

Brand New 471

[Brand New Life Online: Rise Of The Goddess Of Harvest](#)

Chapter 471: Growing Stronger With Blackie And Naming The Skeletons

FLUOOSH!

As Elayne prepared a small meal to eat with Blackie and Rose, she absorbed Gustaf's enormous Magic Crystal. It had so much Mana that even after having been shattered, it held an immense power. If she were to absorb it all, wouldn't it feel like a slight waste?

Such a powerful Magic Crystal could also be used to make quite the wonderful equipment. The thing is, Elayne didn't seem to care, she was easily predicting only edgy-looking items would come out of fusing it with other equipment.

However, much like an enormous meal, she was unable to eat it entirely, and had to devour it by small bites slowly. Nonetheless, she was feeling slightly greedy, and only left a few smaller fragments, she used one of these fragments each for the three skeleton's evolutions, left a big chunk for Blackie to eat when he were to wake up, and then the other for Rose.

As the stew she was making using Great Tusk meat and other vegetables she grew in Arcadia's farm, she finished her powerup. The mysterious voice spoke into her mind once more, gracefully telling her how strong she had grown.

[You have absorbed a tremendous quantity of high-quality Mana, Nether has been purified.]

[Hundreds of new Spiritual Runes have been inscribed within the Magic Circle.]

[Your Magic Circle has improved from Tier 2 Rank 1 to Tier 2 Rank 5.]

[Several New Spells have been created: [Wide-Area Exorcism] [Light Blade] [Light Arrow] [Sunshine Veil] [Light Spirit Call] [Nature's Domain] [Terrain Dominion]...]

[Your Magic Power has improved tremendously.]

[Your body can now acquire a Physique.]

"It's done!" Elayne felt like she was overflowing with power.

Jumping four Ranks in just a few seconds was insane, and she felt she needed as much power as she could if she wanted to complete the Dungeon anyways. She had also made sure to engrave several spells that would come in useful in fighting Undead.

"Phew, with this it should be enough, though getting myself a second weapon might be a thing I should consider now, Irene you're strong but changing your shape really tires me out." Sighed Elayne.

"Geez, how can you say that when we slain that baddie so amazingly?! Geez girl!" Sighed Irene while feeling slightly sad. "Well, how about you give me more upgrades then?"

"Hmmm, there's nothing in materials that could be used, and the magic crystal is not compatible with you, sorry- Oh, look at this though."

Elayne grabbed a gigantic Black Axe, which was the weapon Gustaf was using. It was already a Magic Weapon and seemed to have the Dark and Death Elements, when Mana was imbued into it, the giant axe would generate a powerful Phantasmal Flames Aura that could even deal damage to a target's soul.

"Wait are you serious?! Don't replace me with that!" Irene complained.

"Geez I am not replacing you with anything." Elayne sighed. "Fine, I won't use anything else, but I'll save it just in case."

She quickly saved the Axe inside her Inventory, while she noticed the three skeletons looking at the weapon with admiration.

"Boss can't we use it though?"

"It is just fitting for us!"

"Also you have yet to name us..."

"Right..." Elayne sighed. "Well, for now use the Wooden Swords I can create for you, they're specifically made to deal with Undead. I've personally enchanted them with Spirits and also used a Potential Cube in each one of them."

"Aww..."

"B-But the big axe..."

"Aw man..."

They were rather disappointed.

"Well, maybe if you behave well I could give it to you guys one day." Elayne said. "Anyways, if you don't remember your names then... You're Skellington, Skellrus, and Skullosus."

[You have named your Familiars Skellington, Skellrus, and Skullosus]

[Their Hidden Potential is now Fully Unlocked.]

[Further Evolution Options are now available upon growing strong enough.]

[The Ability to digest Magic Crystals is now possible for their growth.]

FLAAASH!

All three of them began to overflow with magical power, just by being named they had unlocked a great deal of power.

"Uuuoh! A-Amazing! Oi, this is great!"

"Holy shit! Boss you're the best milf ever!"

"These names are just like what we are. You're so smart with your naming sense!"

Elayne started to giggle a bit at their comedic responses. It seems that with these wacky skeletons around she won't have much time to feel down.

"Cronch, crunch, nom..."

However, the sound of crunching something echoed around the camp, as Elayne realized little Blackie had woken up and was snacking on his reward. He ate the whole thing completely and then started overflowing with the power he had acquired.

"Blackie, you're awake!"

"Meoow!"

FLUOOOSH!

Out of the blue, Blackie gained a few gray stripes around his tail, and then a tiny black horn growing on his forehead. His claws had also become red.

[Familiar: Blackie has evolved into Tier 2: Rank 4 Demonic Shadow Black Cat.]

[Magical Power capacity has greatly improved.]

[Physical Capabilities have greatly improved.]

[New Spells and Abilities have been learned: [Shadow Embodiment], [Shadow Transformation], [Shadow Fusion], [Demon Aura], [Bloody Claws]...]

"Oooh, you got much stronger, dear! Congrats!" Elayne was tremendously happy, seeing her little black cat turn out this OP was a nice thing to behold. She quickly held him like she usually did and caressed his little head, while Blackie started purring and rubbing his face on hers.

The three skeletons were watching filled with envy, as Blackie sometimes gave them a cocky smile.

"T-That damn cat, he's got the boss love all for himself!"

"Not fair! Please spoil me too boss!"

"I never thought I would be envious of a cat in his whole life- I mean death!"

As they made so much noise, Rose slowly woke up.

"Nnngh- Ah! W-What happened? Huh?! W-Where is... that big guy?" Wondered Rose. "Huh?! Skeletons?!"

"Rose! I am glad you're alright. These... guys are my new familiars. Please just... ignore their dumb words. They're useful though." Elayne said apologetically.

"O-Oh, that's... interesting. Nonetheless, it seems we won... Sniff." Rose began smelling something tasty. "Oh, are you preparing food? It smells so good..."

"Oh, so you can eat normal food too? Then let's eat right away, it is ready." Elayne said with a smile.

While Elayne and Rose were taking a small break before continuing their search, Rita and Mark weren't having it so easy, as both were fighting powerful Mid-Bosses...

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Chapter 472: Overcoming Nightmares

"GRYYAAAAAH!"

CLAAASH!

A gigantic, chimeric undead composed of dozens of corpses tied together roared furiously, hitting the ground, and shattering the ground. Its four enormous limbs were composed of many other limbs, and once it hit the ground, the limb suddenly split apart into many skeletal and fleshy hands, trying to catch Mark and Josuke.

"I'll get you!!!"

The monstrous chimeric undead was unlike the other undead monsters they had fought before, as it was more than capable of speaking, and seemed to be some high ranked lackey of Phantasmos.

"Not so fast!" Roared Mark, as he quickly summoned a large spear-shaped totem made of blazing wood, with the decorations of a monkey, a bird, and a lizard. "[Triple Faced Spiritual Totem Spear]!"

FLUOOOOSH!

The power of these three Beast Spirits activated immediately as they emerged from within the wooden spear and combined themselves with the infernal flames.

CLAAAASSHHHHH...!

Mark pierced the gigantic, over five-meter-big Chimeric Undead Beast with the Totem Spear, as the flames started to spread around its body. All three of the beast spirits quickly started adding to the damage by attacking it and then... exploding!

BOOOOOOOOMMMMM!!!

"GRUUUAAAAHHH!"

The Chimeric Undead Beast seemed to have stood no chance against fire attribute wielders. It was made of rotting flesh and bones, which were very easily destroyed with blazing explosions after all.

"GRUUUHHH...! [Abyssal Nightmares]!"

However, although a large part of the Chimeric Undead Beast was blown to bits, it was still standing, and it quickly decided to activate a rather nasty trick.

