies, despite not actually having physical bodies.

Of course, when we evolve, we lose those traits. And as a simple Lesser Ghost, I don't remember having my head wandering around, so the trauma of being beheaded didn't stick with me.

Anyways, the point is, unlike my sister, I always wanted to be a mother myself and have children...

Sniff... Now I don't even have a physical body, so that's impossible!

As the night continued, we looked over the area for anything suspicious, but thankfully, the night went on peacefully.

Chapter 76

Within an underground laboratory, a small old man with a long white beard and a bald head looked at the floating mass of flesh inside a tube. This tube contained a green and oozy substance that nourished this lump of flesh, which continued to grow bigger with each passing day. Within this flesh, there was a soul, and within this body, there was also a large black jewel as its core.

He looked at the experiment and then continued to walk through his facility, ignoring the several skeletons walking in and out of the whole place while maintaining the things in motion. He looked at the empty room where he once held two of his items.

"Damn it. They escaped and even found someone to help them! But... Even if they escape, they cannot really run away from me... As long as they hold those Magic Crystals, I can always track them down," He laughed, holding onto a runic tablet, and a magical projection suddenly showed that his targets were closer than he imagined.

“Huh?! They’re in the town now...? Haha! Fools! You brought them closer to me... Hm?”

Suddenly, another magical artifact began to ring; a small eye-shaped item on his pendant.

Ring, ring~

“Ungh... T-The boss...”

He quickly attended the call as the voice of a stoic man spoke.

“Borudro, how are the experiments going? I’ve invested enough time and money in you for you to finally show me some results. And I don’t want to see any more wild and stupid chimeras. I want proper results this time around,”

“A-Ah...! Yes, boss! T-The results are almost readyyy... I-It’s just... T-There was a slight... disturbance,”
Said the man.

“What disturbance?! And you’re telling me you finally made them, right? Living beings capable of adapting to the power of the Evil God’s Fragments and utilizing them without being affected negatively? This is what I paid you for, for over 30 years, you know?”

“Yes! T-They’re almost ready! The tests showed great results. They were able to wield the Dark God’s Energy through the implants made from the Dark God’s Fragment! They had been successfully made into Magic Crystals that fuel their bodies with power like a monster’s magic crystal does. And due to their souls being summoned into this world from another, they possess unique talents to boot! They could become excellent soldiers and warriors for the entire organization!” Shouted the man.

“You’re not lying to me, are you?!”

“N-No! I would never...!”

“Then send them to me. I want to see the merchandise myself. And quickly!”

“A-As I said... there are some disturbances with the delivery... If Master could... wait a bit more....”

“Disturbances?! What is it this time?” Asked the man.

“The... subjects had escaped the facility by using abilities I had not expected them to develop so soon... I had sent my dogs chasing them, and they almost caught them, but... Well, someone came. A group of around four and they defeated my dogs incredibly quickly! W-Whoever they are, they will learn to never disturb my work!” Shouted the man.

“Y-You useless piece of trash! I only have so much patience! Catch them quickly! Use anything you have! Money! Power! Anything! I require those two subjects... they’re the key for us Vampires to fulfill our goal!”

“Y-Yes! I will do everything I can to retrieve them!” Said the little man.

“And about those aristocrats... have them give you more resources. They owe me a lot. Use those resources and build strong chimeras. Whoever those that are trying to disturb you are, destroy them!” Shouted the Vampire.

“Yes!”

The call was abruptly cut, as the halfling old man could almost barely keep standing. His boss was very tyrannical and rather temperamental.

He quickly ordered the skeleton to get moving, as all of them possessed the souls of talented alchemists or people that exuded in the area of magical science.

There were also proficient biologists and even crafters, which he had placed into these Undead bodies through contracts, summoning magic, and other dark arts.

He began to quickly fill more tubes with new fleshy beings, which began to grow at an insane speed after the insertion of special toxins and magic.

Each one of them had glowing black crystals within them...

“Now that I know your location, the only thing I need to do is wait until my chimeras are done and then send them chasing you down at night! Perhaps your heroes were strong, but they won’t be able to fight against these improved chimeras!”

