

A Ghost 801

Chapter 801 A New Army

Ding!

[You and your Party have slain [Giant Miasmic Mushroom Chimera King: Lv100 (A+++ Rank)] x1!]

[You and your Party have slain [Miasmic Giant Mushroom Aberration (B++ Rank)] x1009!]

[You and your Party have slain [Abyssal Dark Treant King: Lv100 (A+++ Rank)] x1!]

[You and your Party have slain [Abyssal Dark Treant (B++ Rank)] x1017!]

[You and your Party have slain [Titanic Demonite Golem: Lv100 (A+++ Rank)] x1!]

[You and your Party have slain [Demonite Golem (B++ Rank)] x1002!]

[You earned 485.000.000 EXP!]

[LEVEL UP!]

[LEVEL UP!]

[LEVEL UP!]

[LEVEL UP!]

[LEVEL UP!]

[Your Level has increased from Level 91 to Level 96!]

[All of your Stats have increased.]

[You earned Bonus System Points.]

[Your Job Class/Subclass Level has increased from Level 66 to Level 88!]

I'm getting closer to Max Level now... Three thousand of monsters, even if small fry, really give a lot of EXP... I don't know how much that huge tree will give us EXP-wise, but it must at least be over a hundred million.

"We're done with the small fry." Lucifer said, looking at the distance. "Should we advance right away?"

"I want to rest for a bit..." Takeshi sighed.

"I'm quite tired myself..." Laura agreed.

"Alright, let's take a break." I nodded. "How about we have something to eat? E-Even if the surroundings are quite lugubrious-looking. Every corpse has now become an undead, so you can think of them as... friends."

"I guess there's no helping it." Emeraldine sighed. "I am quite tired myself too..."

"Let's have a meal then!" Partner agreed. "I'm starving!"

"I'm quite hungry too." Lucifer groaned.

"Me too." Jonathan sighed, sitting over the floor. "Hahhh... I never thought I would go against thousands of enemies..."

Mostly everyone was exhausted, even the eager Emeraldine, so even if the surroundings looked a bit creepy, we didn't had any other choice than to prepare something to eat and fill our stamina.

This is also the perfect time to talk with Emeraldine about what I spoke with Takeshi and Laura about Ash... Although I don't know if she might agree completely to it, we have to try.

"Mama, can we have beef?" Nyx flew to my side. "Beef! Beef! Beef!"

"Hehehe, okay, okay." I smiled, giving her a head pat. "Let's have beef."

"C-Can I cook something too?" Tear suddenly spoke. "It is a meal that Veredorr used to make all the time for me and my brother..." She caressed her necklace.

"Sure, feel free." I smiled. "Come, I'll bring out the portable kitchen."

I quickly took out dozens of items at once out of my Inventory, Tear quickly started making some dough, and then prepared tomato sauce with grounded beef she had prepared beforehand.

Oh, she was making noodles?! Was that what Veredorr always made for her? Honestly, I can't even imagine Veredorr being a cheerful young man, I only remember him as a gloomy, and silent ghost.

To think that Tear holds such different and precious memories of him... It makes me kind of happy that she knows a completely different face of him.

"It's done! It is called Bolognese Pasta!" Said Tear. "I-I don't know if it is as tasty as how Veredorr used to make it but- Huh?!"

She quickly realized everyone started eating the noodles without hesitation. The tomato sauce was delicious, made from fresh dungeon-grown tomatoes from the dwarf country dungeons. The ground

beef was a combination of polar bear meat and frost snake meat, both were quite tender once ground so much.

The spices were quite simple, but there was indeed oregano, salt, and some pepper added into the whole mix, making the sauce fragrant and delicious. The only thing missing was parmesan cheese, which we sadly lacked.

"Ahh, it's so good!" Emeraldine said happily. "Did Veredorr really made such a tasty meal for you, Tear?"

"Y-Yeah!" Tear smiled happily. "It was my favorite meal when he made it for us... I wish he could be here, so I could share this food with him..." She smiled sorrowfully, eating the noodles.

"I'm sure he would love them." Lucifer said.

"For sure!" Jonathan agreed.

"It is really good." I nodded. "Well done, Tear! I never thought you had the knack for cooking."

"Heheh... I-I've been practicing... mostly to destress a bit." She smiled faintly.

"Tashty!" Nyx said. "Big sis Tear, can I has moar?"

"I-I didn't thought you would like it that much! Sure." Tear giggled, giving Nyx even more.

She also served us all a second plate, while the stew and grilled meat I was making was getting ready. I had also started making a pizza I had pre-made beforehand. Why? Well, I was craving pizza.

Even in these perilous moments, it is always important to gather together, and eat something with the family, to make bonds together, and grown attached some more.

"Ahh, the stew is ready! Is somebody still hungry?" I wondered.

"YEAH!" Everyone agreed, it seemed that as we grew stronger, our appetite did as well.

We ended eating the meat stew, and then the grilled meat which Nyx requested, and later we devoured the huge pizza I made. After eating so many foods made with the Cooking Skill, we gained a lot of buffs to our stats.

And while we ate, we also talked about what we discussed with the twins with Emeraldine, and she seemed to agree with it.

"If Ash... is truly sorry, and maybe was manipulated, then I think it is the right thing to help him somehow. Once we confront him... or see what's truly happening there, we can take a proper decision." She nodded.

"I guess that's better than just going for his head." Lucifer said. "Though... was that tree so big before it transformed?" Lucifer wondered.

The tree was over fifty times bigger than his own dragon form, so it was definitely not something easy to tackle, not at all.

"No, it was much smaller... It is as if its expanding." Emeraldine sighed with concern. "The Spirit Tree... We have to go."

"I agree. Let's get this done with." I nodded, leading our large party, and thousands of Undead.

Chapter 802 The Corrupted Spirit Tree

"You're nothing but a vessel, sleep well, and you won't even feel pain as you fade into nothingness, child."

Those were the words of that Vampire, of the one that found him. Even after having ran away so fast from where he came from, even after he found a village of good people that sheltered him.

He found him anyways... Even after he had lost the hope of ever finding his way back to his home country in Goldsand.

Threatening him to kill his entire family if he didn't cooperate, the boy, who was captured alongside many other children that lived on the streets or orphanages, was forced to cooperate.

After all the horrendous experiments they did to them, and as we saw so many children dying because they couldn't take this power...

He still remembered the agony as his brown skin turned completely pale from the mutations on his body, as his hair lost color, and his eyes became red.

"You're not a monster, child. You've evolved into a new being! A Homunculus- no, a Chaos Demon! You inherit the powers of the Evil God, and you're his perfect vessel! Someone that can carry his fragments!"

The crazy scientists that modified his body spoke strange words, which he didn't understand... Ash only wanted to go back home, to go back where his mother was waiting for him.

To go back to meet her and his little sister...

Monsters beyond his comprehension forced him to become a monster himself. Even as he screamed, cried, and asked them to stop, they would never have any mercy for him.

And that Vampire that always worn a strange mask, that glanced at him with such sharp, red eyes, as if he was nothing but an item...

He wanted to run away from that place, to run as fast as he could from there...