FLUOOOOSH!

Darkness started filling the entire area, as a black fog seemed to slowly force Mark and Josuke to enter into a state of drowsiness.

"Ugh...! What the heck is this?!" Mark was flabbergasted.

"Nightmare Magic?!" Wondered Josuke. "How come an undead like this has this power?!"

"Kehehehehehe! Even if you don't fall asleep, these nightmares will consume you! Your deepest fears and traumas shall devour your mind!" The Chimeric Undead Beast laughed evilly.

"Unnnnggh...! D-Dammit!" Mark groaned, falling to his knees, as he started gasping for air. His mind was in complete shambles, as countless memories and traumas he wanted to not remember started to resurface one after the other, making him go insane.

Without him realizing, a part of his mind was sent to his childhood.

"What do you mean you got a B?! We've been studying diligently for all the last weeks and this is how you repay your mother's efforts, Mark?!"

"I-I'm sorry mom... But the test was hard, it had tricky questions that-"

"DON'T TALK BACK TO ME!"

SLAP!

The young Mark's face was slapped hard by his strict mother, leaving his face swollen red. A few tears began flowing from his eyes, as he contained his pain and lowered his head.

"I'm sorry..." He started crying.

"You're going to start studying all day from today!" Said her mother, furious. "I will take away your TV and your Phone, and you will make sure to get As for the next tests!"

"O-Okay..." Mark nodded; his hands were trembling.

"My son, you have to understand, if you don't have good grades you'll never go to a good university! You have to work hard and study with everything you have. These years are very important for your academic development! You'll thank me later, when you realize how right I was." Her mother said, walking away.

The nightmares continued, as his traumas resurfaced one after the other. Most of the were about his own childhood. About the hundreds if not thousands of times his parents hit him for his "incompetence", the bad, discouraging words he always heard from them, and the bullying he received on his school.

He was so submerged in these nightmares and traumas that his mind slowly started to regress, he found himself within endless darkness, as a young child crying in the corner of a dark room, with nothing at all.

Mark had nobody. He couldn't trust nor love parents that treated him so badly and asked so much from him. He couldn't find friends; everyone abhorred him because his family was poor compared to the rich families of the children that went to that school.

He had nobody.

"Yes.... Hehehehe... Submerge yourself on your nightmares!" The Chimeric Undead Beast laughed, slowly crawling towards Mark, and opening its gigantic jaws. "Is it painful? Does it hurt? Don't worry... Once you're dead, all of that pain will go away!!!"

The monstrous beast's jaws opened wide, about to devour him whole.

"I've always been alone..." Mark thought, his eyes devoid of light.

However, amidst the darkness he was being engulfed into, a spark of light surged once more. He wasn't alone there. Within his very soul, there was always a piece of her, of Elayne.

"You're not alone, Mark."

"Huh?"

"I will be there for you, no matter what."

"Elayne...?"

"So please, don't give up so easily, alright?"

A beautiful lady made of light hugged his child self, engulfing him with her light and destroying the darkness transforming his psyche. In mere seconds, Mark was suddenly awake!

FLAAAASH!

The light within his soul emerged, burning the entire face of the Chimeric Undead Beast, just before a gigantic wooden fist made of flames were to grow out of his hand, punching the beast into the ceiling!

BAAAAAAMMMMMM!!!

"GRAAAAGGGH...!"

CLASH!

The Chimeric Undead Beast fell back into the floor, its amorphous, chimeric body started exuding a deadly, phantasmal aura, as countless of phantom hands emerged one after the other, directing themselves against Mark!

"You... How come you freed yourself from the Nightmares?!" Asked the Chimeric Undead Beast furiously. "DIE ALREADY! [One Thousand Phantasmal Hands]!"

Mark did not answer the question, remaining silent and concentrating his Mana into his knife, as it was quickly engulfed on draconic flames, which started to dance around him, taking the shape of a dragon!

"[Blazing Dragon Spirit Summon]!"

FLUUUUOOOOOOSSSHHH!!!

"W-What?!"

The Chimeric Undead Beast was impacted by the spectacle he saw!

By fusing his Beast Spirit Summoning Magic with the Dragon Flames within his magic knife, Mark was able to bring out a specially powerful entity!

"[Infernal Blazing Breath]"

"ROOOOOAAAARRRR!!!"

BOOOOOOOMMMMMM!!!!

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Chapter 473: Mark's Growth

Through the light within his soul left behind by Elayne, Mark was able to fight the Abyssal Nightmares that the High Rank Undead Monster conjured on him and Josuke, destroying it on the process. However, the powerful Chimeric Undead Beast had more tricks below its sleeve.

Not only was it able to use high tiered nightmare magic, but it possessed a powerful Phantasmal Soul on equal power to Giant Phantoms, if not slightly stronger. If he truly wanted to get rid of this monster, Mark had to go all out.

By fusing the Lesser Dragon Flames produced by the Ability within his Magical Knife with his Beast Spirit Summon, Mark was capable of temporarily summoning a Blazing Dragon Spirit.

"[Blazing Dragon Spirit Summon]!"

FLUUUUOOOOOOSSSHHH!!!

"W-What?!"

The Chimeric Undead Beast was impacted by the spectacle he saw. His Phantasmal hands were quickly consumed by the strong flames produced from the dragon-shaped spirit, which started spreading everywhere.

"[Infernal Blazing Breath]"

"ROOOOOAAAARRRR!!!"

With a simple command, Mark imbued his Spiritual Essence into the gigantic Blazing Dragon Spirit, as the creature opened its enormous jaws and unleashed an utterly gigantic blazing beam of flames!

TRUUUUMMM...!

BOOOOOOOMMMMMM!!!!

"GRUUUUAAAGGGH...!"

The Chimeric Undead Beast was incapable of fighting back against such an overwhelming attack. His entire body quickly started turning into pure ashes, as his phantasmal soul immediately retreated alongside its Magic Crystal.

"GRRRRRHFFF! You damn human...!" Roared the Phantom, revealing its true form! It resembled an aberrant, ghostly parasite-like bug with hundreds of legs like a centipede. It had sharp insectoid jaws, and sharp red eyes. "I guess you've pushed me far enough to recognize your strength! My name is Vermin, one of Lord Phantasmos Strongest Servants!"

"[Fireball Rain]"

Mark didn't had time to talk, he quickly realized this monster was much stronger than it originally made itself to be. Josuke was still on the floor, probably on a nightmare. Just like he protected him back then when he was unconscious, Mark felt like he had to give back the favor and protect him this time.

FLASH! FLASH! FLASH! FLASH!

Hundreds of giant fireballs started falling over Vermin, as the insect-like Phantom laughed, countering with his own Phantasmal Flame Rain Spell. Both blue and red flames started impacting each other, generating loud explosions.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOOM! BOOOOM!

FLAAASH!

Mark quickly leaped into the air, passing through the blazing explosions, and reaching vermin. By activating several spells, his entire body started to grow a blazing wooden armor carved with many animal faces, resembling totems.

"[Blazing Wood Totem Armor]"

FLUOOSH!

The Wings of the Bird Spirit emerged on his back, allowing Mark to easily evade the incoming attacks from Vermin, who viciously materialized the tip of his sharp tail and used it like a spear, attempting to pierce Mark's body with countless attacks!

CLASH! CLASH! CLASH! CLASH!

However, Mark either evaded or tanked the hits, while at the same time unleashing blazing slashing attacks with his knife. Each slashing attack was made of flames, and once it reached Vermin, they transformed into different animals, attacking him and evading his attacks.

BOOM! BOOOM! BOOOOM!

"Unnggh...! What sort of annoying magic is this...?!" Vermin was struggling to keep this up. His soul was being showered with deadly explosions of flames... but that wasn't all.