Today in the morning, the kids finally woke up feeling better, although they were feeling a bit exhausted and always saying their chest hurt a bit. Emeraldine used her magic to alleviate their pain as we were greeted by an early breakfast brought by the assistant of the Inn once more.

The breakfast wasn’t any different than the dinner from last night, but it included some wild berry jam with bread, a small cup of fresh milk, and a piece of cheese too. It was actually a tiny bit more generous than the dinner, but it had less soup, as it was only now a cup and not a whole plate. Also, the potato was still there, and the coffee too.

The kids had their own while I enjoyed one with Emeraldine as the others didn’t seem to want to eat. Partner had her fill of blood last night so she could go on without any thirst for over a week, I believe. Meanwhile, Lucifer is a zombie and doesn’t particularly feel any hunger.

Well, me neither, but I wanted to try out this cute little breakfast, and to no surprise, it was amazing!

“Anyways, you two, I think it is finally time to open up a bit and tell us... who are you? We don’t even know your names,” I asked the two kids.

“Maria-sama, d-don’t pressure the kids....” Said Emeraldine.

“No, it’s fine....” Muttered the girl as the boy nodded.

“You’re good people... You deserve to know the truth...My name is Laura, while he’s Takeshi...” She said.

“Wait, Takeshi? That’s Japanese, right?” I wondered.

“Huh?!”

The two kids ended up looking at me, surprised.

“Hm? What?”

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“Wait, Takeshi? That’s Japanese, right?” I wondered.

Takeshi is a Japanese name, isn’t it? Then why was the boy named with a Japanese name?

Well, this is another world, so- Ah, it doesn’t matter in the end, there are also western names too, so I guess it can be whatever.

“Huh?!”

The two kids ended up looking at me, surprised.

“Hm? What?”

Nonetheless, when I voiced my thoughts, the two kids were left surprised when I said the word “Japanese”.

“What’s wrong?” I asked.

I felt a bit surprised as these two kids were shocked by this word.

“Nee-sama... Y-You’re from another world, right?!” Asked Takeshi.

“Nobody would even know about the word ‘Japanese’ in this world if it wasn’t for someone from Earth too!” Laura exclaimed.

“Oh, I guess you found me out! But that means you’re also from Earth, right? H-How? Did you get reincarnated like me?” I asked.

“Wait, you’re a reincarnated person?” Asked Lucifer.

“Huh? What’s reincarnated?” Partner added another question.

“Maria, your soul is from another world?!” Emeraldine added yet another question.

Oof, I guess it’s big reveal time now.

“Indeed, but I only regained the memories of my previous life when I died, funnily enough. While alive, I didn’t remember my previous life, but when I died, I remembered them, but forgot the memories of when I was alive....” I sighed as my explanation was a bit confusing.

“An otherworldly soul....” Muttered Lucifer.

“Is it common? I thought I was unique, but I guess Laura and Takeshi here are also from Earth,” I said.

"No, reincarnated people are actually not unique. There had been tales about them from long ago, don't you remember that you read about a Hero of the past, and the Human Heroes? They were summoned using powerful Dimensional Summoning Magic. Heroes summoned in this world come packed with powerful Unique Skills and dangerous powers... They were incredibly strong from the start and a real threat to the Demon King...." Sighed Lucifer.

"I've also heard of them... Aside from the Summoned Heroes of old, there are also tales of other people that have been summoned into this world or reincarnated. People with memories of past lives... of worlds different from our own. The remarkable thing about all of them is that they're intelligent from the start, even as babies, and they develop unique powers named Unique Skills, just as Lucifer said!" Emeraldine added.

"I see... Ugh! I thought I was super unique... But I suppose I am not that special, huh? There's always a bigger fish out there," I muttered.

"I don't think that metaphor really works in the current context, but sure," Said Lucifer.

"Y-You're pretty strong already, Maria... Stronger than all of us combined," Said Emeraldine.

"Yeah! Maybe you're being a bit too humble there," Said Lucifer.

"Hahaha! M-Maybe? Well, anyways, kids, tell us more about you, how did you come to this world, and what the heck are you guys? And what are those glowing cores in your chests?" I asked.

"Ah, well..."

Takeshi and Laura looked at one another before nodding and mustering up the courage to explain.