And the opportunity arose, on his confinement, someone that had been captured and modified differently, that had only arrived recently used his powers to free them all.

A young boy with brown hair and sharp green eyes, a strangely cheerful personality, and a strong feeling of righteousness.

"Escape! All of you! Before they come back!"

He remembered those words really well... And also remembers how much he regretted not even trying to bring him along, or not even turning back.

Ash continued running and running, while dealing with a demon living inside of his heart, that constantly whispered him words he always tried to ignore.

"Why are you running?"

"If you're so powerful, kill them all..."

"You're a coward!"

"Your body should be mine!"

He ignored those words, as he kept running, and running, and running.

Ash didn't know how much he ran; his feet were covered in ugly wounds and bruises. His entire body was nasty.

He was starving...

Yet when he finally arrived in front of a lush forest filled with life, which brought him so much joy, he collapsed before he could say a single thing.

For a moment, he thought he would die.

However, the kindness of a stranger saved his life. His warm hand touched his cold and tattered hand, and he was carried into his house.

He was slowly healed, and attended, like never before, until he woke up...

Ash meet August, an old Alchemist with a gentle heart.

It was perhaps just a few days he spent in that small village, where humans and elves lived together but... it was the first time on his life that he was truly happy.

For a moment, he thought he could move on, and forget about the past, and about all the traumatic experiences he underwent, and how his body... was transformed.

But he was very wrong.

"If you don't cooperate... I'll kill them all. Every single person in this village will die, and not in a swift way, but an agonizing way. I will make sure to make them scream in agony."

The words of the Vampire when he finally found him still echo within his poor, shattered heart.

He didn't had any choice.

If he wanted these people to live, he had to do what he was told... even if it by doing so, he would betray them all.

He asked August to bring him to see the tree, which was guarded by a special spiritual barrier that nobody could trespass unless the elves allowed them to.

And then, when he was finally able to get there with him, and touch the tree... While holding his tears, his power surged, the demon living inside his heart absorbed the tree, and his body slowly became one with it.

While mocking August to pretend he didn't care for him, the Vampire laughed, finding amusement in the tragedy that had happened...

"Well done... You were designed specifically to become our Monster Factory. Spread your roots across this entire forest, and infect it all. Create thousands, millions of monsters if possible. With the army that you'll create, not even the Empire of the God of Light will be able to fight back, child!"

The voice of the Vampire echoed as his consciousness slowly faded away...

"Your noble sacrifice will never be forgotten, Ash!"

Ash never could say a thing against this.

Always pushed around by others, always forced by others, always abused by others...

Forced to become a monster and forced to fill the world with them.

As his consciousness slowly fell more and more into the eternal void, he could only mutter a few words with his mouth.

"Please... someone... kill me..."

...

Maria and her family arrived near the tree, as she suddenly heard something. Something that reached the depths of her soul. The voice of a helpless, suffering child, that could only find solace in death.

"Ash?" She wondered, looking into the huge, monstrous tree in front of them.

"SO YOU'VE COME..."

However, before she could even step any further with everybody else, the tree itself spoke. Countless red eyes emerged across its entire body, as its branches became like tentacles, and a huge jaw with sharp fangs appeared below its many eyes.

"YOU... THE ONE THAT POSSESS MY FRAGMENTS... GIVE THEM BACK!"

"I knew it..." Maria sighed. "The one behind this entire thing was an Evil God Fragment."

Chapter 803 Against The Evil Spirit Tree

Maria and her family finally arrived at the end of this whole ordeal, the one behind this entire disaster, the Evil God Fragment that possessed the Lesser Yggdrasil Tree, mutating it into an aberrant monster, not at all similar to the adorable Root that Maria raised with love and care.

"I knew it! It was the Evil God Fragment all along! Did you possess Ash body?!" Maria asked.

"THAT BOY'S BODY, YOU ASK?" Laughed the tree. "WHAT IF I DID?! HE'S MERELY A VESSEL! A BODY I USE TO INFECT THIS MUCH MORE PRECIOUS BODY! THIS TREE FILLED WITH SPIRITUAL POWER... IT IS MINE! GAHAHAHA!"

"S-So Ash... Was he forced to merge with the tree?!" Cried Takeshi.

"He was a tool all along for the fragment!" Laura was surprised, although she had guessed correctly.

"I've always knew that my other selves became monsters due to the corruption into my soul..." Tyr sighed. "But this guy is honestly worse than the others by far..."

"I'm guessing conversing with this bastard's pointless." Lucifer sighed. "You filthy motherfucker, I'm going to tear you a new asshole with my claws." His dragon form sharp claws glowed with Abyssal Death Flames.

"We'll have to fight this thing together then..." Jonathan nodded, his aura spreading through the entire area, shining brightly with divine sunlight energy, his divine sword gleaming and resonating with his mana.

"I was waiting for this anyways!" Partner smiled, holding both of her spears. "Let's do this!"

"YOU! Are you the one that brought so much despair and destruction to my village?!" Emeraldine cried. "And to think you would use a small child as a tool... Unforgivable. I won't have mercy! I'm tired of all of this! Of how you've ruined my precious home! You're going down!"

Emeraldine had enough as well, roaring with fury. Among everyone here, she was the most frustrated, as her entire home was destroyed, devastated by this monster.

"No matter what we'll help Ash out!" Laura said.

"Somehow!" Takeshi nodded.

"I can detect a faint life force inside of the tree's bark." Maria explained. "Ash... is most likely there, still somewhat alive. However, the tree is slowly... fusing with him, in some more time, he'll end up being completely assimilated, we have to get this done quickly, and separate the tree and his body! If possible, I'll also absorb that Evil God Fragment!"

"AS IF I WOULD EVER LET YOU FIND HIM! THAT BOY'S MINE!" Laughed the tree. "NOW, COME, AND PERISH!"

TRUUUUUUMMMM...!

The enormous tree let out a powerful, catastrophic aura of dread, chaos, and darkness that engulfed everyone, swiftly weakening their bodies and minds!

Ding!

[The Monstrous [Chaotic Evil God Corrupted Yggdrasil Tree (S+++ Rank)] roars with fury!]

[His corrupted soul exudes a deadly [Chaotic Aura of Despair], which lowers all foes Stats by -50%, and decreases HP and MP Regeneration by -80%, while increasing all of his Magic Power and Defenses by +300%!]

FLUOOOOOOSH!

"Unngh?! T-This thing... Argh...!" Emeraldine started groaning in agony. "M-My power is being drained?!" She fell to her knees.

"Urk...! You bastard! What is this spell?!" Jonathan cried, suffering the same weakening effect.

"Argh...! It even affects me?!" Lucifer was shocked, as he felt he couldn't move his huge body as easily anymore!

"Urgh..."

"Hahhh..."

Takeshi and even Laura were affected, even when they were wielders of the Chaos Element.

"Mama...!" Nyx felt weakened too.

"Urgh... Those damn words..." Tear muttered, growing furious. "Those damn words remind me of that stupid crown!" The young Ice Giant roared angrily, as her powers continued surging.

FLUOOOOOSH!