While fighting against the phantom, Mark quickly started trying out different elements. Although his affinity with flames was the greatest, much like Elayne, he was a Spirit Summoner.

And his Beast Spirits always had different elements, if flames are not good enough, then use something else, or combine them all.

"[Holy Light Tiger]! [Tempest Eagle]! [Rock Bear]!"

FLASH! FLASH! FLASH!

In the middle of the air, three Beast Spirits were summoned. A ferocious tiger attacked with slashes of its claws and deadly bites, firing beams of holy light against Vermin.

"GROOOAAARRRR!"

SLASH! SLASH! SLAAASH!

The Tempest Eagle, made of winds, summoned tempestuous winds and slicing gusts to overwhelm Vermin and at the same time, create a domain using these winds to not allow him to escape.

"COOOOH!"

FLUOOOOOOSH!

And lastly, the Rock Bear summoned giant walls made of stone to overwhelm Vermin and further cut his chances of escaping and moving away from Mark's attacks.

"GRAAAAHHHH!!!" Vermin groaned in fury; his entire body being covered on wounds that were not even regenerating. "GET AWAAAAAYYYY...!"

Vermin roared furiously, unleashing a phantasmal shockwave everywhere, the spirits were weakened and thrown away, but Mark utilized this chance. Seeing how Vermin struggled and screamed was the perfect opportunity.

"[Beast Spirit Fusion]!"

Mark quickly gathered the three Beast Spirits he summoned and imbued them into his knife, alongside his powers, and the light coming from his soul which protected him from the Abyssal Nightmare that was still surrounding him like a black fog.

FLAAAAAASSSHHH!!!

The knife suddenly underwent a temporary transformation, as the knife started to laugh, growing in size, and turning into a giant, red-colored blazing sword. The flames covering the sword were shining bright gold, with both holy light, winds, and the power of the earth itself.

"RAAAAHHHH!!!!"

Mark roared with fury, desiring to end this once and for all! His sword pierced through the weakened Vermin's phantasmal soul, slashing right through his Magic Crystal!

CRAAAAASSSHHHH!!!!

"GRYYYAAAAHHHHH...!"

BOOOOOMMM!!!!

The attack was so powerful it impacted the floor below, making a gigantic hole towards a lower floor within the dungeon, Vermin's phantasmal soul disappeared in an instant. He wasn't even a Death General, yet it was strong enough to force Mark to use all of his remaining Mana to deal with him.

"Unnggh..." Mark slowly crawled towards Josuke, checking on him while clenching on Vermin's cracked magic crystal and slowly purifying them before absorbing them and regaining his Mana, while growing slightly stronger. "[Healing Flames]"

FLUOSH!

Golden flames covered the red-headed Japanese man, as they slowly not only healed his wounds but his mind, he woke up, opening his eyes at long last.

"What... what happened?" He wondered, looking at Mark with a confused face.

"A bit too much." Sighed Mark. "But with this, I've given back the favor."

"Ah... Eh? Did you beat that thing all by yourself?!" Josuke was shocked.

"Anyways, we should-"

"KRIIIEEEEEEEEHHH!!!!"

However, before the two could relax for a bit, the scream of a gigantic creature coming from the hole Mark accidentally created in the dungeon reverberated!

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Chapter 474: Saved By An Hair

Before Whitey were to be devoured by the Rat Queen, Rita unleashed dozens of Shadow Bullets, barely managing to rescue her pet by a hair!

"[Shadow Bullets]!"

BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!

All the bullets miraculously landed on the Rat Queen's arms, filling them with holes and making her drop Whitey before she could eat him! Happy to see his master, Whitey jumped over Rita's shoulders and started licking her face.

"Kyu! Kyuu!" Whitey was very happy.

"Whitey! I was so worried- Ah." Rita quickly realized this wasn't going to get better.

After Rita managed to rescue her little White Rat, Whitey, she quickly was surrounded by hundreds of Small Rat Monsters that directly obeyed the Giant Rats she had fought and killed before, including their Giant Rat Queen, sitting over her throne of bones, who had intended to devour the adorable little white mouse.

"GRYAAAAAAHHHH! GRYKAAA!" The Rat Queen pointed at Rita with her tail, as dozens of Giant Rats and millions of Tiny Rats all glanced at her with fury!

To make things worse, there were even bigger Giant Rats wearing armor and holding weapons, Giant Rat Warriors. Rita quickly found herself surrounded! The Giant Rat Warriors slowly started to get closer, pointing their sharp spears and swords at Rita.

"Hu... man! KILL!!!" The Rat Queen ordered in human language. This only made things even creepier for Rita and her little mouse.

"Fuck..." Rita muttered.

"KRIEEEE!"

"RAAAAH!"

"SHAAAAH!!!"

The Giant Rat Warriors charged forward while hundreds of Tiny Rats attempted to distract Rita, aiming at her legs! Rita panicked, quickly pointing her shield at her foes.

"[Magic Shield]!"

FLAAAASSSHHHH!!!

By imbuing the power of Whitey's Holy Light and her own Shadow and Darkness Magic, her shield suddenly unleashed a giant barrier made of both darkness and light, an Eclipse Barrier!

BOOOM! BOOOM! BOOOM!

Beams of light and tentacles made of shadows emerged out of it, attacking every rat that got closer and blowing them away, keeping them far away from Rita!

CLASH! CLASH! CLAAASH!

"KRRRHHH..." The Rat Queen was pissed at seeing Rita resist her attackers, as she waved her hand and suddenly conjured a large magic circle.

"Wait, you're a magician?!" Rita panicked.

"Kurakh, terus, magna..." The Rat Queen spoke in her rat dialect, as a gigantic mass of miasma emerged atop her head, and she launched it directly at Rita.

"Agh!"

BOOOOOOOMMMMMM!!!!

The explosion was so enormous and strong that several of the other rats were blown away on the spot. The Queen seemed completely unconcerned about the health of her servants, and smiled while trying to find Rita's destroyed body amidst the smoke provoked by the explosion.

However, what she found was different, and far away from her expectations. Rita was completely safe, and Whitey had managed to hide himself between her large chest, the Miasma launched at her was flowing through her body.

"Hehehe, I can't believe you actually did such a stupid thing, rat." Laughed Rita, her entire vibe suddenly changed, becoming malicious and vile. Her eyes started glowing with red light, and the Miasma she absorbed started powering up her dark magic. An orb made of darkness surged at her side, overflowing with power.

After her recent powerup, she had managed to create a spell similar to the one her Avatar had, the Orb of Malice was able to absorb Malicious Energies, this even included Miasma, powering her up.

"[Darkness Empowerment]!"

FLUOOOSH!

Rita's aura started exuding a powerful aura of power, shaping as a gigantic lady of the night. It felt as if her own equipment's powers merged with her aura.

"KRAAAH!!!"

The Rat Queen furiously ordered her Giant Rat Warriors to fight, as countless weapon attacks were directed at Rita all at once. However, Rita furiously swept her arms, as a gigantic hand made of shadows crushed the Giant Rats in mere seconds.

CLAAAASSH!

Another palm made of shadows swept the other side, crushing even more Rats on her way. Rita smiled evilly, beginning to laugh. The Rat Queen started trembling nervously...

"Hahahaha... Now's your turn!" Rita smiled, about to crush the Rat Queen...

POOF!

However, her powerup quickly ended. Her shadows disappeared and her Mana was completely empty. The Orb of Malice disappeared at the same time, she had used all the power she absorbed from that attack...

"A-Ah..."

Rita quickly realized she could no longer act cocky, as the Rat Queen's face started to distort in anger, dozens of magic circles appeared, summoning fireballs, icicle spears, and giant rocks, which started falling over her one after the other.