"We barely remember exactly how we came here..." Said Takeshi.

"But we know that one day when we died back on Earth, we arrived here," Said Laura.

"I don't want to be the one to ask such a thing... But how did you die? Okay, I'll go first! I died being buried by books after an earthquake in my visit to Japan... Hahaha..." I laughed.

"Huh?! You died like that?" Asked Lucifer.

"Poor Master..." Partner began to pet my head and caressed my hair while hugging me.

"Hahaha, it was funny, no worries," I laughed.

"W-Well... I died by drowning... I went to the beach with my family, but when I went swimming in the water, a large wave took me, and... I died..." Sighed Takeshi.

"I'm sorry... to hear that. ...At which age did you die?" I questioned him once again.

"Around 12... We might seem older, but our current bodies are around four years old. We developed quickly due to our composition," Said Takeshi.

"I see... So you're technically 16,"

"I died a bit older at 15... A plane crashed in the apartment where I lived," Sighed Laura.

"A plane...? Wait... which country are you from, Laura?" I asked.

"I... I'm from the USA,"

"Then... where you lived... by any chance... were these the Twin Towers?!"

"Yeah... How did you know?" Asked Laura as she perhaps thought I had died before her.

"Dear... that happened in 2001... And I am from 2021," I said.

“Ah...!”

Laura looked at me in disbelief.

“The year when I died... it was 1985,” Said Takeshi.

“What?!”

So strange... what is with this time difference?!

They certainly came before me, but our years apart here are so tiny. They had only lived for four years here, yet both of them weren't much older, younger or older than each other... and they were summoned at the same time?

And four years later, within this world, I was summoned from 2021.

...

Could it be? Are we not from the same Earth? Or there is another possibility, something within this Universe holds our souls and then releases them as we are reincarnated or summoned elsewhere. But who says that time here is the same here as on Earth? It could probably be completely different.

“I am sorry for having asked this. Perhaps I should have been more considerate... Sometimes I get a bit too ahead of myself. I am a bit... nuts, you know....” I sighed.

“Oh... No, it is fine. We were also curious.” Said Laura.

“Yeah... it is important to talk this stuff out, so we know each other better, Nee-sama,” Said Takeshi.

“Aw, you two are such sweeties!”

I hugged both of them before sitting down between the two on the bed. They felt my hug; although cold, I tried to use mana to “warm” my materialized body, and I guess it worked a bit.

“Let’s strive together for a better future... I’ll take you two into my party, but you better tell me the truth regarding your origins too... First of all, what... exactly are you two?” I asked.

“Well...”

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Yeah, I don’t really know what exactly they are, but I really want to know more.

My analysis can only look through their basic info, but I wasn’t able to properly see their entire status for some reason.

Perhaps being a reincarnated person makes their souls stronger so they cannot be read by my Ability? I cannot see what Unique Skills they have either, so it is very confusing.

“Well, when we gained consciousness, we were merely two lumps of flesh,” Said Takeshi.

“From then on, our minds slept and came back in intervals. We were raised inside cold tubes and strange liquids... we are beings made of many parts fused together into a whole living being similar to a demi-human; we are Homunculus,” Said Laura.

“We remember well what that crazy old man had said back then... I think he said we were the vessels of the Dark God or something. That we were made to harbor his powers, and that we were made using parts of his fragments,” Said Takeshi.

“It was until very late that we realized what we truly were... We read some of his documents when we were finally left free from the tubes. We were trained to move, read, and more. He gave himself the time to actually make us learn what we were from the beginning,” Said Laura.

“We don’t take him as a good person, but he did this so we could learn quickly to use our own bodies,” Said Takeshi.

“Wait, wait, wait... Hold on a second. The vessels of the Dark God!?” I asked.

The Dark God... A corrupted God that once tried to destroy this world. I don’t know much about it, but according to folklore, he was part of the 80 plus gods that resided in this world after having created it. For unknown reasons, he was corrupted and became mad.

The other gods had to defeat him and destroy his body. Each of his fragments ended up leaking tremendous quantities of dark power, which ended up falling around the world and corrupting it with monsters and strong dark energies.