Her frost aura started quickly freezing the ground and spreading across some of the roots of the huge tree!

"UNGH?!"

Her frost somehow distracted and temporarily weakened the huge tree, as Maria gathered the power of Tyr, his entire body fusing with her through her Spiritual Fusion Skill.

Ding!

[You have temporarily underwent Spirit Fusion with [Chaotic Evil God Spirit: Tyr]!]

[All Stats have increased by a further +300%, Chaos Magic Damage has increased by +500%, MP and HP are constantly regenerated!]

[Duration: 10 Minutes.]

"Your damn debuff is shit compared to this!" Maria roared. "[Shadow and Death Domain]!"

TRUUUUMMMM...!

Maria hit the ground with all her fury, as shadows and darkness spread everywhere. However, instead of hurting everyone like the tree's powers could, it helped them stabilize!

Ding!

[Your [Shadow and Death Domain: Lv10] Skill has completely cancelled the foe [Chaotic Evil God Corrupted Yggdrasil Tree (S+++ Rank)]'s [Chaotic Aura of Despair]!]

[Your Darkness and Death is much stronger, permeating the air and ground with it!]

[All of your Stats while being within this Domain increase by a further +150%, and your Darkness and Death Magic power increases by +250% while their MP Consumption reduces by -50%!]

[Additionally, compatible allies receive similar buffs, and even non compatible allies are not affected by negative effects!]

"It worked!" Maria smiled, as she noticed everyone was finally able to move much better now!

"M-MY AURA IS BEING CANCELLED?! N-NO! THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE!" The huge tree groaned in agony, his roots and branches quickly beginning to move, shapeshifting into hundreds of utterly gigantic spears. "I AM CLEARLY THE SUPERIOR FRAGMENT! PERISH!"

CLASH! CLASH! CLASH! CLASH! CLAAAASSSSH!!!

The huge spears made of gigantic wood branches and roots hit the ground as they attempted to impale everyone, but thanks to Maria's enhancements and her domain, things were looking pretty good right now!

Everyone swiftly evaded the attacks, as Maria kept her daughter Nyx close to her by making sure she was always behind. The little dragon girl desired battle above all else, but she was too young and unexperienced to get into such a deadly fight.

However, she couldn't fight against her desire to join anyways, and had to bring her along...

"Mama!" Nyx cried.

"Are you alright dear? Keep yourself behind mama and papa, okay?" Maria said. "Please, don't be reckless and stay behind. You can support us from afar, alright?"

"Please, Nyx!" Lucifer said.

Nyx, although young, knew she was very beloved.

"O-Okay!" She nodded, flying farther away, while being coated by Maria's shadows and her very soul to be further protected.

The same was with Takeshi and Laura, which quickly joined her at her side.

"You three, support us from afar! The cavalry will charge forwards." Maria smiled. "Everyone, are you ready?! Let's end this!"

"RATS! PERISH!"

CRAAAASSH!!!

Chapter 804 Don't Mess With Me!

"Rats?! You're calling us rats when you're just one ugly oversized tree?!" Partner roared furiously, her aura constantly growing out of her body into the shape of a swarm of bats made of blood and shadows. "Don't mess with me!"

She quickly spun in midair while using her two powerful Spears, piercing through the sharp spear-like roots coming at her constantly, shattering them apart with each attack!

CRASH! CRASH! CRASH!

"DIE!!!" The huge tree roared with utter madness, as several magic circles appeared around everyone, summoning huge fireballs made out of chaos flames!

FLASH! FLASH! FLASH!

"Not on my watch!!!" Emeraldine stepped in, unleashing the power of her magnificent spirit magic and imbuing her bow with the power of her two Divine Spirits. "[Divine Spirit Fusion]!"

FLUOSH!

Both Divine Spirits fused both her body and her bow, as her fairy wings grew into a much larger and beautiful size, while her long golden hair glowed as if it was made of light!

Countless divine tattoos emerged across her body, as her dress and armor changed as if they were made of divine spirit tree and light.

The bow grew into an enormous size, as a gigantic arrow made of spirit tree and light surged, spiraling together into a beautiful spear-like shape.

"[Divine Arrow of Yggdrasil]!!!"

FLAAASH!

The arrow flew into the skies, and then exploded, dividing itself into hundreds of smaller arrows of light, impacting every giant Chaos Flame Fireball and destroying them in midair!

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

"W-WHAT?!" The monstrous tree was shocked as he saw his plans being foiled with ease!

However, that was not all, while Partner attacked his sharp roots, a huge Death Dragon King and Maria stepped forward, accompanied by a hero of Sunlight!

"[Dark Eclipse]!"

FLASH! FLASH! FLASH!

Suddenly, hundreds of huge spheres of darkness and death concentrated magic emerged one after another, falling over the huge monstrous chaotic tree consecutively, bombarding his huge body!

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

"AARRGHH...! YOU DAMN BASTARD!" The monstrous tree roared, suddenly bringing out yet another power, as from within his branches and roots, enormous masses of corrupted phantoms emerged, mind-controlled with chaos and miasma, becoming huge chimeric phantasmal beasts! "[Miasmic Phantom Beast Legion]! Devour them!!!"

"ROOOARRR!"

"GRAAARR!"

"SHAAAAH!!!"

Hundreds of hue Miasmic Phantom Beast, most as strong as A Rank Monsters rushed into battle, trying to overwhelm Lucifer! However, the prideful Death Dragon King summoned his trusted weapon.

"[Scythe of Death]! [Reaper of Souls]!"

And swung his huge scythe furiously, cutting down the Miasmic Phantom Beasts several times!

SLASH! SLASH! SLASH!

Each time he cut them up, they wouldn't be able to regenerate nor fuse with others, immediately having the souls purified and freed from the control of the tree!

"M-MY PHANTOM BEASTS!"

The tree was clearly shocked over seeing such a thing, as he didn't put enough attention when Jonathan reached his head, his Divine Sword shining with divine sunlight.

"[Heaven's Fall]!"

SLAAAASSH!!

A huge slash using pure divine sunlight energy emerged from his sword as he swung it masterfully downwards, the dark skies opened up as a huge beam of light was summoned by his magic power alone, hitting the tree!

CRAAAASSSHHH!!!

"UUUAARRGGHHH...!"

The chaotic tree suffered the most as this powerful attack not only purified the miasma coursing through his body, but also the attack pierced through the wood of his body!

"Gotcha!"

Maria roared, flying towards the tree as it was distracted, her entire body shapeshifting as the powers of her various transformation skills combined together, once more bringing her into her titaness, demon, and snake-like form.

Her huge fists overflowed with both chaos and darkness, as she punched the tree several times, while using her weapons to slash and slice through the wood, trying to open a hole where she could get in and rescue Ash!

CLASH! CLASH! CLASH! CRASH!

"Y-YOUUU!!!"

The Tree grew more and more frustrated, as enormous spikes emerged from his body, piercing Maria's entire body several times while beginning to drain away her chaotic energy!

"You're up for a bad time if you try to do that!" Maria laughed. "[Purification]!"

Using the Purification Skill she gained from a powerful Title Skill, she imbued the tree with this purifying power through the spikes piercing her soul and body!