BAAM! BAAAM! BAAAAM!

Rita barely managed to evade using her Shadow Sneak Spell, trying to run away from the scene, only to be surrounded by more and more Rats!

"S-Shit... I got a bit too cocky..." She sighed to herself.

"You did, dumbass! Now look at the situation we are at!" Her talking handgun reprimanded her.

"KILL... KILL HEEERRRRR!" The Rat Queen ordered, as Rita was showered with countless attacks, being forced out of her shadows!

CLASH! CLASH! CLASH! CLAAASH!

"Uwaaaaahhhhh!!!" As Rita panicked, suddenly... something happened.

TRUUUUUUUMMMMMM...!

From the ceiling above, a gigantic beam of flames emerged, crushing the Rat Queen, and burning her to a crisp, her surrounding guards were engulfed in the flames and died on the spot, and most of the ones attacking Rita were burned severely, as they started screaming in agony and rolling over the floor.

BOOOOOOOOOOMMMMMMM...!

When Rita opened her eyes, she found out everything around her was crispy and burned. Every rat that escaped, mostly the tiny ones, were saved, but every single big one was roasted alive... Well, she had taken down over half of them herself, but still.

"W-What happened?! Who's there?!" Rita wondered, looking into the hole in the ceiling.

"Wait, is that you, Rita?!" Mark's voice echoed from above.

"MARK! Oh my gosh I can't believe I am so happy to hear your voice!" Rita said happily.

"It's really you! We'll be going down soon, wait there!" Mark said.

"Wait, can't I go up there instead?" Wondered Rita.

"Of course not, we need to gather the magic crystals inside the monsters down there!" Mark said.

"Eh? Ah, you're so similar to Elayne in some things..." Rita sighed.

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Chapter 475: A Warm Meal Can Even Warm Up A Dhampir's Cold Heart

"Here, try this out." Elayne said with a warm smile, giving Rose a plate filled with warm stew.

It had potatoes, carrots, meat, and many other spices. The stew was red and pipping hot. Usually as a Dhampir, she satiated herself drinking blood and eating mostly raw meat, she had never eaten food that tasted that good for her.

Elayne's warm smile also added to the whole meal. She had meet her for just a bit of time, but she had detected a very nice and overwhelming aura from her, an aura of a mother, a mother she never had.

"So, Rose? Is it good? I prepared it specially using magic ingredients so you can feel better." Elayne said with a smile, enjoying her own plate as well.

Rose ate the stew like she had never eaten food before in her entire life. The flavors, the mana flowing into her body with each bite, the soft pork meat, the warm potatoes, the deliciousness of everything, the warmth that spread through her cold body...

"T-This is..." Rose muttered, suddenly recalling a single memory of her childhood.

She recalled the time when she was living in the Vatican, as a young dhampir that was bullied by many priests in training, and often called a demon. She used to run away from these people and hide in a corner of an abandoned temple all alone.

However, there was a nice and old nun that always found her, and brought her a nice and warm plate of porridge with a warm, recently baked bread with butter. That old nun's smile, and her motherly nature with Rose was perhaps the only good memory she had of her childhood.

And this stew, and Elayne's smile and personality, greatly reminded her of the only person she ever considered family, who had passed away long ago.

Without realizing a small tear flowed from her right eye, as it fell over the stew.

"I-It is good..."

Elayne panicked after seeing her cry.

"E-Eh?! Is it too salty, maybe? Or too spicy? I added a tiny bit of dried chili and some pepper..." Said Elayne, feeling slightly worried.

"Oh no... It's delicious. I have never eaten something so tasty before. It slightly reminds me of the time I used to eat at the Vatican. There was one old nun, the only person that was close to me back then..." She sighed. "She always feed me porridge and bread with butter. Her smile is similar to yours, Elayne."

"O-Oh..." Elayne felt a bit relieved. "I see, so you had it hard back then... I'm sorry."

"You don't have to apologize for anything." Rose said. "Anyways, this is too good and even my Mana has begun to recover... Did you use something magical?"

"I used Spells that enhance flavor, and some secret ingredients! I use my magic not to just fight, but to strengthen nature itself and grow plants and veggies. The veggies I grow become much tastier and have magical properties." Elayne said with a smile.

"W-What?!" Rose was shocked. "I see... Something like this... If the higher ups were to ever find out such a talent, they would immediately try to offer you millions to work for them. Someone that can create food that can not only recover health and hasten regeneration, but even recover Mana..."

"E-Eh?! That much?!" Elayne panicked. "I would prefer if you kept this a secret... if possible then. I like my life as it is, even if it has its hardships. And even if I'll aim higher in the future, I would like to do it one step at a time, hahaha..."

"You're too humble." Rose squinted her eyes. "Such a power would make you famous but... I understand that feeling as well. Sometimes, we just want to live our simple lives, isn't it?"

"Y-Yeah." Elayne nodded.

"You see, I am not working on this because I'm being forced, nor for the money, even." Rose said. "The boss is someone that saved my life back then, and a nice man that cares about the safety of the innocents. I have grown tired of working for the Vatican because the only thing I was asked to do was to kill people, sometimes, not even Vampires... I wanted to change my life, I... well, maybe I'm talking too much?"

"Oh no, go on." Elayne said.

"Well, I just want... to do good." Sighed Rose. "To protect people, like I was never able to do in the past."

Elayne giggled a bit, giving Rose a motherly hug and then petting her head.

"E-Eh? W-What are you...?" Rose asked, blushing a bit.

"You're a nice girl, Rose." Elayne said with a warm smile. "You're a good person."

"Me? A good... person?" Rose wondered. Recalling the things she had done, and the many sins she committed for the "greater good" that the Vatican had brainwashed her into thinking, she never thought of herself as a good person.

She was doing all of this now in the Agency perhaps to redeem herself, to make herself be useful to society, and to protect innocents like she was never able to do before.

Was she a good person for that? She never considered it, and quite honestly, she always thought of herself as someone... bad.

"If you're working so hard and fighting with your life on the line to save others, then you're indeed a good person." Elayne nodded, letting go of her. "Ah, sorry about that hug... You slightly reminded me of my daughter, hahaha..."

"You have a daughter?" Rose was surprised. "So you're a mother fighting so much for her?"

"Kind of..." Elayne said. "I love her and I am doing this for her as well but... I am doing it for everyone too. I feel like it is my responsibility. After all, if I don't do it, then who will do it? And it is partially my fault too... That monster was seeking me for my powers."

"I see..." Rose nodded. "You're also a good person then, Elayne. Too admirable in fact, hahaha."

"Geez, don't say something like that, I am feeling embarrassed now..." Elayne giggled. "Well, now that we're done here though, we should get going! I can feel Mark and Rita very close, let's go!"

"Alright! Scarlet, come!"

FLUOSH!

The two decided to ride Rose's Familiar, rushing across the dungeon.

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Chapter 476: The Magician Families

Mark, Rita, and Josuke finished cleaning the Rat Monster corpses, gathering a big pile of Magic Crystals. There were over thirty of them, and the Rat Queen's Magic Crystal was the biggest, overflowing with magical power.

"Oh man this is great! So much loot out of nowhere!" Laughed Mark happily. "I guess we got lucky. You too."

"Yeah, I guess I should be thankful." Rita said. "If you didn't came out of nowhere with that giant cannon, I would be rat's food right now, or something. Though, you never told me you had such a hottie as your friend, Mark! Hey~!"

"H-Hi..." Josuke felt slightly overwhelmed by Rita's personality. "Name's Josuke, I am... A Sword Agent, I imagine you're a civilian that awakened her powers much like Mark and this Elayne friend you share?"

"Yep!" Said Rita. "Hey are you single?"

