Reincarnated as a Castle - (LitRPG, Kingdom Building, Progression)

chapter 11-20

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Morning crept gently over the forest floor, painting the clearing in soft, shifting hues of gold and green. Dew sparkled on every blade of grass like tiny shards of glass scattered across the yard, catching the sunlight in brilliant flashes.

It was peaceful. Idyllic, even.

Meanwhile, I was here, quietly mourning my slowly dwindling wallet.

[Reincarnated as a Castle — Day 21]

[Points Remaining: 24]

I really should have had far more Points by Day 21.

But those animals were just too cute and too much fun to watch! I'd ended up spending a few Points here and there just to keep them fed. The main reason was that I figured if they could always find plenty of food here, perhaps they would stick around my castle longer instead of eventually wandering off.

Or, in other words, I was literally bribing them to stay and be my friends.

It was an expense I genuinely couldn't afford, yet one I couldn't bring myself to regret no matter how hard I tried.

But then, all of a sudden, my external vision caught something strange moving at the very edge of the forest.

Oh?

Oh!!

I froze internally.

Are those two... what I think they are?

In the distance, two figures emerged from the dense forest, pushing past low-hanging branches before stepping boldly into the open clearing.

They were humanoid creatures with green skin and small bodies roughly the size of 6 or 7 years old human children. Their faces were rather ugly, featuring big, crooked noses and long, sharply pointed ears that stuck out awkwardly from the sides of their heads. They wore nothing but ragged, filthy strips of animal hide that barely covered their private parts, and each carried a crude wooden club that looked as though it had been chewed on by wild dogs for weeks.

These characteristics were far too easy for me to recognize after years of reading isekai novels.

Goblins.

Well, damn!

So this world really does have goblins!

That means there must be other magical creatures and races too!

Orcs? Dragons? Elves?

For a fleeting moment, my inner fantasy enthusiast practically vibrated with excitement at the thought.

This was real.

This was the kind of adventure I'd read about in countless webnovels, the moment when the protagonist finally encounters their first monsters.

But the excitement didn't last long.

Reality quickly set in.

The pair of goblins skidded to an abrupt halt the instant their eyes landed on me.

Well, how could they not?

I was a massive stone castle sitting right there in the middle of an open clearing, practically screaming "Loot me!" with every brick and turret.

For one breathless heartbeat, the entire world seemed to hold perfectly still.

The birds stopped singing mid-note. Even the wind seemed to hold its breath. The only sound was the faint rustling of leaves as the goblins shifted nervously on their feet.

Then...

"GAAAAAAAAARRRR!"

A blood-curdling roar ripped from their throats, raw and feral, thundering across the clearing like a war cry!

Panicked birds erupted from the grass in a sudden explosion of flapping wings and alarmed chirps. The deer bolted instantly into the underbrush, while the rabbits vanished down their burrows in a blur of white tails.

The goblins then barreled straight toward me at full speed, clubs raised high above their heads, their faces twisted with wild aggression. Their screams grew louder and closer, vibrating harshly against my stone walls.

And for one icy, gut-wrenching second, I was genuinely terrified.

Because these weren't just harmless animals scurrying around my yard.

These were actual monsters.

And me?

I was just a castle.

I had no hands to wield a sword. No weapons to fire back. No way to fight at all.

If those little green psychos reached my walls and started hammering away at them with those crude clubs, I'd be in serious trouble!

Would it hurt?

Would pieces of me crumble away?

Would I actually die again?

No time to panic.

I had to react immediately.

Instinct took over.

CLANG!!!

With a single focused thought, the massive iron portcullis crashed down, sealing my front gate with a deafening roar of metal slamming against stone. The heavy vibration shuddered through my entire foundation, kicking up small clouds of dust in the entryway.

At the very least, I needed to keep those goblins out.

I had to protect my precious racoons living inside!

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But then... twenty minutes later...

I was still standing tall, utterly unscathed.

Thwack!

Thwack—thwack!

Haha! That tickles!

I laughed silently to myself. The vibrations from their frantic blows felt like nothing more than gentle taps against my thick stone walls.

The idiots were pounding away at my walls with every ounce of their pathetic strength, but it didn't even register as damage.

Not a single scratch.

Not a single chip of stone flaked off.

These goblins were laughably weak!

At last, the initial tension drained away completely, replaced by a long mental sigh of pure relief.

Haha! I can't believe I was actually afraid of these worthless little pests!

Still, the pair stubbornly refused to quit.

They leaped futilely at my walls, clawed desperately at the stone with their blunt, dirty nails, and even tried to scale the surface like drunken spiders on a bad day.

At one point, one goblin hoisted the other onto its shoulders in a wobbling, ridiculous human pyramid, their arms flailing wildly as they struggled to reach higher.

Of course, even doubled up, they were nowhere near tall enough to crest my three-meter-high walls.

I was invincible!

Watching them now felt less like witnessing a serious battle and more like observing a pair of green ants performing strange little tricks to entertain a bored god.

It was almost endearing, in a pathetic sort of way.

But then, the mood shifted dramatically for the worse.

One goblin shuffled closer to my wall, thrust its hips forward shamelessly, and...

A stream of yellow liquid splashed noisily against my stone.

Seriously?

Is this fucker really pissing on my walls!!?? Oh come on!

Seeing that, the other goblin immediately joined in with gleeful enthusiasm.

Now both were peeing on me!

This is so unacceptable!

And as if that wasn't bad enough, after they finished shaking off, they reached into their ragged loincloths and pulled out what looked like chunks of white chalk or soft limestone. With cackles that sounded like braindead hyenas, they began scribbling and drawing dicks all over my castle walls.

"AAA !!!"

"DAMN IT! YOU GOBLINS!"