FLAAASH!

"UUUAARGGHH...!"

The tree quickly retrieved the spikes in horror, his gigantic body suddenly started moving, no longer stationary, as he began to step back, away from Maria and everyone else!

"You're not going anywhere!" Maria said. "Undead Army! Go!"

Her shadows spread out everywhere, as a huge army of Undead appeared behind the Tree, cornering him were the three S- Rank Undead that the tree had created just some time ago, now betraying him as Maria's allies!

"GERORORORO!" Toad, the gigantic chimeric miasmic mushroom unleashed a storm of poisonous and paralyzing spores, stopping the movements of some of the leg-like roots, while also employing their own body for the task! Their mushroom army was there as well.

"OOOOOHHH!!!" The huge Rocky, a gigantic Demonite Golem quickly stopped his movements, using their hulking body and gigantic strength, even if the body size was very different, there were thousands of golems helping out too.

"GROOOOHH!" Meanwhile, Bark, the corrupted chaos Treant used the same tricks as the giant tree, wrapping his roots and branches with his own roots and branches, an army of Treants also helped on holding the monster on place!

And not only those, but the rest of the Undead Frost Beasts, former members of the Frost Queen's endless army joined in, unleashing ice attacks which were combined with Tear herself.

"Somehow, I can still feel a connection with them..." Tear was surprised. "It is as if I can expand my powers into their bodies, and receive their help too!" Her necklace suddenly started shining brightly, as Tear felt the power of Veredorr himself coursing through her veins.

"Tear! Stop that bastard from escaping!!" Maria asked for help.

"Got it!" Tear roared, connecting her frost magic powers with the Frost Beast Undead that amounted over two thousand, her magic power received an amazing boost! "[Divine Frost Queen Magic]: [Niflheim's Frozen Coffin]!"

FLUOOOSH!

Chapter 805 Entering The Corrupted Tree

Tear could somehow feel the strength of Veredorr, his phantasmal icy aura encompassed her own body, and allowed her to easily connect her magic power with her former army, now converted into an Undead army, allowing her to use even stronger magic than before.

Magic that was only possible thanks to the boost that the Crown of Skadi gave to her!

"Veredorr, I can feel your strength within me..." Tear smiled, glancing at the hue tree. "[Divine Frost Queen Magic]: [Niflheim's Frozen Coffin]!"

FLUOOOSH!

A huge wave of divine frost magic surged from within her entire body, reaching the back area of the chaos tree, and instantly freezing almost all of his lower half! Ice grew everywhere in the ground; his entire body was completely and totally paralyzed now!

"URGH...?!" The monstrous tree groaned. "I-I CAN'T MOVE...?!"

"You're a damn tree, so better stay where you are!" Maria roared, pushing forward as she attacked the tree with everyone else.

"Y-YOU DAMN BASTARDS!!!"

The voice of the Evil God Fragment echoed from within the tree's many jaws, as his upper half started to shapeshift, gaining hundreds of tentacle-like branches, attacking Maria and her allies!

Partner and Lucifer joined together to push through with their mighty physical might, slashing away the endlessly regenerating tentacles while firing powerful magic!

CLASH! CLASH! CLASH!

"NOT YET...!"

The Evil God Fragment roared furiously, his Miasmic and Chaotic Powers constantly surging more and more as the many red eyes spread across his tree-like body started firing beams of destruction!

However, Emeraldine and Jonathan utilized their rapid attacks and bright, purifying light skills to easily intercept all the beams, so they wouldn't reach anywhere dangerous. Spiritual Arrows and Starlight Sword Arts constantly stopped the beams.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

"Ungh...! They're really strong!" The Evil God Fragment thought. "I need more time to completely assimilate this damn child... However, at the very least, if I attack them from behind...!"

The monstrous tree stealthily started growing roots below the ground, moving them farther and farther away, as hundreds of them surged out of the ground, growing larger and larger, slowly preparing to pierce his foes from behind!

However, Nyx, Laura, and Takeshi wouldn't let that happen, quickly noticing what was going on. They quickly attacked the gigantic spear-like roots one after another!

"[Infernal Explosive Demon]!" Laura said, her powers of Chaos and Explosive Fire Magic combined together, as she summoned a manifestation similar to the Evil God himself, surging from within her own core, as it was made out of the Evil God's Fragment secretions.

A gigantic demon made of dark red flames emerged, immediately reaching the roots and attacking with a gigantic barrage of fist attacks, which generated constant explosions around the surroundings, burning them and turning the roots into ashes!

BOOM! BOOM! BOOOM! BOOOM!

"[Ocean Domain]: [Tsunami]!" Takeshi roared, spreading out his domain of water and oceans around and bringing down a huge tsunami, which quickly shattered into pieces dozens of huge roots, covering a wide scale!

SPLAAASH!!!

"[Phantasmal Dragon Fusion]!!!" Nyx roared, as hundreds of Phantom Dragons she had summoned fused with her entire body, creating a huge draconic phantasmal aura around her, which she controlled as if it were an extension of her body, unleashing phantasmal dragon claw attacks, and a powerful death phantom flame breath!

CLASH! CLASH! CLASH!

BOOOOMMM!!!

The plan of the chaos tree was completely foiled by the brave children, as he was incapable of attacking his foes from behind! Not only that, but Tear and the Undead Frost Beasts constantly kept freezing his lower half, even as he kept discarding his wood and regrowing some new one.

He was stuck! Completely cornered, and he couldn't even fly, nor escape underground because he would easily be found out anyways!

With his lower half frozen, his roots being destroyed, and his huge upper half being attacked by Maria and her strongest allies, the Evil God Fragment grew madder, incapable of keeping himself calm!

"GRAAAH! YOU WRETCHED BASTARDS!!!"

TRUUUMMM...!

A huge shockwave of pure chaotic miasmic energy surged from his gigantic body, as he attempted to throw everyone away with it and swiftly escape somehow!

However, Maria easily caught that shockwave of power, opening a strange black hole on her chest, the power of her [Ultimate Skill: Yog-Sothoth], and absorbing all of that energy for her own nourishment!

"HUH?! IMPOSSIBLE...!"

"Thanks for the meal, dumbass!"

Maria laughed, as her weapons swiftly and temporarily fused together into a huge black spear, the same spear she had used before to fight her mighty foes, Laevateinn! While the tree was overwhelmed and shocked, she attacked the area where Jonathan and Emeraldine were attacking the post, which was now weakened severely by their purifying magic!

"[Piercing Spear Attack]!"

Using the Level 10 [Piercing Spear Attack] Skill, Maria's spear blow's power was enhanced several times over, giving her enough power to pierce through the hard bark of the chaos tree finally and completely!

CRAAASSHH...!

"GRAARRGHH...!"

Giving out an agonizing scream, a large hole was created within his bark, which Maria swiftly entered through by transforming into a mass of phantasmal and chaotic energy!

"Emeraldine, come with me!" Maria said, quickly grabbing Emeraldine with her shadows and dragging her along, after all, she'll need her magic to do what she wanted to do!