"Single? Yes, why?" Josuke wondered.

"Hehehe..." Rita started giggling.

"Aren't you married?" Mark said, quickly killing Rita's mood.

"Geez! Why are you so much like Elayne?! So killjoy! Let me flirt with a cute boy now and then, will you?!" Rita complained, crossing her arms.

Josuke felt confused, looking around and trying to read the mood, but he was unable to. And quite honestly, the nightmares he had in that fight left him mentally exhausted.

"Okay, relax." Sighed Mark. "But don't be unfaithful to your husband..."

"I-I am not!" Rita said, feeling all down. "Geez, sorry about that Josuke..."

"No, it doesn't really matter, don't worry." Josuke said, looking at the magic crystals. "How exactly are you two going to use these things? Usually they can be sold for a lot of money, though they need to go through purification first-"

FLUOOOOSH!

However, before his eyes, he saw how the magic circle Mark had been inscribing using the blood of the rats began glowing. It was the magic circle that Elayne had done before with the Great Spirit's help. He had used his phone to take pictures of them and keep every rune stored there, so he easily recreated them.

The magic crystals began disappearing into ashes one after the other, Josuke was flabbergasted as he saw Mark and Rita's Magic Circles develop further, growing much stronger. Their Runes became many more, and they were already reaching Tier 2!

FLAAASH!

Their Magical Auras were so strong Josuke had to step back. In Earth, magicians of such high amounts of power were praised as geniuses, and usually only lived in their own territories on Europe, commanding their families.

"T-To think there could be people out there with this much magical power that are completely unrelated to the Magician Bloodline Families..." Josuke was shocked. If the two were to tell him he could also get as much power if he were to get a magic circle, he would lose his mind.

The Magic Circle engraving was an unique technique of the World of Arcadia, and only the Great Spirit knew about it. People of Earth developed differently, mostly relying on magical artifacts they crafted and relying on their own base Mana Quantities.

Because of this, the Bloodline a Magician was born into was essential. If they were from special bloodlines of magicians, they would be naturally born with high quantities of Mana and possessing various Magical Affinities.

However, because collecting magical artifacts, or commissioning them was so expensive, all of these Magician Families were rich and few. Urban Magicians that didn't belonged to any of these families were often weaker in comparison due to their lack of artifacts.

Of course, Josuke belonged to the first section, he was a young man born from a Millenary Family of Shamans in Japan that made contracts with Spirits and Yokai to gain power. He was a genius amongst geniuses that was able to create a contract with the Legendary Spirit of Flames, the Vermillion Bird, becoming the bird's vessel.

However, the nightmares he had just now made him remember the traumatic moment when his entire family was destroyed by their foes, and their territory was taken away forcefully. Since then, he had become an outcast and escaped Japan from his family enemy's clutches, now working as an agent of Sword instead.

"I wish I could had been stronger back then..." He sighed, seeing Mark and Rita powerup.

"Huh? What's wrong friend?" Mark wondered.

"Oh, nothing." Josuke sighed. "So anyways-"

"Uwaaaah! I feel so strong now! I must at least be Tier 2 now, right?! I've developed so many new Spells! And all of my Mana's fully recovered! Insane!" Rita celebrated, jumping around and conjuring darkness.

"I-Incredible... You're such a strong Shadow Sorceress already?!" Josuke was surprised.

"Well, if it wasn't for our friend we wouldn't had been able to grow this strong~!" Rita giggled.

"Rita don't just say such things openly!" Mark reprimanded him.

"Your friend? Is this Elayne woman the one that taught you this magic I've never seen before? It almost feels like it is from another world. These runes... and the way they're formed, it feels so easy yet so complex..." Josuke was amazed.

"Something like that..." Mark sighed. "She... just knew thanks to her spirit."

"I see, I do remember hearing something about her having some sort of Spirit as her partner. Certainly, Spirit Magic is still a very powerful and mysterious magical subject, very few Magician Families even have close contact with Spirits even in Europe." Josuke analyzed.

He felt relieved that it was because of this Spirit, which he knew very little about the subject but had heard they were incredibly strong beings. These Spirits were different from his own, which was more like an Incarnation of a beast than a normal Nature Spirit.

With Mark and Rita finally hitting Tier 2, the trio was ready to advance. However, before they could even step to their next destination as they tried to follow Elayne's presence, something emerged from amidst a nearby cave, a gigantic beast coated on phantasmal flames!

FLUOOOOSH!

"CRYAAAAAHHH!"

Its gigantic and sharp claws hit the floor, shattering it apart wildly!

BAAAAAMMM!!!

"W-What is that?!" Rita evaded the attack barely, looking at the enormous monster.

"That's... a bird of some sort?" Wondered Josuke.

"Huh?! Falco?!" Mark was surprised.

This bird... it was his familiar, the Wind Eagle he had lost when he was sucked into the dungeon.

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Chapter 477: Corrupted Familiar

Although Mark felt the connection with the giant, white-colored eagle. The beast was no longer obeying his orders. It not only underwent a strange transformation and became enormous and even stronger

than before, but it seemed possessed by many phantasmal ghosts, to the point it exuded a powerful aura of phantom flames.

If the Great Spirit was here, she would qualify this powerful monster as nothing less than C Rank at the very least! The pressure it exuded was completely otherworldly as well!

"T-That's my Familiar! Don't attack him!" Mark said, rushing towards the bird. "Falco! It's me! I am relieved you're alive but what happened to you?!"

"CRAAAAAAH!"

Falco, however, had no intentions of hearing his master. His beak suddenly glowed with large quantities of Phantasmal Energy and Mana, as it suddenly peeked the ground furiously.

CLAAAAASSSHH!!!!

If Mark didn't jump before, he would have ended completely crushed by his own Familiar's attacks. The giant bird looked at him furiously, with glowing red eyes.

"CRAAAAAHHHHHH!!!!"

It cried furiously, generating a powerful shockwave of mana and phantasmal energy, and forcing the trio to step back due to the enormous quantity of power this bird held!

"Oi Mark it's not working, your damn bird's gone berserk!" Said Rita.

"Just what happened to him?! He was such a good bird before..." Mark was surprised.

"It's just what you think it is." Josuke said, his flames flickered around his body, generating a powerful aura around him in the shape of a gigantic vermillion bird. "Just like animals that get infected by miasma and mutate into aggressive monsters, a familiar could easily undergo the same process in this kind of dungeon. We're surrounded by Undead and ghosts everywhere. They most likely caught your familiar and decided to turn it into the vessel of hundreds of ghosts, powering him up to this state. I'm sorry Mark, but we should take it down before it takes us down."

"But..." Mark muttered, feeling afraid to hurt Falco. He remembered his childhood and how he never had a pet, as his parents never allowed him to have one either.

Falco might have been recruited recently, but he had already grown fond of the bird. He liked crackers, and sitting over his shoulders, and sometimes it would end up pooping his clothes, but the bird still loved him, grooming his head sometimes.

"Mark!" Rita roared. "Maybe we could purify it? Using Whitey's Holy Light Magic! If Elayne was here, it would be much easier but we'll have to do it this way."

"Ah, that... That's right!" Mark realized, quickly summoning several Holy Light Beast Spirits. "[Holy Light Tiger]! [Heaven's Dove]! [Sunlight Bear]!"

FLASH! FLASH! FLASH!

"I'll also join in the exorcism then!" He said. "Sorry Josuke, but we are not willing to kill it!"

"Sigh... I should have expected this." Josuke sighed. "Fine! But before you even try to exorcism that thing, we need to weaken it! Let's smack some sense into it!"

"Right!" Rita and Mark agreed.

"CRAAAAAHHHHH!!!"