"HOW DARE YOU NOT ONLY PISS ON ME BUT GRAFFITI ON ME TOO??!"

"YOU ARE COURTING DEATH!"

Since these morons couldn't climb my walls anyway, they clearly thought they were perfectly safe. They thought I was just an ordinary, defenseless building.

Well, let's see how brave they are when the building actually fights back!

A deliciously wicked idea sparked brightly in my mind. If they wanted inside so badly, who was I to deny them?

How about... I teach them a proper lesson they'll never forget?

So, I focused my will firmly on the gatehouse.

"Open gate!" I commanded.

At my command, the heavy iron portcullis groaned loudly and began to rise once more.

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I raised the portcullis.

GRIND. CLANK. The sound of heavy gate raising.

"GORO! GORO!"

"MIMIYA DADA!"

The two goblins flinched hard, jumping backward several steps as their ugly faces twisted in confusion and sudden alarm. Their beady eyes widened, and they clutched their crude wooden clubs tighter, raising them forward as if bracing themselves against some monstrous, invisible foe. Their scrawny green limbs trembled visibly.

It seemed the mere act of raising the gate had spooked them.

But that wasn't my true intent at all.

My real goal was to lure them inside.

So I waited patiently. I allowed their fear to linger in the air, just long enough for curiosity to begin creeping back in.

And it did.

Slowly, as their initial apprehension started to fade, the taller goblin straightened his back, puffed out his narrow chest, and took one hesitant step forward toward the open gateway.

Haha!

Excellent!

Come closer!

However, the smaller goblin, still gripped by fear, quickly grabbed his companion’s arm and yanked him back.

"GORO! GORO!"

At that moment, I realized I needed something more — something powerful enough to stoke the burning greed in their little green hearts and override their caution.

"Very well."

"Let’s see if this works!"

I opened the shop and exchanged a single Point for 1 Food. A familiar soft chime sounded, and ten small, vibrant red apples appeared inside my inventory.

"Now then, little goblins... would you like an apple?"

I rolled one apple out through the open gate.

Then another.

And another.

They came to rest just beyond the raised portcullis, perfectly placed in the sunlight.

Instantly, the taller goblin’s eyes lit up like lanterns, gleaming with raw hunger as if I had dropped a pile of shiny gold coins at his feet.

"YARRR! APA! APA! YUM YUM!"

He shouted in pure delight and, with a sudden violent jerk, wrenched himself free from the smaller goblin’s grasp, lunging desperately toward the fruit.

The shorter goblin, however, remained deeply wary.

"NARRR! NARRR! GORO! GORO!!!"

Its shrill cries were filled with panic as it clutched its companion’s arm once more, trying desperately to pull him back to safety.

And just like that, the two goblins stumbled backward a few steps, locked in a heated, noisy dispute. They snarled and barked at each other, their voices overlapping in a chaotic frenzy, their clubs trembling wildly in their fists.

"YARRA! YUM YUM! RARA!"

"NAAAAARRR! NAAAAARRRR! GORO!!!"

Their shouts echoed loudly across the clearing.

Hmm....

Perhaps it is time to sweeten the deal even more!

If apples aren't enough... how about meat?

I spent another 3 Points to purchase one kilogram of meat. As I selected the option, a small menu unfolded before me.

I could choose between five two-hundred-gram beef steaks or one kilogram of assorted chicken parts.

The decision was obvious: steak!

"Muahaha!"

"Now let me see how these wretches could possibly resist such a temptation!"

With a soft chime, a thick, juicy slab of red meat materialized right beside the apples, its fresh scent probably already wafting toward the goblins.

And oh my, their reaction was even more instant and explosive than I thought!

"WAAAAAAA!! MYAT! MYAT! YAARRRRAAA! YUM YUM!"

The taller goblin, now completely consumed by greed, swung his club backward in a wild arc —

THWACK!

— and smashed it straight into the smaller goblin's head with brutal force!

The smaller one yelped in pain and crumpled instantly to the grass.

But the moment its eyes locked onto the tempting slab of meat, it quickly scrambled back onto its feet and shouted angrily in protest.

"YARA! MYATT! MYAT!!! MI MYAT II!!!"

Now, both goblins charged madly at the food!

And then, it was total chaos!

As they reached the bait, the scene even surpassed my wildest expectations!

The taller one got to the meat first, snatching it greedily. But then—

BAM!

A wild, overhead swing from the shorter goblin's club shattered several of its teeth! A bloody tooth flew through the air in a wide arc, and its ugly face twisted in agony.

The steak arced upward from the impact, landing perfectly in the shorter goblin's outstretched, clawed hand.

"KAKA! MYAT! MYAT LA MI MI!!!"

It screamed triumphantly as it caught the prize!

Of course, the taller goblin would not concede so easily. It got up utterly pissed, eyes blazing with rage.

BAM!

A powerful return strike!

"BLARGGHH!!"

The shorter goblin was sent hurtling ten meters away, crashing hard into the grass and rolling several times before skidding to a stop! Its nose now bleeding a river a blood.

"Damn!"

"This is so fucking crazy! It's messed up!"

After all, who could have thought that a single piece of bait would incite them to turn on each other with such savage ferocity?

And just like that, the two greedy goblins engaged in a vicious fight to the death right in front of my gate.

BAM!

THWACK!

BAM!

Blood spurted from fresh wounds, and more teeth flew through the air like tiny white projectiles. The taller goblin appeared stronger and bulkier, but the shorter one moved with far greater speed and agility, dodging and countering with surprising quickness.

I found myself secretly favoring the smaller, faster combatant though.

Eventually, the brutal fight reached its dramatic climax. With a swift dodge to the side, followed by a club swing of astonishing speed —

THWACK!