They say that demons originate from his body, and what I mean by demons, I mean the Majin, such as Goblins. Monsters too, are said to come from it, although they also come from dungeons, which the Chaos God made as trials for the mortals. I know that my family in this world used to hold a fragment of the Dark God— a Fragment of Evil, as they call it.

Our ancestor used to be a Hero, and he had sealed this fragment of evil in the holy underground areas of our large territory, where it was something like a treasure, although it couldn’t be sold or used. After all, it was a terrifying evil that was being held there.

The whole drama with my family, how they killed my parents, how they killed me, how they destroyed everything in my life, was to get their hands on this.

And now, after getting their hands on it, the entire Kingdom is most likely doing millions of things with it. And the black potions are already one of them.

These potions enhanced the power of anybody and could even be used as fantastic necromancy materials to make overpowered Undead.

And now, they were doing Homunculus projects, trying to use the tiny black crystal that grew around the Fragment of Evil as a core of a half-monster half-demi-human homunculus. It seems Laura and Takeshi are the first successful subjects... and there were many failed other ones.

We had fought two of them recently. The wolf and the slime who were homunculus too, or chimera, I don't know. But they were failures and were reduced to mere monsters whose minds were being constantly tortured.

They explained this and more as we continued speaking.

"So they're trying to make a new living being that has the power of fully wielding the fragment of evil... For what purpose?" Pondered Lucifer.

"What's the point of doing something so horrendous... if the Dark God can really be revived through such a method... wouldn't everything end? Why are humans so obsessed with self-destruction..." Sighed Emeraldine.

"The scientist said that our existences would bring a new era...." Said Takeshi.

"But we didn't want this... we wanted to live freely. After dying in our previous lives, we wanted to live this life without regrets," Said Laura.

"I see... I understand how it feels," I said.

"This... Is this being run by the government? Or the Vampires in the shadows... or wait, both?" Lucifer pondered once again.

"The scientist that created us was a Vampire Subordinate," Said Laura.

"So those damn Vampires are in this too? Are they in everything bad that's going on?" I muttered.

“Most likely, after retrieving the Fragment of Evil from your family, the Kingdom had begun experiments on it, and many pieces of this fragment, such as the leftover secretions and outgrows that this fragment produces. Also, with this black crystal, which they named Demonite, and that black liquid named Miasma... they’re most likely trying to make weapons of war with them... The Kingdom is ambitious. They are colluding with the Vampires families who have the resources and the personnel to create such experiments... This is a guess, but perhaps now that the Demon Kingdom is gone, they want to expand. There are many other Human Kingdoms, after all, right? They want to conquer everything using this Fragment of Evil as their greatest weapon,” Explained Lucifer.

“Ugh, no way... This is awful,” I muttered.

“It all gets more intricate as we delve deeper. This entire conspiracy has been going on for much longer than we initially believed. Perhaps even before getting your family’s fragment... Could it be... they already had fragments beforehand? This is why my lord, the Demon King, feared humans so much. They have no considerations towards self-preservation nor the preservation of the world... they are barbaric and greedy. By experimenting more and more with these fragments... they’re risking the entire world to collapse into Chaos!” Shouted Lucifer.

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Huh, I guess everything is connecting a bit. Even Laura and Takeshi are connected to my own past as my family was the holders of this damn fragment that is provoking all of these things to occur.

But now, what should we do? I had come here to slay some aristocrat pigs and the duke of this place, not to solve this entire issue. But now, I feel like I’ve entangled myself into this conflict. I don’t want to give away these kids, so I will be forced to act. It’s not like I am truly being forced, but I just want to do it for the EXP.

And well... I kind of feel strong hate for anyone who is daring to use this fragment that my family was protecting to do all sorts of atrocities. And like the good heroine I am, I will put a stop to it.

After all, everyone who is using it, or the byproduct of this item, in one way or another, is related to the whole scheme against my family, and therefore, they deserve to die through excruciating pain while having their souls devoured.

Yep, that's my resolve now... And the Vampires, sadly, are getting in the way of the Undead Queen. If I have to do a complete Vampire genocide, so be it. They're the bad-type of Majin who are doing things that were even against the beliefs of the Demon King they once served.