However, Falco had no more time for their bullshit, immediately spreading his enormous wings and shooting hundreds of feather projectiles as fast as arrows against them. Each one imbued with phantasmal flames, which caused explosions whenever they touched the surface of something.

BOOOM! BOOOM! BOOOM! BOOOM! BOOOM!

Mark and Rita used their shields and activated the Magic Shield Ability within them to defend from the constant explosions, while Josuke sneaked behind the bird while it was attacking, utilizing this opportunity to hit it.

"[Blazing Vermillion Falling Kick]!"

FLUOSH!

He flew into the air using his blazing wings and then immediately followed it by falling over Falco's back with a powerful, blazing kick!

CLAAAAASSSHHHH!!!!

"CRYAAAKH...!"

BAAAM!

The bird immediately fell into the floor, incapable of being able to detect an attack coming from behind. Falco struggled to get up again, only to see countless chains made of flames wrapping around his body.

"CRYEEEEH!"

The angered giant bird wouldn't let them do as they pleased. The Phantasmal Aura suddenly expanded wildly and summoned small birds made of ghostly phantom energy, as Falco ordered them to attack everyone!

FLASH! FLASH! FLASH! FLASH!

The Phantom Birds started attacking everyone furiously, pecking them, slashing them, and exploding one after the other. Mark and Rita couldn't take a break, and Josuke was already spending enough time restraining Falco.

"Rita, cover my back!"

Mark roared, slashing apart dozens of Phantom Birds that flew towards him using his Magic Knife, slicing them apart using the sharp knife and the powerful flames wielded by the magical weapon.

SLASH! SLASH! SLASH! SLAAASH!

"Agh dammit, why me?!"

Meanwhile, Rita covered his back, using her shadows and tentacles to pierce through the bodies of the Phantom Birds and making them disappear in an instant. Whitey jumped over her gun, as she started shooting several Holy Light Bullets, instantly purifying faraway Phantom Birds readying some kamikaze attacks from above.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

"Falco! Wake up!" Roared Mark, jumping over the gigantic bird and quickly gathering the power of all the Holy Light Spirits he summoned into the palm of his hands. "[Spiritual Exorcism]!"

FLUOSH!

A bright light emerged, covering the gigantic bird's entire body. The phantoms possessing it started to scream, slowly beginning to disappear one after the other. It was working!

Rita's Whitey also joined in, jumping over Mark's hands, and imbuing his little power as much as he could.

"CHUUUUU!"

FLAAAAAASSSHHHHH!!!!

An enormous explosion of light erupted from the bird's chest, covering the entire hall, which some minutes ago belonged to the Giant Rat Queen.

"CRYAAAAHHHHHH...!"

Falco cried in fury and agony as it was being purified. But then stopped moving. Mark exhausted all of his Mana, as he gasped for air, looking at the giant bird's face.

"Falco...? Are you there?"

Falco slowly opened his eyes, looking at Mark.

"Falco!"

"CRYAAAH!"

"Eh?!"

However, Falco was not purified. His eyes shone bright red once more, attacking Mark with his sharp beak and piercing his chest with it!

CLAAAASSSH!

"U-Unngh?! F-Falco...!"

Mark vomited a mouthful of blood, feeling his lungs being pierced apart by Falco's merciless attack, incapable of moving, he fell into the floor, like a puppet that lost his strings...

"MAAAARK!!!" Rita screamed in horror.

"W-What?!" Josuke was shocked. "Dammit! MARK!"

FLUOOSH!

An enormous shockwave of Phantasmal Energy was unleashed from Falco's body, throwing both of them away, as the gigantic bird pointed his claws at Mark.

"F-Falco..." Mark muttered. "S-Stop... You're... not... li... like this..."

"CRYAAAAAH!!!"

CLAAAASH!

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Chapter 478: Elayne Appears!

Josuke and Rita were thrown away by Falco's overwhelming Phantasmal Aura Shockwave, the gigantic bird now had all the time it wanted to tear apart his former owner. The Evil Ghosts possessing him were telling him to sever the last bond he had with Mark, by killing him and devouring his flesh.

The giant bird's sharp claws reached Mark, about to pierce his chest and kill him for good. His Mana had completely exhausted, and he couldn't even fight back anymore.

"F-Falco..." Mark muttered. "S-Stop... You're... not... li... like this..."

Although perhaps he could fight back somehow... He still simply couldn't bring himself to hurt his pet.

"CRYAAAAAH!!!"

CLAAAASH!

Silence filled the hall, only for Falco's eyes to open wide at what it saw, its giant claw was stopped by a pair of beautiful women riding a giant red wolf, Elayne, and Rose!

"CRAAAH?!"

Elayne stopped the claw using her Shovel-Staff and her Shield together, generating a powerful barrier, while Rose used her Blood Aura, creating a gigantic Blood Claw to aid Elayne in blocking the powerful talon of the bird monster.

"GET AWAY FROM HIM!"

Elayne lost it, seeing Mark almost die a second time made her snap. Her enormous Magical and Spiritual Aura surged like a gigantic, overwhelming eruption, as she swung her weapon with all her strength, slamming Falco so strongly the giant bird was flung into the walls faraway, clashing with a loud noise.

CLAAAASSSSHHHHH!!!!

"C-Craaahh...!"

Falco fell into the floor, his wings were broken and some of his bones were cracked, the bird vomited a mouthful of blood, glaring with hate at Elayne from afar, but barely being able to move anymore.

"Mark!"

Elayne jumped towards Mark, hugging him.

"E-Elayne... ne?" Mark was slowly losing his consciousness. Not even his vision was alright, as he seemed to be slowly falling into the darkness of death.

"Calm down, everything's alright!" Elayne said while crying, her spiritual and magical powers flowed into Mark, his body started healing, but it was taking a while. She took out many Health Potions and forced him to drink them, but they were not working, his lungs couldn't be repaired.

"His lungs can't regenerate yet...!" Elayne panicked. "My healing magic is not strong enough..."

Her hands started trembling. The same thing had happened before, and yet again, she felt like she could do nothing for him. That... she could do nothing to save the life of the one she loved, so similar to when her own husband died by cancer.

She felt so powerless... so useless.

"Agh, girl! If you can't regenerate a lung, then make it from zero!" The Great Spirit snapped her back to reality.

"W-Wha? Is that even possible?!" Elayne was surprised.

"Somehow! Use your [Spirit Creation] and [Nature Magic] and fill his body with it! Remember that magic works in ways according to their users! It will shape into what you desire, as long as there's enough Mana!" The Great Spirit said.

"Then... [Pathway]!"

FLUOOOSH!

By calling the divine powers of Gaia, Elayne started something she never thought she would be doing. The power of dozens of Spirits converged together into her hands, alongside the flowing power of Nature, and of the World Tree Body back in Arcadia.

Alongside that, the divinity of Gaia was imbued into this spell, as not only Mark's lungs grew anew, now made of plants, wood, and spiritual power, but his heart, which was hurt and bleeding severely was also repaired.

FLAAAAAASSH!

Roots and branches started growing over Mark's chest, regenerating his wound and slowly making him be able to breathe again. Blood started pumping through his body once more, and his eyes opened again, as he gasped for air.

"AAAH! Hahhh... Hahhh..." He gasped, looking at Elayne. "E-Elayne...?"

"Mark!" Elayne hugged him tightly, kissing his cheek. "I-I was so worried. I thought... I would lose you... again."

"Again?" He wondered, feeling slightly confused. "I'm sorry... I was a fool... I shouldn't have... risked my life like this. I am... too reckless. Thank you... You're always saving me; I feel so stupid..."

"Maybe, you're a bit dummy." Elayne sighed, giving him a head pat. "But I know why you went so soft... That bird is Falco, isn't it? Your kind heart... I know you wouldn't have been able to hurt him at the end."