The shorter goblin struck the taller one squarely in the face, the impact so violent it dislocated its neck with a sickening crack. Its head spun a full three hundred and sixty degrees in one grotesque motion! And then, its body fell onto the ground with a thud, convulsing a few times before it truly died.

The sheer brutality of the scene was staggering.

"Holy!"

Even as a castle, I was genuinely shocked!

The smaller goblin panted heavily, chest heaving, as a wide, triumphant, and utterly deranged smile spread across its bloody face. A guttural, victorious scream tore from its throat.

"YARAAAAAA!!!!!"

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[Ding!]

[A Level 8 Forest Goblin has been killed within your territory!]

[Obtaining loot from the fallen creature... Success!]

The notification left me stunned for a moment.

"Wait... what?"

"So you’re telling me that if any creature dies within my territory, I can automatically loot it?"

"Hell yeah!"

As the System did its work, the fallen goblin’s corpse began to glitch and dissolve, breaking apart into countless shimmering particles of light that floated upward before gradually fading away.

Even its crude wooden club disintegrated along with it.

[Ding!]

[Obtained: 1 Goblin Corpse]

[Obtained: 1 Wooden Club]

I immediately checked my Inventory and watched with growing excitement as the two items appeared inside.

I stared at the goblin corpse for a moment.

Hmm... I wonder what I can actually do with this.

I selected it.

[Goblin Corpse]

[Description: The corpse of a fallen goblin. Can be processed or sold to the System for a small amount of Points. If not processed within 24 hours, it will automatically be sold to the System.]

Hmm...

This finally answered one of the questions that had been lingering in my mind since my reincarnation.

One reliable way to earn more Points was simply to sell monster corpses to the System!

Of course, I suspected the goblin corpse might have more valuable uses than simply selling it. Perhaps I could process it into materials, or maybe a processed corpse would be worth considerably more than the raw one.

Unfortunately, I currently had no way to butcher, skin, or otherwise process it.

So, for now, selling it seemed like my only practical option.

"System!" I called out eagerly. "I want to sell the goblin corpse! Activate Item Sell!"

[Skill: Item Sell activated! Target: Goblin Corpse]

[Calculating amount of Points... Completed.]

[You can sell the corpse for 24 Points. Would you like to proceed?]

"Hell yeah!"

I couldn’t believe it.

A whopping 24 Points!

Given that my Castle Core only generated 1 Point per day, selling this single corpse was equivalent to nearly a full month of passive income!

But just before confirming the transaction, I hesitated.

I couldn’t completely trust the System to give me the best possible price right away.

Yeah, of course a scamming system like this would never give me the best deal on the first try!

I decided to try haggling a little, just to see whether the System would actually negotiate.

"System, the Goblin Corpse is in very good condition. How about 40 Points?"

Silence.

"Hmm... maybe 30 Points?"

Still nothing.

"26?"

The System didn’t even bother replying.

Yep.

The price is completely fixed. There really is no room for negotiation.

At least not for now.

"Alright, then. Sell it," I finally said.

[Ding!]

My order was processed in a heartbeat.

[Item Sold: Goblin Corpse]

[Obtained: 24 Points]

[Points Remaining: 44]

Seeing that number made me feel considerably richer.

I had gone from worrying about every single Point to suddenly having more than forty!

This is the feeling of becoming a rich man!

With that transaction settled, I turned my attention to the other item I'd obtained.

"Now, what about the club? Can I sell this too?"

Turns out, I could!

Unfortunately, the club was only worth a measly 1 Point.

Given that the Wooden Club available in my Weapon Shop cost a whopping 10 Points, that initially seemed like a terrible deal.

But after checking the detailed stats of the goblin's club, I immediately understood why it was valued so low.

[Wooden Club]

[Type: Weapon]

[Rarity: Trash]

[Description: Just a trash weapon.]

[Effect: None]

[Special Effect: None]

It didn't even increase the user's stats or grant any special skills. Thus, compared to the System's version, this thing really was pure trash.

Knowing that, even 1 Point suddenly seemed fairly generous.

Still, since the club didn’t appear to have an expiration date, I decided to keep it for now.

After all, I could always sell it later. Or perhaps I might find another use for it.

And so, with the loot sorted out, my attention shifted back to the remaining goblin still inside my territory.

"Damn..."

"Look at you. Aren’t you a relentless little glutton?"

"How fascinating!"

The little guy didn’t even seem to notice that his companion had completely disintegrated into light. His obsession with the meat had completely overwhelmed whatever tiny amount of reason he possessed.

Right now, he was busy chomping down on the thick steak with savage enthusiasm, tearing into it with his sharp yellow teeth and smearing grease across his clawed hands and face.

Absolutely barbaric!

Then he shoved all three apples into his mouth at once, eating as if he hadn’t had a proper meal in weeks. Juice dripped down his chin as he devoured them one after another.

After finishing every last scrap, he performed a little twisted victory dance, hopping from one foot to the other.

But it wasn’t long before he started growling again.

He prowled restlessly around my territory, lifting loose rocks and checking beneath vines and patches of grass, apparently convinced that there had to be more food hidden somewhere.

"I see. So you’re still hungry, huh?"

I couldn’t help but smirk.

"Unlucky for you, I’m hungry for some Points too!"

Now that I knew goblins could be a surprisingly good source of Points, how could I possibly let this guy get away?

Especially when he was already deep inside my territory!

"Muahahaha!"

For a moment, I felt like some powerful Demon Lord, scheming away in the shadows of my own castle.

But there was one small problem.

How the hell was I supposed to kill this guy?

The other goblin had been taken care of by their own fight, but this one was completely alone.