"M-ME?! UWAAAAH!" Emeraldine panicked a bit as she was dragged along.

FLUOSH!

Once both arrived at the enormous wooden interior of the chaos tree, they glanced around in shock, but didn't really had any time to sightsee at the place, as the corrupted, miasma-covered wooden walls quickly opened millions of red eyes, glaring at them.

"YOU BASTARDS! GET OUT OF MY BODY!"

Large spikes emerged out of the walls constantly, trying to pierce their bodies! However, Maria swiftly grabbed Emeraldine and protected her as she traveled across the entire interior, going higher and higher, where she sensed Ash's presence.

"STOOOP!" The tree roared in frustration, constantly growing more and more walls made of wood, only for Maria to shatter them all using her spear!

CRASH!

CRAASH!

CRAAASH!

CRAAAASH!

Until finally, Maria and Emeraldine reached the top of the tree's interior, finding the small and weakened body of a boy slowly being merged with the tree's roots and miasma.

"Ash!"

Chapter 806 The End Of The Corrupted Tree

"STOP! DON'T YOU DARE TOUCH MY VESSEL!"

The voice of the Evil God Fragment echoed from within Ash's body, as his miasma and soul transformed into a monstrous wolf-like beast, opening its jaws, and trying to devour both Maria and Emeraldine with ferocious bites!

CRASH! CRASH! CRAAASH!

However, Maria swiftly shapeshifted her body around, utilizing her brand-new Eldritch Body Skill and her Spirit Fusion with Tyr to become an even more terrifying abomination, catching his bites, and then devouring the wolf back to nothingness using a single and deadly bite!

CRAAAASH!

"AARRGGH...! UNGH...! M-MY POWER...! YOU DEVOURED MY POWER?!"

The Evil God Fragment was left temporarily weakened, as he realized Maria's attack devoured a part of his powers, and he couldn't summon the same power again for at least a few seconds before he charged some more.

"Ungh...! W-What is... happening?" Ash muttered, his red eyes opening weakly as he woke up from his slumber due to all the commotion.

"Emeraldine, now! While the bastard's reloading his ammo!" Said Maria. "Hold my hand!"

"O-Okay!" Emeraldine nodded. "Don't worry, Ash, we'll help you!"

Maria temporarily fused a part of her soul with Emeraldine, as both of the girl's souls, and powers, merged as one, piercing Ash's chest and entering his own body and soul!

"Ungh?! Agh...! Aaaarrgghhh...!"

FLAAAASH!

While Ash screamed in agony due to the pain of having his soul tampered by Maria, the two girl's consciousness quickly landed on a completely different place, a dark and deserty wasteland.

"This is... what is this place?" Emeraldine looked around.

"This is the Soul Scape that the Evil God Fragments create." Said Maria. "Before I devour a fragment, I always have to fight their minds and wills in here! However, this time, we can't just do that, I need your purifying power so we can separate the Evil God Fragment out of Ash and save his life!"

"I see!" Emeraldine nodded, just before a huge mass of chaos and miasma surged in front of them...

"You... You bastards!" It roared, shapeshifting into a huge wolf of over fifty meters, possessing two large heads, black fur, and several Demonite horns spread across its body. "Now that I've got you here, you won't be able to escape so easily! I'll devour both of your souls, and come out on top as- Huh?!"

FLUOSH!

Ding!

[You have activated the full power of all your [Evil God Fragments]!]

[All of your Stats have increased by +500%, your Chaos and Miasmic Power has increased by +1000%!
Due to the enormous pressure, this transformation only lasts for a small time.]

[Duration: 3 Minutes.]

Maria's entire body shapeshifted and became even larger, and even monstrous, completely overpowering the wolf and pushing it down into the floor!

"You can't hope of winning against us when we've got so many fragments on us already, dumbass!"
Laughed Tyr.

"Y-YOU FAKERS!" The two-headed wolf screamed in frustration, constantly trying to free itself, only to be pushed further down!

At this point, Maria was just bullying him!

"Emeraldine, now! Use your magic to purify this being and connect with Ash's Soul, I'll help you on that part!" Maria said.

"Okay!" Emeraldine nodded, putting her hands down into the floor, this entire Soul Scape was already connected with Ash after all! "[Divine Yggdrasil's Aura]! [Divine Spiritual Domain]!"

FLAAASH!

A bright divine light spread across the entire place. The darkness started to be constantly purified, as even the huge two-headed wolf began to turn into ashes slowly, while at the same time as being devoured by Maria.

"AAARRGGHH...! S-STOP! I HAVE... BARELY ACOMPLISHED ANYTHING YET!!!"

The Evil God Fragment roared with endless resentment and rage, but it was too late. Emeraldine's and Maria's combined powers pierced deep through the roots of his own soul, and then reached Ash's soul.

"There!"

Emeraldine used her magic to quickly cut the strong connection between both souls, which was almost parasitic, and at the same time, with Maria's aid, purified the rest of the will of the Evil God Fragment, while successfully devouring it!

"Your little game ends NOW!"

"GRYYYYAAARRGGHHH...!"

With a last, agonizing scream, the entire soul scape collapsed, and the Evil God Fragment was completely devoured by Maria, while the little Ash was freed from its powers!

Both Maria and Emeraldine regained their consciousness in their bodies, quickly grabbing the unconscious Ash, who seemed to have healed thanks to Emeraldine's spiritual aura, and then quickly flew away from the collapsing tree, which was already long dead...

CRAAAASH!

RUMBLE...!

As Maria and Emeraldine flew back to their friends with Ash in Maria's arms, Emeraldine glanced back at the big Ancient Spirit Tree with a saddened expression.

The many memories she shared with this beautiful, and big tree, that protected and nurtured this huge forest for so many generations...

"Ancient Spirit Tree..." Emeraldine cried. "I'm sorry... For not being able to come here earlier..." She started crying, feeling regretful and saddened.

The enormous tree collapsed into pieces, a lifeless husk of what once was a beautiful and glorious tree that feed the forest with spiritual energy and life...

Once Maria and company regrouped, everything was finally over. The dark skies cleared completely, and with Emeraldine and Jonathan's light magic, Maria was able to purify the dead forest out of all the miasma around.

"It's finally done..." Maria sighed. "I'm sorry I couldn't had brought you here earlier... It is all my fault... All of this."

"Eh? O-Of course it is not your fault, dummy." Emeraldine sighed. "You did what you could... We did what we could. We saved an innocent life... It would had been even worse, if not even this child's life could had been saved."

"..." Maria sighed, glancing at the desolate and dead forest, now a husk of its former beauty and glory. "Yeah... For now, let's go back. I'll help you refill this place with plants and life later. We need to prepare and antidote as fast as we can."

"Right!" Emeraldine nodded, cleaning her tears. "Let's collect this dried wood left behind by the dead spirit tree. I think this might be enough!"

Chapter 807 Making A Cure

(Maria's POV)

With the help of Emeraldine's Alchemy and the assistance of Partner's lower-level Alchemy, alongside all of my Alchemy Skills and our combined knowledge and experience, we managed to create a cure for the Miasmatic Mold infecting the villagers, it took us almost half a day, and we didn't rest until we finally got it right.