I suppose that after their boss died, they went pretty crazy and began doing atrocities. I don't know if they're doing this against humans to avenge their Demon King, but I am not going to let them play around with the treasure of my family, even less now that I've figured out that if they're using it so much, it most likely means they were probably behind the death of my parents and well... myself.

"Lucifer, it appears the Vampires are behind this entire thing, and quite probably, were the ones pulling the strings behind the death of my parents and my own death too," I said.

"...I know. I've also figured it out," He sighed.

"I know that they're Majin and most likely once served the Demon King, so I am going to ask you this... Are you okay with me slaughtering them all?" I asked.

"...Why do you even ask me this? Although I once saw Vampires as my comrades, that's long in the past. The Demon King is gone, and so is his Kingdom and legacy. What exists now is but the remnants of the past. Some like me decided to have new lives and move forward, while the Vampires, within their grudges, had decided to destroy humans from the inside out... but well, to do that, they also affected you, my master. I wish I could do them a favor and help them destroy the humans too, but you, as a former human, cannot let that slide, will you?" He sighed.

"I won't. But not because I was a former human. It's not a thing of race. It's more of a personal thing. Maybe if they didn't mix themselves with my family and had provoked their death through pulling the strings behind all these aristocrats, then I wouldn't even care... but now, I really care. I am going to kill this crazy scientist guy and probably destroy everything he has made...." I said.

"*Sigh*... Your response is within my expectations. I already guessed you would do that and think like this already. We have been together for some months now, so I've had enough time to know how you

act and think, Maria. Do as you please. I will help you as much as I can, as you're my Master," Said Lucifer.

"Aw, Lucy, you get so serious over things... But you meant that you're my bestie?" I asked.

"S-Shut up!" He cried out, blushing in embarrassment.

"Master, I will also stay at your side... Let's kill!" Shouted Partner, getting pumped up.

"I-I... Well, if these Vampires are truly threatening the life of these innocent people, then I feel it is also my duty to put a stop to them thanks to the holy light I've inherited from my ancestors through my evolution. And of course, Maria, you can count on me for anything," Said Emeraldine.

"Good to know that you're all up for the challenge!" I shouted, giving my thumbs up.

The two kids were surprised to hear our words.

"Erm, are you sure?! T-That man... he's strong," said Takeshi.

"And he also has many like us... the failures that came before us... There are many like those two monsters that chased us down..." Said Laura.

"Oh really?! Then even more free EXP, right? And you two are still Level 1. You should also level up a bit... Oh right, can you guys use any supernatural powers? And what are your Unique Skills?" I asked.

"W-We can use something called Demon Energy... or Miasma. It comes from the cores in our chests... But it's an unstable force," Said Takeshi.

"We can use it to conjure explosive magic that erodes living things... Like a deadly poison," Said Laura.

"I see!"

“And about Unique Skills... I possess [Fisher] and [Water Absorption]...” Sighed the boy.

“And I have [Twin Connection] and... [Detonation],” sighed Laura.

[Fisher] and [Water Absorption]? Is this because Takeshi died in the sea? Damn...

And Laura is even worse, Twin Connection and Detonation... is this because she died in the twin towers and through an explosion due to the airplane?! Ugh... This is beyond cruel. Who the heck decides these stupid Unique Skill names? Seriously...

“I-I see... I don’t know what those do... My Unique Skills are... Well, they help me drain Mana and pretty much use magic better,” I explained.

They had revealed their secrets, so it was only fair to do the same. The rest of my party already knew such things anyway.

And then, they decided to reveal what their Unique Skills could do.

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Takeshi and Laura showed us their Unique Skills effects. They were interesting, to say the least.

Takeshi’s [Fisher] allowed him to convert any stick into a fishing rod which had the ability to trespass material objects. It is as if everything it touched was water itself.

The hook it has is very sharp, and the fishing rod can pick up things and grab them tightly, allowing them trespass material objects to bring them to him.

He has been practicing with it ever since he gained consciousness, but its power was lacking by quite a lot. Plus, it required him to have higher stats to show off its true potential.

Apparently, he utilized it to escape by grabbing the key to open their cell using it. And the stick he made was created through the bones of the meat given to him as food.