I searched through my castle's various features, trying to think of anything I could use against it.

Then, suddenly, a simple idea came to me.

"Right!"

"I can use gravity!"

With that thought, I raised the portcullis once again.

GRIND... CLANK...

The heavy iron gate groaned as it slowly lifted into the air.

The little goblin didn't even pay attention to the noise. It was still too busy searching the ground for more food.

Perfect.

I placed another piece of steak directly beneath the raised portcullis.

And soon enough, the goblin found it.

Its eyes lit up like stars in the night.

"MYATT!! MYATT!!"

It charged like a starving animal, claws tearing at the dirt, drool flying from its jaws. Without the slightest hesitation it ducked beneath the raised portcullis and snatched the steak in both hands, bringing it greedily toward its crooked yellow teeth.

I was not that evil, so I let the goblin have a final meal.

It almost swallowed the steak whole, its face a picture of pure bliss as it wiped its mouth with the back of its hand.

And that was when I released the gate.

The massive iron spikes came down with the force of a falling mountain.

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I stared at the corpse for a while, feeling a deep sense of revulsion welling up inside me.

The scene was simply too graphic and bloody.

Well, I wasn't so weak that the death of a mere goblin could traumatize me, but seeing a living creature get crushed beneath my portcullis was still something I wasn't used to.

Luckily, I didn't have a stomach. Otherwise, I probably would have needed to puke.

Anyway, it was a good thing I still had my Inventory Skill to clean up the mess automatically.

[Ding!]

[Obtained: 1 Goblin Corpse]

[Obtained: 1 Wooden Club]

The moment I stored the loot inside my Inventory, everything left behind by the goblin disappeared. Even the bloodstains vanished without a trace, as if no one had ever been crushed beneath my deadly portcullis in the first place.

Naturally, I immediately tried to sell the goblin corpse.

However, the System only offered me 18 Points this time.

"What?! Only this many Points?!"

I was a little confused.

That goblin was the same level as the first one I'd killed. Based on that, shouldn't it have been worth the same amount?

24 Points?

Sure, this goblin had been a little smaller than the previous one, but there was no way that alone should have caused such a huge difference in price.

Wait!

Could it be... because I'd crushed the goblin so badly that its corpse was heavily damaged, which in turn reduced its selling price?

That certainly seemed possible.

Unfortunately, I had no way to test that theory right now, so I simply made a mental note to keep it in mind.

In any case, after selling the second goblin corpse, my balance increased to 62 Points.

Just 38 more Points!

Once I reached 100, I'd finally be able to afford one of the next System Shop upgrades.

And in particular, I had my eyes on this one:

[System Shop Level 2 Upgrade]

[Requirement: Castle Core Level 1]

[Upgrade Cost: 100 Points]

[Unlocks: New Basic Materials, Bulk Discount, Sovereign Shop]

With my [Point Generator] skill, I would need at most another month to accumulate enough Points for the upgrade.

Once I got that out of the way, my next priority would be upgrading my passive method of generating Points, my [Castle Core], to Level 2.

That would improve my Point generation from 1 Point per day to 10 Points per day.

The Castle Core Level 2 upgrade also required 100 Points. However, the reason I was putting it second was simple: it required System Shop Level 2 as a prerequisite.

Yup...

Progression was very slow.

But at least I was moving forward at a steady pace.

Hmm... if only I could kill some other monsters, my progression would be much faster!

As soon as that thought crossed my mind, however, another, far more dangerous thought followed.

Wait...

Monsters?

Does it... only have to be monsters?

What if.... I kill other animals and sell their carcasses for Points too?

The moment I thought that, a chill crept down my nonexistent spine.

Fuck! What am I thinking?!

I immediately snapped out of it.

Come on, me! Why the hell would you even consider something like that?

Killing those adorable animals?

Sure, there was literally a huge family of raccoons living inside my basement. If I wanted to, I could simply close all the doors, trap them inside, let them starve to death, and then loot their corpses.

Or I could do the same thing to the deer and rabbits that I'd done to the goblins.

Just lure them beneath the portcullis and...

Crush!

Each one would probably bring me a considerable number of Points.

But...

No! I can't do that!

I forcibly pushed the horrible thought out of my mind.

Being cute was one thing, but those animals were also my friends.

They had been living here with me for quite some time now. Back when I was drowning in loneliness, they had come to my castle and filled the empty halls with life.

Thanks to them, I had been able to stay sane.

So... how could I possibly be so heartless as to murder them all just for a few measly Points?

Sure, progression was important. But so was my conscience!

And besides, what if killing those animals will drive the other animals away from my territory? I still want to tame them somehow in the future, so maintaining a friendly relationship with them can be important.

With that thought, I finally made up my mind.

That's it!

Call me a hypocrite or pussy or whatever. I refuse to murder those animals!

This castle is an animal sanctuary, and it's going to stay that way!

*****

Fortunately, I didn't have to wait that long for my upgrades.

Because just a few days later, some more goblins appeared.

Rustle, rustle...

Under the clear morning sky and warm sunlight, three small green figures suddenly emerged from the bushes.

They spotted my castle almost immediately and charged straight toward me.

"YARRRRR!"

"YARRRRR!"

Their crude wooden clubs were raised high as they rushed toward my gates.

Meanwhile, I was equally excited.

"Haha! Come!"

"COME TO ME, MY BAGS OF POINTS!"

Three goblins!

That was roughly 60 Points, more than enough for me to afford my first upgrade!

I immediately used the same strategy as before. I raised the portcullis, opened my gates wide, and lured them inside with some delicious food.

And, once again, it worked like a charm.

Just like last time, they immediately fought each other viciously over the first piece of steak until only one remained standing.