It was tiring, but once we finished, the people slowly felt better, the effects were almost instantaneous, the mold was cleansed from their bodies, and their bodies slowly regained their vitality. The people still had to rest, so we left them sleeping through the rest of the day.

Emeraldine wanted to go back to the forest and remake it right away, but we stopped her and told her to eat and sleep, she was too exhausted, and overusing her powers would only do her more bad than good.

"Zzzzz..."

And just as I told her, she was indeed just sleeping right now, the moment she sat over the bed, she fell asleep instantly! Geez, she was really exhausted.

"Sleep well, dear."

I gave her a little kiss in her cheek, and covered her in warm bedsheets before leaving downstairs, as I joined everyone else on continuing our small dinner.

As for Ash, he was also sleeping in another room, he seemed healthy, but we didn't know when he would wake up now.

He felt different, however, the Demonite core on his chest had been purified, as if I had accidentally drained all the miasma when I ate the Evil God Fragment in there.

It was now glowing with a transparent, silver color, and instead of holding Miasmic or Dark powers... it seemed to have absorbed whatever was left of the Ancient Spirit Tree's powers, maybe even the tree's soul.

"Ash seems to be stable, and Emeraldine's sleeping peacefully." I sighed in relief, sitting down and drinking some tea. "Finally, there's peace..."

"Yeah, it was rather rough." Lucifer sighed. "At least, the child's fine now. At the end, he was indeed victim of that fragment, and probably of whatever vampire was chasing him around and forced him to do this."

"If he wakes up, we'll have a lot of questions to ask to that brat!" Partner said.

"Hahaha, well, it would be better if we go easy on him. He must be someone similar to Laura and Takeshi." Said Jonathan.

"I pity him... He reminds me of myself, when I was controlled to do things I didn't wanted to do by that crown..." Sighed Tear. "He's healthy, right?"

"Yeah, don't worry." I nodded, Nyx sitting on my lap the second I arrived.

"Mama, can we play with Ash when he wakes up?" She wondered innocently.

"Hehehe, maybe?" I wondered. "But for now, just let him rest, he's very tired."

"Aww... Oway." Nyx nodded, eating a big sandwich her father prepared for her. "Nom, nom, nom..."

"Should we stay longer here?" Wondered Lucifer. "Or...?"

"I.. I would love to stay longer, but I'm worried about my brother..." I sighed. "For now, let's just stay another day for tomorrow, and depart past tomorrow, so Emeraldine can spend the rest of the day with them. In fact, if she really wants to... I wouldn't mind leaving her behind for a while, so she can connect back with her family."

"R-Really? But without Emeraldine around..." Partner got a bit sad.

"Partner, don't be selfish." Lucifer sighed. "Emeraldine can do as she pleases. She's not chained to anybody. We've freed her from such a thing long ago..."

"It all depends on her anyways! Not like she'll disappear or something, we can come visit her or something." I smiled. "I just want her to be happy."

"I guess you're right..." Partner sighed.

"I know its hard but... Let's keep moving forwards." I sighed. "Even after all that has happened... Let's enjoy the little things too. Tomorrow's a new day and all!" I tried to cheer everyone up.

It worked only a little bit, but hey, that's everything I could do right now...

Later, as dinner ended, I helped Nyx go to sleep, and then I decided to take a warm bath while glancing at the moon from the window of the bathroom.

And finally, I decided to check on my annoying System Notifications, which I've ignored because I was too concentrated with everything else.

Ding!

[You and your Party have defeated the [Chaotic Evil God Corrupted Yggdrasil Tree (S+++ Rank)] x1!]

[You earned 200.000.000 EXP!]

[LEVEL UP!]

[LEVEL UP!]

[LEVEL UP!]

[Your Level has increased from Level 96 to Level 99!]

[All of your Stats have increased!]

[You gained Bonus System Points!]

[Your Class and Subclass Level has increased to Level 96!]

[Several Skills have Leveled Up!]

[You Devoured an Evil God Fragment! Your Stats have increased as a result!]

Ahhh! I'm getting much closer to Max Level, well, that's nice. Though I wonder what I would even evolve into if that time comes... Maybe just another type of Titan?

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Once the next morning came, I woke up early in the morning, finding that Emeraldine was already awake, preparing breakfast for us and his uncle who had woken up all energized.

When I walked downstairs, I found everyone there too. It seemed this morning was rather beautiful as well, without the miasma contaminating everything, the sky looked so clean and nice.

"Good morning, Maria!" Emeraldine said with a gentle smile. "I'm preparing pancakes! Do you want some?"

"Sure!" I smiled. "Hello everyone- Oh, August!"

"Maria." August smiled. "Thank you for everything... I've just woken up, but now I feel like I was born anew! And the skies are finally no longer darkened... I heard what happened from Emeraldine... Again, thank you so much..."

"Oh, no problem about that. We were just doing what we could..." I nodded. "More importantly, about Ash..."

"Yeah, we already explained to him about that." Lucifer smiled.

"Hey, stop interrupting when people speak!" Partner said, bonking Lucifer's head.

"E-Eh? You do that all the time!" Lucifer angrily said.

"Nuh-huh, I never do that." Partner crossed her arms.

"You have terrible memory..." Lucifer sighed.

"Ahahahah... Well, yes, I did heard about Ash as well! He's still sleeping, but he seems quite healthy and fine!" August smiled. "I'm glad he's alright... That boy didn't deserved what happened to him."

"Yeah..." I sighed.

Suddenly, Nyx came flying from the second floor.

"Mama! Papa! Ash woke up!"

Chapter 808 The Goldsand Confederation

"He woke up?!" Emeraldine was clearly surprised. "T-Then we need to go see how he is right away! Uncle!"

"Right!" Her uncle nodded. "I need to check his health too, he might still be afflicted with something... And also, well, we need to talk about a lot of things."

Emeraldine's uncle had already forgiven Ash for what he did, it seems he always knew he was being forced to do what he did, and never truly held a grudge, even if the other people of the village did.

He is a good man, and only ended blaming himself for not being able to stop him, nor for being able to protect him... It isn't fair to blame himself, there are sometimes things we can't change, no matter how hard we try.

But as long as we can keep our lives, we can continue moving on, and try to redeem ourselves for not having been able to do anything against such things.

That's... well, that's something I learned through my two lives. After having died so tragically, I was never able to do a single thing about that.

But now that I've been given a second chance, I want to make things different, and right. I want to change people's lives for the better whenever I can...

And help those in need, that have been wronged unfairly by life, and those that lurk in the shadows, looking to take advantage of the powerless innocents.

Maybe I sound too corny and stupid, and maybe it is an unrealistic ideal... But that's what I want to strive forward to.

"Let's go meet Ash then." I said, as I guided the rest of my family to the second floor, and we greeted the young boy.

Ash was sitting over his bed while looking at the window, his face looked exhausted, and his eyes seemed to be devoid of light. It almost felt like he didn't wanted to be alive right now...

"Ash..." August said, entering the room.

"U-Uncle...?" Ash opened his eyes in surprise.

"Ash!" August ran towards the young boy, hugging him tightly.