"F-Falco..." Mark muttered, slowly trying to stand up. "Is he... dead?"

"No, he's still alive." Rose startled Mark. "Is that your familiar? It has been possessed by hundreds of ghosts... It has transformed into some sort of powerful Phantom Falcon."

"Yeah... I... Maybe we should take him down. I tried to exorcism him but it didn't work." Cried Mark. "I just... I never had a pet; I don't want to lose him..."

Elayne looked at Mark's eyes filled with so much sadness. He was a very stiff man sometimes, never showing his emotions so openly, but now, he did. She felt slightly relieved about that because it meant he trusted her.

"Don't worry, I'll finish the job." Elayne said. "I'll exorcise him."

"Can you even do that?" Josuke wondered from afar.

"Elayne, you're finally back!" Rita cried.

"Rita! Yeah, I'm back. Let's bring Falco back as well." Elayne said, quickly stepping towards the giant bird on the floor with Mark.

Falco was barely crawling, most of his body was in tatters.

"C-Craaahhh..."

Elayne touched the giant and furious bird's head, closing her eyes. She quickly felt hundreds of furious ghosts possessing him, the souls of many innocents that Phantasmos had captured and used as materials to create this dungeon.

"Don't worry, you'll rest in peace now. Mark, can you help me out?" Elayne asked, holding Mark's hand.

"Sure. I think I get it." Mark nodded. His powers quickly reacted to hers, as they merged into her hand, imbuing themselves into Falco's head, and then flowing down through his entire body. "[Holy Exorcism]!"

FLAAAAAASSSSHHHH!!!!

A bright golden light encompassed the giant bird completely, hundreds of souls started emerging and then fading away constantly. Both Elayne and Mark combined their willpowers, fighting against the grudges of the many souls.

However, once it was all over, Falco's body was not only fully healed, but the gigantic bird slowly opened his bright eyes, looking at the two of them.

"Cooooh!"

"F-Falco? You're back to normal?!" Mark wondered.

"He is." Elayne said with a smile.

Meanwhile, in the distance Josuke and Rose were watching the scene with faces filled with... cringe.

"Oh my god they're so corny together..." Rose sighed.

"I guess they have this type of relationship..." Josuke said.

Both loners felt slightly jealous...

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CRASH!

"AGH! WHY?!"

Within the depths of the Dungeon, Phantasmos crushed the Crystal Ball he was using to see what was happening within his Labyrinth. Seeing his prisoners defeat every threat that surfaced in front of them made him deeply angered.

"T-They even killed a Death General..." Phantasmos muttered. "If I have to deal with them, I simply cannot use conventional methods! That World Tree Incarnation has mastered the power of Exorcism after all!"

Phantasmos looked into his vessel, which was overflowing with an enormous power he had never seen before back in Arcadia.

"I'll make sure to put you into a good use then, my new vessel..."

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Chapter 479: Approaching The Final Boss

Once Falco was exorcised completely, the bird did not go to his former appearance. It remained pretty much the same, but it had lost the phantasmal powers it possessed. It had become tame once more, and it was pretty much friendly. In fact, it felt guilty of having hurt Mark, and was constantly lowering his head while groaning timidly.

"Cooo... cooo..."

"It's fine, I already forgave you, Falco. You were being possessed after all, you didn't meant it, right?"

"Craaah!"

Falco gently rubbed his enormous face over Mark's entire body.

"Hahaha, okay, I get it! But just how strong you ended becoming? Are you sure you can't go back to normal now?"

"Craaahh..."

Falco sighed, looking down.

Rose and Josuke analyzed the creature, while Elayne and the Great Spirit seemed to be checking if Falco was healthy.

"It seems it has permanently mutated into a monster." Said Rose. "It was already one before, wasn't it?"

"Yeah but much smaller." Sighed Mark.

"Well, isn't it better this way? Big and strong?" Josuke felt no flaws on this new form.

"I-I mean, I have no complains about that but it will be a bit difficult to go around the city with a giant bid..." He sighed.

"Right..." Rose and Josuke ended realizing why he was so worried.

"Hmmm..." The Great Spirit noticed. "This thing's healthy as it could ever be. The exorcizing also healed all his wounds. Seems like he's as strong as a C Rank monster though! It lost the Phantom Magic, but didn't it had wind magic before? This is a win-win to be honest!"

"I guess there's no helping it." Elayne giggled a bit. "For now he'll be fine. We may have to hide him in Blackie's Shadows, maybe. What do you think, Blackie?"

"Meereooooow!" Blackie didn't liked Falco before nor now, it seemed. "Hiiissssss...!"

"Caaah..." Falco ignored Blackie while sighing.

"Agh, well, now that this big problem is out of the place... Ugh..." Rita sighed, sitting over the floor.

"Man, I am so TIRED! And HUNGRY! And I want to get OUT of here! Aagggh... Do we really have to find the Boss?"

"Stop complaining so much!" Elayne reprimanded her. "Here, let's sit down, eat something, and continue. Let's also catch up about what we went through to get a better grasp on the situation."

POOF!

Elayne quickly began taking out several items out of her inventory, from a whole table to seats, and then plates of hot stew, rice, fruit juice, and even potable water, and wet tissues to clean each other's blood and sweat.

"Here, here, please relax for a bit. It is always good to take it easy before moving to our next destination." She said with a motherly smile.

Josuke and Rose couldn't help but accept her many gifts while sitting down and enjoying some more food. Rose had already stuffed herself with stew before but had room for some more.

However, Josuke wasn't surprised over the stew's taste, but over Elayne's insane Ability.

"T-This is insane... She has a pocket dimension where she can store things?! I-It's like a game!" He said in surprise.

"Yeah, pretty amazing, isn't she?" Asked Rose. "With that power alone she could do so many incredible things..."

"Is this a power you awakened by yourself, Elayne?" Asked Josuke.

"Err... something like that, yes. I awakened it." Elayne nodded.

It wasn't as if she could say: "Tehee! The Gods from another world which is actually the most popular VR Game right now gifted it to me!" or something.

"I see... It seems people may begin to awaken all sorts of strange powers. I wonder if we can awaken anything ourselves, it feels slightly unfair..." Josuke sighed.

"Unfair? We've had these powers for a while now while nobody had anything, at most, it is fair." Sighed Rose. "Well, not like I would ever have wanted to have my powers, I always wished to be a normal person, being a Dhampir sucks. I would rather live as a weak, frail girl with a meaningful life instead of having this horrendous curse, the hate of everybody and..."

"Okay, okay, I get it, calm down!" Josuke said. "Let's just eat for now while we catch up..."

Like that, everyone explained what each one went through, and at the end, once everyone had caught up with the events that happened... the big question was only one.

"Albert's lost, I guess." Rose said.

"Hmm, seeing how strong that guy is, I doubt he'll be in trouble anyways." Josuke said.

"Though, I can sense him." Rose said. "Down there, in the last floor of this dungeon, on its dark depths, he's there... Immobile, for some reason."

"Maybe he's sleeping?" Rita asked.

"There's no way he would be sleeping with that demon inside of him." Josuke sighed. "It's odd... I am worried."

"Well! Now that we're done eating, it would be nice to move on then." Said Elayne. "We can't delay this anymore."

She seemed filled with the intent on finishing what had begun and get out of here as soon as possible. The Great Spirit had already guessed that the way to escape this dungeon was by defeating the Boss, which was like the pillar of the entire Dungeon.

"Once the Boss is defeated, the entire Dungeon's structure will break apart and a portal leading outside will open." She explained. "More or less..."

"More or less?" Asked Rose. "Hey, are you even sure, little spirit?"