But before I killed the last one, I decided to try one thing I'd forgotten to do last time.

And that was... Citizenship Granting!

Yeah...

For some reason, I forgot to try that last time with the first two goblins.

Since Goblins could make weapons, wear simple clothes, and communicate using their own language, they were clearly more intelligent than ordinary animals.

So, perhaps they would satisfy the requirements for Citizenship Granting?

"Alright, System. Grant this dude citizenship!"

[Ding!]

[Would you like to use Citizenship Granting on Level 7 Forest Goblin?]

[Cost: 6 Points]

"Hmmm?!"

I was confused at first.

Previously, attempting to grant citizenship to animals had only cost 1 Point. But this time, it cost six?!

"Well... I suppose that makes sense?"

The goblin's level was much higher than that of the animals I'd tried it on before, so perhaps the cost scaled with the target's level.

Luckily, I had enough Points. And even if Citizenship Granting failed, the System would refund 50% the amount of Points. That's totally fine.

With that in mind, I gave my approval.

"System, just do it!"

And the System complied.

[Attempting to grant citizenship to Level 7 Forest Goblin...]

As the skill activated, the goblin suddenly froze in place. Its body then glitched slightly for a few seconds, similar to how the animals had reacted when I'd tried using the skill on them before.

Come on...

Come on!

I was incredibly nervous. Anxiety was practically shooting through the roof.

For some reason, this reminded me of those monster-catching games where you throw a ball at a creature and then pray to every god you know that the capture succeeds!

Surely... I wouldn't need to beat this goblin half to death before I could grant it citizenship, right?

Five seconds later, the notification finally appeared.

[Citizenship Granting Failed!]

[Issuing 50% Refund]

[3 Points Refunded]

[Reason: The target lifeform is intelligent enough. However, its affinity is too low. It will not voluntarily submit to you! It does not recognize you as the Sovereign!]

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Chapter 15: System Shop level 2

"Hmmm? Interesting..."

The Citizenship Granting had failed, but it wasn't like I had gained nothing from the attempt. If anything, the System's notification had given me some valuable clues about the conditions required for the skill to work.

So...

First, the target had to be intelligent enough to understand my existence.

Second, it needed to have a sufficiently high affinity toward me. In other words, it probably couldn't fear me or have a negative impression of me.

And third, it had to recognize me as its Sovereign.

When I put all three conditions together, Citizenship Granting started to look less like a conventional skill and more like a consent agreement between two parties.

In other words, I couldn't simply force someone into becoming my citizen. They had to willingly accept me as their ruler.

Huh...

That's actually pretty reasonable.

I had no problem with the first and second conditions.

But that third condition though... it seemed to be the most troublesome one.

Because I was a castle. How exactly was I supposed to get someone to "recognize me as their Sovereign"?

I mean, in order for someone to recognize me as their ruler, they first had to recognize that I even existed as a living being.

If I were a human or even a monster, that would be easy enough. I could simply introduce myself, talk to them, and establish some sort of relationship.

But here, I was a building.

I couldn't move. I couldn't speak. I couldn't even make a facial expression.

So how the hell am I supposed to make someone recognize me as a being in the first place?!

I see...

So this is the puzzle the System wants me to solve, huh?

Anyway, with the skill having failed and me having no way to make this goblin my citizen for now, there was no reason to keep it alive anymore.

I placed a small apple beneath the portcullis and lured the goblin underneath it before bringing the heavy gate down.

A swift, painless and humane death for the goblin.

Cha-ching!

Another 17 Points into the bag.

Combined with the Points from the two other goblin corpses, and after subtracting the Points lost from the failed Citizenship Granting attempt, I now had a total of 124 Points.

And with that, I finally had enough!

It was finally time to upgrade the System Shop!

*****

"System!" I called out. "Upgrade System Shop."

[Ding!]

[System Shop Upgrade Initiating.]

[-100 Points]

[Points Remaining: 24]

A few seconds later, the upgrade was complete.

[System Shop Upgrade Successful!]

[System Shop Level 2 Unlocked!]

Seeing my balance once again drop below 3 digits hurt more than being struck by lightning.

Haha, back to being broke again, I guess!

Anyway, several new menus smoothly unfolded in my mind.

[New Basic Material Unlocked: Iron!]

That sent a fresh wave of excitement coursing through me.

Hell yeah! Iron!

This precious metal was literally what I'd been waiting for!

Because if I had iron, that meant I could finally get my hands on real swords, spears, and proper metal equipment!

So far, all the weapons available in the Item Shop were made from wood or stone, practically Stone Age junk. So I couldn't help wondering whether the addition of iron would finally change things for the better.

I immediately checked the Item Shop.

Unfortunately, nothing had changed yet.

I'd already used my free daily refresh, so I'd have to wait another day before I could see whether any new iron equipment would appear.

But then...

The moment I went back and checked the price of Iron in the Construction Shop, reality came crashing down on me.

[Iron ×1 — Cost: 30 Points]

...

I closed the screen and opened it again, thinking there must have been some kind of error or miscalculation.

But no.

It was real.

[Iron ×1 — Cost: 30 Points]

"What...?"

"Are you serious, System-san?"

"Thirty. Freaking. Points?!"

"For what? One piece of iron?!"

"ONE?!"

To put that into perspective, I could buy three Stone or three Wood for just 1 Point.

That meant one unit of Stone or Wood effectively cost only about 0.33 Points.

Iron was literally one hundred times more expensive!

"Hmmmmm..."

I tried to come up with a reasonable explanation for the ridiculous price.

Maybe it's because wood can be obtained directly from trees, while iron has to be extracted from ore and then smelted before it becomes usable?

The more processing required to produce a material, the more Points it costs. Thus, Iron would be much more expensive...