"E-Eh?!"

Ash was clearly surprised, as August hugged him tightly, and started crying out of happiness that he was alright.

"I was so worried, Ash! I thought you would be dead..." August cried.

"W-Why? Why are you happy?!" Ash cried. "I only did terrible things...!"

"But you were manipulated to do that!" August said.

"B-But...!" Ash started crying. "Why...?! I betrayed everyone and destroyed the forest... Everything... this beautiful place... It's all my fault... I did all of it..."

"It is not your fault completely!" Emeraldine stepped forwards. "You were manipulated by forces you simply couldn't fight against. Even if you betrayed them... I can't blame you, Ash."

"Y-You're... And you! You're the ones that appeared in my dreams..." Ash pointed at Emeraldine and then at me.

"Your dreams?" I wondered. "Oh, we must have looked like that. We pretty much fixed that soul of yours and took away the evil voice you always heard."

"I-It is gone?! But I thought I would die... That voice..." Ash continued crying. "Why... why did you go to such lengths to save me...? Wouldn't it had been better if I died? My whole life... I've spent it running away, and being used by others... And then, when I finally found good people, I betrayed them... I'm horrible, I'm a monster! Why are you being nice to me?! You should all hate me!!!"

Ash started crying while angry over our forgiveness of his actions.

"We can't treat you like a monster, nor you're horrible as you said." August sighed. "We can't hate you either, you're a young, innocent child, and no matter what you did back then, it won't change that fact... I'm sorry for not being able to help you back then, Ash..."

"U-Uncle... Uncle! Bwaaah!" Ash quickly started crying even more, hugging August. "I was so scared... I'm sorry! I'm sorryyy..."

"It's fine." August sighed. "It's alright now... Calm down."

"Ash, if possible... We would like to talk about what you experienced and all of that." I said. "Regarding your experiences with the Vampires... And where did you come from."

"Yeah, is it possible?" Emeraldine wondered. "If it hurts too much to remember that, maybe not..."

"No... I'll talk, if it can help you even a little, I'll tell you anything I know!" Ash nodded.

"Thank you, Ash." I smiled. "How about we eat first? Are you feeling hungry?"

"Ugh... I do feel my stomach really empty..." Ash sighed.

"Alright, let's go downstairs. Can you walk?" Emeraldine wondered.

"I-I can! I think I can." Ash nodded.

He slowly stood up, feeling healthier and with more vitality than he expected. In fact, it took him a while to realize a fact he had not realized when he first woke up.

"Huh? My Miasma... Is it gone? I don't feel any fuzzy and weird feeling inside of me anymore... W-What's going on?" Ash wondered, feeling strangely weirded out.

"Well, looks like we did a few things there, seems like you lost that power." I smiled. "Maybe you'll be able to finally touch things without fearing to destroy them."

"Oooh... T-This is..." Ash was shocked.

"For now, let's go eat together... As a family, Ash." August smiled gently, holding the boy's hand.

"O-Okay!" Ash nodded.

We walked downstairs and had breakfast. Ash started eating fruits and pancakes happily, the flavors and the refreshing taste made him go almost insane while eating.

"So where did you come from?" I asked.

"From a place named... Goldsand Confederation." Ash explained. "I was... well, my mom... She died. And when I started being homeless, I was... kidnaped. I remember other kids also being kidnaped similarly. We were thrown into a strange underground room, and there were these creepy people with red eyes... They said we would be given powers beyond our imagination."

"Red Eyes..." I sighed. "Why are the Vampires trying so hard to be the villains now? They were wronged and all of that, yes, but do they have to hurt innocent people to accomplish their revenge? Don't they realize they're becoming worse than those that wronged them in the past now?"

Chapter 809 An Elf's Love

Apparently, Ash came from the Goldsand Confederation, our next goal in this journey. He lived there as just another kid, but his mother died and then he was kidnaped... I didn't wanted to ask too much though, but it seemed the Vampires are working even there.

"I was... well, my mom... She died. And when I started being homeless, I was... kidnaped. I remember other kids also being kidnaped similarly. We were thrown into a strange underground room, and there were these creepy people with red eyes... They said we would be given powers beyond our imagination."

"Red Eyes..." I sighed. "Why are the Vampires trying so hard to be the villains now? They were wronged and all of that, yes, but do they have to hurt innocent people to accomplish their revenge? Don't they realize they're becoming worse than those that wronged them in the past now?"

"They used to be just and righteous, a family of knights." Said Lucifer. "When most of them died in the war against the Demon King, most likely... those that survived decided that their righteous and just ways were not necessary if they wanted to destroy their enemies, the humans. I guess those that survived did so by doing the nastiest of things imaginable, while slowly infiltrating human society."

"They've been infecting the human society ever since. I know they harbor deep hatred against us but... To go as far as to kill innocents. Do they believe this is the way they are taking revenge on our kin for doing the same before?" Jonathan sighed. "Hahh... I guess I shouldn't really comment on this, despite

being seen as a hero and praised by many, I barely know these things, the politicians have been hiding this even from me."

"The Goldsand Confederation is also a rather lawless place." Said August. "While in the center and the south of Midgard, there are mostly kingdoms with laws we abide to, the Goldsand Confederation was built upon large groups of wealthy merchants that declared the Goldsand Desert as their territory. It is divided into many sub territories, most of them unprotected and lawless. Only the richest merchants and their descendants enjoy peaceful lives there... They most likely benefit out of the endless and constant corruption of the whole place."

"Well now, that's rather sad, is it not?" I sighed. "I guess it is the perfect place for those Vampires to do as many experiments as they wanted. What they did with the twins and all those other people they experimented on, the chimeras, and the slaves they had which we rescued... It was just a small-scale project somewhere else; I assume."

"Is there anything else that you would want us to know, Ash?" Asked August.

"W-Well, more than that... I don't really know. I was experimented and given this strange crystal in my chest." He sighed.

"I guess that's what makes us different too." Takeshi said. "While he was modified, we were created almost from scratch as artificial beings..."

"Yeah, they're probably mass-producing modified children for some reason... Maybe for the same reason they made Ash in here become something like a monster summoner for their army." Said Laura.

"I think they could be planning to amass a great army of monsters, using these modified children with Evil God Fragments' secretions must be essential for their plan, as Miasma can create monsters endlessly in the right conditions." Lucifer analyzed.

"Ugh, my head hurts a bit... I don't get half of what's going on!" Partner complained.

"Is there anything else you know?" I asked. "I... Have you ever meet a boy named Arthur Belle? He's... slightly blonde, maybe clear brown haired?"

"N-No, I don't remember anybody named like that..." Ash sighed. "I'm sorry..."

"A-Ah, well, that's fine." I sighed. "It might actually be a relief-"

"But I do know of someone that was blonde and brown haired. He was really nice, and helped me escape back then... I don't know what has happened to him ever since, but he was also... someone like me." Ash sighed.

"I-I see... Well, it could be just anybody else..." I sighed. "I just hope he's alright... But if there's... really the possibility he might be in a similar situation as yours, then I have to get there as soon as possible. We'll be leaving tomorrow." I said, as everyone nodded. "Of course, we need to restore the forest too. Ah, and about this... Emeraldine, if you don't want to, you don't really have to come along." I smiled back at her.