And well, [Water Absorption] is quite literally the ability to absorb water.

It makes him immune to water attribute magic, and it should be possible for him to also survive underwater, though the true effects of this power had yet to be completely discovered...

And then there's Laura.

[Twin Connection] is a bizarre, Unique Skill as it allows her to choose someone as her "twin." Through this connection, both of them share certain abilities, such as being able to talk with one another through Telepathy, sharing each other's Mana, and even being capable of using each other's abilities to an extent, although their potential is reduced by 50%.

Meanwhile, her second Unique Skill, [Detonation], allows her to detonate objects that she touches and decides to explode.

The issue here is that this is not free as it takes too much Mana for her to even make a tiny marble explode. Also, the explosion itself is not that strong either because it is based on her Magic stat, which is very low at Level 1.

Nonetheless, she also used this to break through the facility, although she ended up completely exhausted...

In total, their Unique Skills are more than promising, and both of them could become pretty incredible fighters if they developed further. Even more, as they have the bodies of genetically modified superhuman Homunculus with the power of harboring the demon energy of the Fragments of the Dark God...

Though, after being told such explanations, some arose with questions.

“Wait, if you had such abilities, why didn’t you use them to fight back?” Asked Emeraldine.

“We did, thanks to them, we managed to escape the facility... but they’re not so good to fight, and consume a lot of energy, which we spent running away... Our stats are too low as well...” sighed Takeshi.

“We are Level 1 after all. Not much we can do even with Unique Skills, and our basic skills don’t help either... What can a Level 1 do against a Level 30 monster? We can either die or escape,” Laura explained.

“O-Oh... Sorry,” Apologized Emeraldine.

“Mana is extra hard for us to gather than others....” Takeshi added.

“Huh? Why is that?” I asked.

“Well, the crystal in our chest is constantly absorbing our Mana so, we never have it at full. It sometimes satiates itself and lets us recover sometimes, but after the Mana hits max, it begins to consume slowly once more,” Said Laura.

“Oh, that’s odd....” I muttered.

“Hmmm...”

Lucifer inspected the kid’s black crystal, and I did as well, through [Analyze].

...

[Black Demonite Heart Core (Grade: S-Rank)]

A special alchemy-made Core made out of pure Demonite; a special ore formed from the crystallization of secretions made by a Fragment of Evil of the Dark God.

It possesses the ability to produce Demonic Energy or Miasma in exchange for draining Mana. It enhances magic strength and proficiency, but the power it has can affect the minds and bodies of others, and therefore, it cannot be used without caution.

...

I see. It provides them with power they have yet to train, but in exchange, it constantly drains Mana.

If they level up some more, they can form enough MP, so the amount drained won't be as much, and they will be able to use the rest of the Mana for Skills.

But what about this Demon Energy or whatever? They did say they could use it to conjure some weird explosive magic, but it gets out of control, and it can even damage them back. They also mentioned that they felt tons of pain around the chest when they used it and often passed out on the spot.

I guess they have yet to mature enough for their bodies to be able to take the complete burden, despite being the "perfect" Homunculus that can use this power without breaking.

"Demonic Energy also has the power to mutate... We didn't look like this before. Our hair color, eyes, and even the horns we grew happened after that man forced us to use this power over and over again..." Said Takeshi.

"Huh?!"

"But even then, not many mutations have happened to us aside from this, meaning that we won't be as affected as... well, the failures, as he calls them," Laura added.

"The tests subjects... that failed became those monsters you fought. After he forced the demonic energy into their bodies, they ended up mutating into those chimera-like monsters... Some even became

completely different beings from their former human bodies, turning into slimes and other things....”
Said Takeshi.

“...Miasma or Demon Energy can do such a thing... And... Erm, how many failures were there?” I asked.

“He said there were at least a hundred before us... this is why we were named 101 and 102,” Said Takeshi.

So the reason these monsters had the souls of people inside wasn’t because they were inserted inside but because they used to be tests subjects with humanoid bodies like these kids... but then they just mutated into horrifying creatures after overusing this energy.

“Oh well, the past is in the past. If they come, we’ll kill them. There’s nothing to talk about in this regard... Now, what should we do? I was planning to wait until night before we strike,” I said.