Yeah... that's probably it!

At this kind of price, I was now expecting nothing less than pure iron bars.

Still, I couldn't complain too much.

Having iron available was already a huge improvement. It would open up countless possibilities for construction, equipment, and all sorts of other things.

Reincarnated as a Castle - (LitRPG, Kingdom Building, Progression)

There was one more thing that had been unlocked when I upgraded the System Shop.

The Sovereign Shop!

Based on the name alone, I had no idea what kind of things this shop would offer.

But when I opened it, I quickly realized that it was essentially a skill shop dedicated to managing and utilizing my future citizens!

At Level 1, there were four skills available for purchase:

[Eye of the Overlord]

[Type: Passive]

[Description: A passive skill that allows you to observe the basic status of any citizen under your rule. You can also view general information about any creature or item within your territory.]

[Cost: 20 Points]

***

[Lord's Blessing]

[Type: Active]

[Description: Spend Points to increase a citizen's level or upgrade their skills. Higher levels and more powerful skills require more Points.]

[Cost: 20 Points]

***

[Quest Creation]

[Type: Active]

[Description: Grants you the ability to assign basic quests to your citizens.]

[Cost: 20 Points]

***

[Tax Collection — Level 1]

[Type: Passive]

[Description: Each citizen under your rule will periodically generate Points for you. Stronger citizens generate more Points. Upgrading this skill increases the amount of Points generated.]

[Cost: 20 Points]

****

More skills would become available after upgrading the Sovereign Shop:

[Vassal's Eyes]

[Ruler's Voice]

[Devolution]

****

As I read through the available skills, my mind once again filled with endless possibilities.

I could give my citizens quests to hunt monsters outside my territory, have them bring back the loot, earn Points from those rewards, use those Points to upgrade my shops, then spend even more Points to level up my citizens and give them increasingly difficult quests!

It was like I was suddenly playing a full-blown kingdom management game!

Sure, I wasn't exactly the best when it came to RTS, grand strategy, or deep kingdom management games. I was more of a hack-and-slash and waifu-collector gacha kind of guy.

But even so, this sounded incredibly fun and full of potential.

So... Citizens.

I need citizens ASAP!

Still, one big question remained.

How the heck was I supposed to get actual citizens in the first place?

Well, I'd failed to grant citizenship to that goblin earlier, but that didn't mean I was going to give up so easily.

I once again sunk deep into my own thoughts, thinking about how I could somehow get these goblins to accept me as their ruler.

First...

Affinity.

That part should be easy.

Based on their reaction earlier, a single piece of juicy steak was apparently enough to make goblins go crazy. If I could somehow make them realize that the food was coming from me, they would probably develop a very strong impression of me.

Hell, if I fed them enough, they might even start worshipping me as their god!

Who knew?

But there was one problem.

Before I could make them accept me as their Sovereign, I first had to make them aware that I even existed.

And that was much easier said than done when I was literally a castle.

I couldn’t speak to them.

I couldn’t walk up to them.

I couldn’t even point at myself and say, "Hey! I’m the guy you should be worshipping!"

....

...

Then, suddenly, an idea struck me.

Right!

A statue!

I need a statue!

The statue didn’t actually have to look like me.

In fact, it could look like anything.

What I really needed was a symbol. Something the goblins could associate with the mysterious entity ruling this place. Something they could look at and think, That’s our lord.

If I could make them believe that the statue represented the being responsible for all the food and other miracles happening around the castle, then I could essentially use it as my avatar.

Thus, if I saved up enough Points, I could make a large, intimidating statue and place it right in the courtyard.

Then, when a goblin eventually came to my castle, they would see the statue and naturally assume that the figure depicted was the lord of this place.

After that, I could bribe them with food.

Once they became friendly enough, I could try asking them to become my citizens.

At least, that was the plan. I had absolutely no idea whether it would actually work, but it was worth a try!

However, there were two major problems with my brilliant plan though...

First, I needed more Points.

A basic statue already cost 50 Stone, and if I wanted to create a custom statue, I'd need even more.

And of course, I wasn't going to settle for some boring default statue of a plain knight holding a sword.

I wanted something impressive.

Something majestic.

Something that would make a goblin look up at it and immediately think:

Yep. That's definitely the boss!

Something so imposing that they'd drop to their knees and tremble the moment they saw it!

So, judging by the material cost, I might need more than 100 Points.

Maybe even 200.

In any case, I needed to start saving.

And secondly...

What the hell should the statue actually look like?

For maximum effect, the statue needed to be large, imposing, intimidating, and radiate an undeniable sense of authority.

Perhaps a mighty king?

Or maybe a mythical deity, like an angel or a demon?

Luckily, I had one major advantage.

I used to play a lot of gacha games in my previous life, and if there was one thing those games had in abundance, it was awesome character designs.

Surely, I could borrow a little inspiration from them, right?

Home Reincarnated as a Castle - (LitRPG, Kingdom Building, Progression) Chapter 17: Statue design?

Reincarnated as a Castle - (LitRPG, Kingdom Building, Progression)

After experimenting with the statue creation feature for a while, I finally came up with a few designs.

Out of everything I'd tried, three designs particularly stood out.

First, of course, was the ultimate waifu bait goddess design!

Let's be real here. If I wanted something that could command attention and inspire worship, what could possibly be more effective than a goddess of divine beauty?

And there she was, a mysterious goddess who embodied both light and darkness, with four magnificent wings, two angelic and two demonic. Her elegant figure was wrapped in a flowing divine gown decorated with celestial patterns, while a radiant halo floated behind her head like a miniature sun.

Her beautiful face carried a gentle, almost motherly warmth, yet there was also an undeniable sense of divine authority in her gaze.