"Don't call me little spirit!" The Great Spirit angrily said. "And yeah, I am mostly sure... Mostly. Well, if things go to the worse possible outcome, with Elayne's abilities, an exit is still possible."

"What sort of abilities?" Wondered Josuke.

"That is not something I am allowed to say..." Said the Great Spirit with a giggle.

Elayne and the Great Spirit had considered using [Pathway] to call for the help of the God of Space, which might give them the opportunity to open a crack in space and escape. However, this was purely an idea, and they didn't know if it would actually work.

FLAAAASH!

Nonetheless, they were already nearing the Boss, as the Gates to the Boss Room were drawing closer as the group flew across the dungeon while riding the big and incredibly fast Falco, who with brute force broke through the dungeon's floor.

"We're getting closer!" Elayne pointed out.

"Yeah, but it's obvious they don't want us to get there yet..." Rose said

In front of the party, hundreds of Undead Skeleton Warriors started popping up one after the other, led by Giant Skeleton Knights. It was as if an army of Undead were stopping them from advancing any single step from reaching their Boss.

"Hahahah... HAHHAHAHA!" The laughter of Phantasmos echoed behind the Gates.

The entire party froze as they heard his voice.

"Yes, I'll give you credit! You've managed to get to me! However, do you truly believe I'll allow you to fight me so easily?!" Laughed Phantasmos. "First, you'll have to defeat my entire Legion of the Dead!"

Undead Skeletons kept emerging from the Nether pools over the floor, as if they were an endless supply of bones and souls.

"Crush them, my Legion of the Dead! Devour their flesh and shatter their souls!"

Rose and Josuke were cringing by hearing him speak.

"Wow he speaks like a damn video game villain, what's wrong with him?" Josuke sighed.

"Right?" Rose was in disbelief.

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Chapter 480: Confronting Phantasmos

Sadly for Phantasmos, his plans went terribly bad. While charging with all his strength, Falco managed to break through the army of Skeletons, not even the Giant Skeletons stopped him!

FLUOOOOSH!

By flapping his wings rapidly, powerful tempestuous winds emerged, devastating the skeletons and shattering them into pieces. At the same time, Elayne, and everyone else attacked using their long-ranged magic.

Rita's Shadow and Holy Bullets, Mark's Dragon Flames, Josuke's powerful vermilion bird spiritual flames, Rose's Blood Magic, and their familiars attack such as Blackie's shadows, Whitey's Light Beams, and the three skeleton's charge using their new hardy and bulkier bodies completely demolished the Skeleton Army or the "Legion of the Dead" that Phantasmos was so proud of.

CLASH! BOOM! CRASH!

"Josuke, Mark! Burn those ponds of Nether! Rita, shoot them some holy bullets!" Elayne commanded, as she did the same, shooting rays of life mana into the Nether ponds, which started being purified and then disappeared.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOOM!

After several explosions, the Nether disappeared and the Skeletons stopped spawning completely. To make things even more amazing, all the skeletons were now piles of bones, and to not waste time, Elayne spread out her hands into several branches, grabbing all of their magic crystals, which amounted to over 50 of them.

She swiftly absorbed them through her own arms, crushing them and devouring them entirely. She didn't had time to do it the proper way. But thanks to her strength and new Light Element Magic, she was able to easily purify the Nether on them while consuming them.

"Here!"

She touched Mark and Rita's shoulders, imbuing a share of all this Magic Power, their Magic Circles quickly started rotating rapidly as several Runes started being inscribed.

The voice echoed within Elayne's mind once more.

[You have absorbed a tremendous quantity of high-quality Mana, Nether has been purified.]

[Hundreds of new Spiritual Runes have been inscribed within the Magic Circle.]

[Your Magic Circle has improved from Tier 2 Rank 5 to Tier 2 Rank 7.]

[New Spells have been created: [Heavenly Light Flash], [Life and Light Chains of Restraint]...]

[Your Magic Power has improved greatly.]

[Your body can now acquire a Physique.]

"And done... Though I still can't get a physique... I'll have to figure that out later for now." Elayne sighed.

"Falco, crush the door wide open!"

"CRAAAAAH!"

Falco was also given a share of the Magic Power, overflowing with all the Mana he had lost previously, he furiously kicked the gates, shattering them into pieces and entering the Boss Room.

CLAAAAASSSHHHH!!!

RUMBLE!

The entire Dungeon started to tremble, as what greeted them was not a giant ghost monster but... a human?

"Huh?" Josuke felt confused.

"There's... a person?" Rose wondered.

"Where's Phantasmos at?!" Rita reacted.

Everyone quickly reacted the same way, looking at the end of the hall, empty with nothing else than a throne made of bones and a man wearing black, cursed armor, and holding a giant blade imbued with phantasmal and demonic power.

However, although the three felt confused, Elayne and Mark quickly realized who this person was. And that Phantasmos was, indeed, right in front of them. The Great Spirit felt the pressure coming from this man's body.

"T-This is..." Elayne said. "I think that's your friend, Josuke, Rose."

"Albert, wasn't he?" Mark muttered, swallowing saliva.

"Wha...?!" Rose was surprised. "Albert?! This Demonic Aura is his own!"

"What's the meaning of this, Albert?!" Asked Josuke.

However, Albert's voice did not answer. Instead, the one that answered their questions was the vile, monstrous voice of the one behind everything, Phantasmos.

"Your friend is no longer here." He said. "He is now in a deep slumber he shall never wake up from."

TRUUUMMMM...!

An enormous, phantasmal and demonic aura pressure was unleashed from Albert's armored body, quickly making even Falco, a gigantic bird, fly back and reach the ground, intimidated.

"Wait... you bastard! You possessed Albert from all people!?" Josuke was pissed. His entire body started growing an armor of feathers made of spiritual flames.

"I see... So that's why we couldn't sense him moving, nor we couldn't find someone as strong as him. He was captured from the beginning..." Rose muttered. "But how?! Isn't his body already the vessel of a demon?"

"And we've reached a nice agreement. I supply Hellberos with delicious souls, and he allows me to become the second user of this body! I get even to share the demonic powers." Laughed Phantasmos.

"The moment you let go of your friend, his destiny was sealed as my new vessel!"

"Hellberos... How could you sell Albert like that?!" Josuke roared angrily.

"Haven't you been partners since he was a child?!" Rose was also furious.

Hellberos, however, manifested himself as a gigantic red flame emerging from Albert's body.

"I am not a being like you. I am a Demon; I have endless lifespan. And I live to devour souls and torment you mortals. Do you truly believe I would ever have a friendship? Nothing but frivolities to kill time. Albert is a good vessel, but I am not someone that cares about him in the slightest." The Demon laughed. "You're foolish to believe I would EVER share a bond such as something so pathetic as "FRIENDSHIP"! Pfff... hahahaha!"

"T-This... you're lying!" Rose cried. "We've shared so many years at your side and that's... how you respond?!"

"You fucking sellout." Josuke said. "I thought you had changed, but you're just a bastard. Where did the whole "we underdogs take care of one another" speech went to? Was all of that just a lie?!"

"A few words can make you humans trust anybody, even a demon. Don't blame me for your naivety. I have simply found someone stronger, much more powerful to serve, the Demon King of Death, Thanatos! He has promised me greatness in exchange for cooperating, and that's what I shall do!" Hellberos laughed.

"You heard him!" Phantasmos was amused with the drama. "Now... Come at me and die by our hands, mortals!"

"HELLBEROOOSSSSS!!!" Josuke couldn't contain his fury, charging first with all his might! "GIVE... ME... BACK... MY FRIEND!!!"

FLUOOOSH!

"Wait, Josuke! Don't be reckless!!!" Elayne cried.

CLAAAASSSSHHHH!!!!