"Eh?"

"I mean, we've only arrived here for like two days... And I know you want to stay here with everyone you love, your uncle too... And you want to help the forest regrow completely. I doubt we can do that in just a single day. And all of that... Don't worry, you can stay here as much as you want, I don't want to force you to come along. I just want you to be happy." I smiled back. "I've seen you smile in here, like never before... I know this is the place you really belong to."

"M-Maria..." Emeraldine was left surprised. "I-I...!"

"It's fine, really." I nodded. "Don't feel afraid either... I don't want to force you to come along with me anywhere... You're free, free to do whatever you want."

"..." Emeraldine suddenly remained in silence, glancing into the table.

Then, her aura started surging from her body. Her face grew... red? And her eyes seemed very angry! What the hell?!

"Maria you idiot! Dummy! Stupid!" Suddenly, she jumped over me and started hitting me with her arms.

She was coated on holy light, and it actually hurt a lot!

"Ouch! Ay! Hey, what are you doing?!" I cried. "Why are you angry?!"

"Why wouldn't I be angry?! How can you say that to me after everything we've gone through?! I might be happy in here... But I'm even happier at your side! At the side... of the family we've built together!" She cried, sitting over my legs. "And with the whole thing about your brother... There's just no way I'm leaving your side! Idiot!"

"E-Emeraldine..."

Chapter 810 Yggdrasil Heart

"You big idiot! I won't leave your side! And this is not because you're forcing me or something... I'm with you because I really love you!" She started crying in front of me. "S-So... don't say those things! It really hurt my feelings... that you think I would love to be here rather than with you!"

"E-Emeraldine... Okay, I'm sorry... Calm down, dear." I hugged her tightly. "I love you too, geez, I really screwed it up... I just wanted you to be happy, but I guess I misunderstood, hahah..."

"Idiot, dummy!" Emeraldine continued bonking my head with her holy light-imbued fists.

I deserved that pain... honestly.

"I'm sorry... I love you too." I sighed, giving her a head pat.

"Dummy..." Emeraldine sighed, pouting, as I gave her a tender kiss in her soft lips so she could calm down a bit.

"Dummy, mooch... Idiot, hmm~" Although she continued belittling me while we kissed.

"Let's go together then, once what we want to do is done, we can come visit your family again..." I smiled at her. "C-Come on, don't be angrier..."

I've never seen her so angry before, she must have been really hurt! Ugh, I'm a stupid idiot.

"Okay..." She sighed. "But don't say dumb things like those again. I'm with you on my own volition. You've never ever forced me to do a thing! Geez, why would you ever think that?!"

"I-I'm sorry... I was stupid for thinking that." I apologized again.

"Yeah, you really are!" She said.

"Hahahah, I'm glad you've found someone that loves you and cares for you so much, dear Emeraldine." Said August. "And you seem very lovely. It is so cute. I wish your mother was here!"

And quickly, we realized we were actually being watched by everyone...

Ah, now I'm a bit embarrassed...

"Y-Yes..." Emeraldine slowly sat down again. "A-Anyways! As Maria said, let's get this forest restoration project done, so we can go rescue her little brother!"

"Alright!" Everyone cheered.

As we walked into the desolate, deserted area with only dead trees, we talked about how we would do things. Eventually, Tear wondered something.

"I wish Root could be here, he's a literal tree, right? I know he's protecting our home, but it would be nice if he could come for a bit to spread some of his roots too." Tear said.

"Actually, about that..." I said.

RUMBLE!

CRAAAAASH!

The ground below shook, as a huge root emerged underground. Large roots started spreading out, growing a few little saplings at first, until one of them suddenly grew a small face, two holes as eyes, and a long twig nose.

"Master gyuh! I'm finally here gyuh!" He said.

"ROOT?!" Everyone was shocked.

"Yeah, I called him to come here since yesterday, seems like his roots finally were able to come as far as this place! Amazingly done, Root." I congratulated him.

"It's nothing gyuh! I've been able to extend my roots so far thanks to your constant Mana supply, master! Gyuh!" Root was happy to be praised, nonetheless.

"A-Another monster tree?!" August cried in fear, stepping back.

"I'm not a monster tree, gyuh! I'm a good tree!" Root said angrily. "Even the spirits like me!"

"I-It cant talk eloquently..." Said Ash. "And he's not malicious at all either. I can sense Miasma within him though, but it is balanced perfectly with nature and life, amazing..." Ash seemed very capable of detecting and sensing magical energies.

"Well, Root is more than an Undead, or a monster, he has become something like a Spirit, so we made a contract of master and spirit a while ago, I can supply him with mana so he can do awesome things like this even when we're far away from one another!" I giggled. "Sorry if he scared you."

"Now that I see much better..." August activated his spiritual powers as an Elf. "I can sense it, the same aura as spirits within this tree! What an odd fellow he is! So he's your pet, huh?"

"I wouldn't go as far as call him a pet, he's a friend." I laughed. "A member of our family, maybe even my son."

"Thank you so much, Root! I thought it would be hard to do it all on my own, but if we got you here, it shouldn't be so complicated!" Emeraldine smiled.

"I'm happy to help, auntie Emeraldine! Gyuh!" Root said.

"Alright then, let's begin now." I nodded. "Ash, I think you'll have to help us too!"

"M-Me?" Ash asked in surprise. "But what can I even do?" He wondered.

"Seems like you've not realized yet." Tear giggled. "The moment you were freed and we defeated the tree, something went inside of you. Haven't you noticed at all?"

"W-Well, I..." Ash was confused.

"First of all, you were purified of all miasma and dark energies." Takeshi explained.

"And then, your Demonite core became very clear, and white, even a bit silver colored, and gold." Said Laura. "It emanates the complete opposite of your powers before... Something is within you now, something that is not malign, but benign."

"This energy I've sensed since I woke up...?" Ash glanced at his own hands, as they glowed with bright yellow light. "Right... I was even able to accurately sense what Root was made of..."

"Yeah, my child." August nodded. "I think you've become the carrier of our Ancient Spirit Tree's Soul."

"His Soul?! Do trees have them?" Ash was surprised.

"Of course we do, gyuh!" Root complained. "You've got a very strong Ancient Spirit Tree soul inside of you! It was after all, some sort of lesser Yggdrasil, is it not?"

"R-Right..." Ash nodded. "But why? I thought the tree died... And it was all my fault..."

"The soul must have been quite resilient, and when the corrupted body perished, and your body was purified slightly, it entered and made you its new vessel, purifying the rest of your body." I explained my hypothesis. "Your Demonite core is no longer made of Demonite, but of something I'll call an Yggdrasil's Heart."

"Yggdrasil's... Heart?" Ash was surprised, as his chest started glowing bright gold...

"I think you have the power to help us revive the forest." Emeraldine said. "Ash, will you help us?"

"O-Of course! I'll help! It is... the least I could do." Ash started crying, as he nodded.

Looks like things are leading to a better conclusion than I imagined!