Yep.

This one would definitely make an impression!

The second design was completely different though.

This time, I went with an emperor. A powerful king who looked like he had conquered half the world and was already planning to conquer the other half.

He sat upon a massive throne, clad in magnificent imperial armor with a crown on his head, a great sword at his side, and an ornate scepter in his hand.

His calm, authoritative expression and imposing presence screamed absolute dominion.

If the goddess represented divine protection, then this guy represented raw imperial power.

Or, in other words...

A complete contrast between gooner-bait waifu and handsome husbando!

Muahaha! If I could bring these designs back to the real world and put them into one of those gacha games, I was sure the fans would absolutely love them!

And finally...

The dragon.

Because, obviously, dragons were awesome.

They were mythical beasts, symbols of power, majesty, and dominion itself!

This one was absolutely enormous.

It had a massive body covered in thick, spiky scales, four powerful legs, enormous wings, and a long serpentine tail coiled around its pedestal. Two enormous horns curved backward from its head, while several smaller horns framed its jaw.

Its mouth was slightly open, revealing rows of sharp teeth, while its narrow, slitted eyes radiated an ancient and terrifying presence. Anyone who stared directly into those eyes for too long would probably feel an instinctive sense of fear.

I also added several decorative chains and ancient runes across its body, giving it the appearance of an ancient divine beast rather than an ordinary dragon.

And finally, at the tip of its tail, I added a gigantic flame nearly half the size of its entire body.

Beneath it was a mountain of gold coins and treasure, as though the dragon had spent thousands of years guarding an endless hoard.

A true ruler of fire.

A guardian of ancient treasures!

A dragon emperor!

Hmm...

Now that’s intimidating!

I stared at the three designs in the system panel for a while.

A divine goddess.

An imperial emperor.

An ancient fire dragon.

All three looked incredibly impressive.

But... which one would be the best choice for my first statue?

******

A while later, after making a few final adjustments, I finally settled on the three designs.

Personally, I really liked the dragon design.

Unfortunately, it was also the most expensive by far.

The blue panel beneath each design displayed the final construction cost:

[Divine Goddess of Light and Darkness — 255 Points]

[Handsome Emperor — 187 Points]

[Scary Fire Dragon — 324 Points]

Those were the final prices after I'd already done my best to reduce the costs by making the statues smaller and removing unnecessary details.

Even after all that, the dragon still required a ridiculous amount of Points. It cost nearly twice as much as the emperor!

Still, I could understand why.

The dragon was by far the most complicated design, with a massive body, huge wings, horns, scales, flames.... All those details added up quickly.

After considering everything, I finally decided to go with the emperor.

After all...

I was a medieval-style castle.

So wouldn't a medieval-style king suit me best?

Yeah.

This is definitely the one.

Now, all I needed was the Points to build it!

****

And so, for the next few weeks, I hoarded every Point I could and farmed every goblin I encountered.

Luckily for me, it seemed like one or two groups of goblins showed up almost every week, practically volunteering to donate their Points to me.

During that time, I also figured out another way to deal with them.

The problem with crushing goblins beneath the portcullis was that it damaged their corpses, which reduced their selling price. If I wanted to maximize my profits, I needed a cleaner method.

After a few experiments, I finally found one.

And it turned out to be ridiculously simple!

I could just drop a sharp weapon on them from above.

Apparently, whenever I chose to retrieve an item from my Inventory, I could choose between placing it gently on the ground or simply dropping it from above.

There was one limitation, though.

I could only drop items from a maximum height of ten meters above the floor.

For example, if I selected the second floor, I could drop an item from anywhere up to ten meters above that floor.

Even so, that was more than enough for my purposes.

So whenever a group of goblins appeared, I simply lured them into my courtyard and...

Sploosh!

Skewered!

A sharp spear came crashing down from above and pinned the unfortunate goblin to the ground!

It took me a few attempts to get my aim right. After all, dropping a spear accurately onto a moving target wasn't exactly as easy as clicking a button in a video game.

But once I got the hang of it, the whole process became incredibly quick and efficient.

Best of all, I could simply retrieve the spear afterward and store it back in my Inventory.

Reusable weapon.

Minimal waste.

Maximum profit.

Now this is efficiency!

Compared to my old method, the goblin corpses remained in much better condition and could be sold for their full value.

And so, I kept doing it.

Goblin after goblin, Point after Point, my balance steadily climbed.

However, there was something else I needed to spend my hard-earned Points on before I could finally build my statue.

Once I reached 100 Points, I immediately spent them to upgrade my Castle Core to Level 2.

The upgrade increased my passive Point generation from 1 Point per day to a whopping 10 Points per day!

At that rate, the upgrade would pay for itself in just ten days.

Yeah! Maximizing my economy is always the way to go!

I briefly considered saving up for the next Castle Core upgrade as well.

However, there was a small problem.

The next upgrade required System Shop Level 3.

And one of the requirements for System Shop Level 3 was...

Having at least five Citizens.

Yeah...

The System was really forcing me to get some citizens before I could progress any further.

There was no way around it.

Still, after weeks of saving and farming goblins, I eventually managed to accumulate enough Points for what I wanted.

Day 54

[Points Remaining: 336]

Finally.

The time had come.

It was time to get my first citizen!

Reincarnated as a Castle - (LitRPG, Kingdom Building, Progression)

I paid 187 Points for the Handsome Emperor statue.

As soon as I confirmed the purchase, the design displayed on the blue panel suddenly began to glow. The image shimmered for a few seconds before transforming into an actual item.

[Ding! Creation Completed.]

[-187 Points]

[Points Remaining: 149 Points]

[1x Custom Statue has been added to your Inventory!]

Of course, I didn't waste any time.

I immediately retrieved the statue from my Inventory and placed it in my main hall, right in the center between the two grand staircases.

The 2.5-meter-tall statue materialized without a hitch.

I stared at it for a few seconds.

"Damn... this is really a work of art! Good job, me!"

The more I looked at it, the more I liked my decision.

It fit the castle's atmosphere perfectly.

The imposing emperor sat upon his throne with an air of absolute authority, his crown, armor, sword, and scepter giving him an unmistakably royal presence. Against the stone walls and towering ceiling of the main hall, he looked like he belonged there.

Yeah...

This is good.

But still...

Something felt like it was missing.

A single statue standing in the middle of this enormous hall looked a little too plain. The emperor was impressive, but the surrounding space didn't do him justice.

Hmm...

Wait!

An idea suddenly struck me.

I immediately spent another 30 Points on a simple but elegant red carpet.

The carpet appeared beneath the statue, stretching forward across the marble floor. Its deep red color contrasted beautifully with the statue's pale stone and the surrounding gray-white marble, making the entire display look much more dramatic.

Much better!

But then I noticed something else.

The hall was still a little too dark.

So, naturally, I spent another 40 Points on several wooden torch stands and placed them around the statue.

Then I activated my Lighting Manipulation skill.

Fwoom!

The torches burst into life.

Warm flames danced above the stands, casting flickering light across the emperor's statue and making the shadows around the hall stretch dramatically across the walls.

The entire atmosphere changed in an instant.

It no longer looked like an empty castle hall with a random statue in the middle.

It looked like some kind of sacred throne room.

A place where a powerful ruler was worshipped.

Now that's more like it!

And yet, the moment I finished decorating, I felt another dangerous urge creeping into my mind.

Maybe I should add some banners...

And a few more statues...

Perhaps some pillars?

And maybe a giant chandelier...

The more I looked at the hall, the more I wanted to keep decorating it and make the whole place even more magnificent.

But I quickly suppressed that urge.

No.

That's enough for now.

I had already spent 258 Points on the statue, carpet, and torches.

I only had 79 Points left. Those Points were far too precious to waste just because I suddenly felt like playing interior designer.

*****

Now that the statue had been built and placed perfectly, all I had to do was wait for my honored guests.

Unfortunately, it wasn't like I could control when goblins decided to show up.

So I had to wait another three days before I finally saw those little green troublemakers again.

Day 57.

Early that morning, two goblins appeared at the edge of my territory.

They approached the castle cautiously, curiosity in their eyes. Just like the goblins before them, they spent some time inspecting my walls and testing their strength with their crude wooden clubs.

I let them explore for a while.

Then, just like every time before, I raised the portcullis and lured them inside with some delicious food.

This time, I only needed two apples.

The moment the goblins saw them, they rushed inside without hesitation, each grabbing an apple and sinking their teeth into it greedily.

Chomp!

Chomp!

Yep.

They really were creatures of greed and gluttony.

Anyway...

It was time.

I felt a mixture of excitement and nervousness as I opened the doors to my main hall.

The two goblins heard the doors creak open and immediately turned toward the sound.

And then they saw it.

A magnificent emperor sitting upon a grand throne, illuminated by flickering torchlight.

And right in front of the statue was a small pile of fresh fruit.

The two goblins froze.

Their apples slipped from their hands and hit the floor.

"Hoho!"

I watched them excitedly.

Looks like they’re deeply impressed!

The plan is working!

Once they rushed forward and grabbed the food beneath the statue, I would try Citizenship Granting again and finally turn them into my very first citizens!

However...

What happened next was completely different from what I expected.

For some reason, the goblins’ eyes suddenly flashed with fury.

Their expressions twisted with anger, and their faces became so tense that I could practically feel their rage from across the hall.

Then they raised their clubs and screamed at the top of their lungs.

"YARRRRRR!"

"YARRRR!"

And charged straight toward the statue!

They completely ignored the pile of food.

They didn’t even spare it a glance.

The two goblins simply charged past it and rushed toward the emperor statue like they had just encountered their most hated enemy.

Then...

BANG!

BAM! BAM!

"YARRR!"

"RAAAARRR!"

Their clubs slammed repeatedly against the statue, the loud impacts echoing throughout my halls.

"What the fuck...?!"

I was completely flabbergasted.

"What the hell is going on?!"

The more I watched them furiously beat the statue, the more I began to suspect what had gone wrong.

Wait...

Could it be because they have a bad impression of humans?

The realization hit me like a lightning bolt.

Damn it! How could I not have thought of this?!

Goblins were monsters.

And if they were naturally hostile toward humans, then a statue depicting a powerful human emperor was probably the absolute worst symbol I could have chosen!

Fuck! I miscalculated!

Did I really waste all those Points for nothing?!

My carefully designed plan had backfired spectacularly.

The statue I'd created to make the goblins recognize their mighty ruler had instead made them see red!

At this point, Citizenship Granting was obviously out of the question.

So, with no other option, I dealt with the two goblins the same way as before, dropping spears from above and eliminating them.

Once everything was over, I retrieved the loot and all my decorations back into my Inventory.

The statue.

The carpet.

The torches.

Everything.

Well...

If anything, lesson learned.

It’s not the end of the world.

Now that my Point generation had reached Level 2, I could accumulate Points much faster than before. It wouldn’t take me too long to save up again.

Still...

Next time, perhaps I should try a statue of a handsome goblin.

Surely that can’t go wrong... right?

Reincarnated as a Castle - (LitRPG, Kingdom Building, Progression)

The statue idea was still plausible.

I just needed a different design. Something that wasn’t human.

But at this point, I suddenly found myself stuck.

I had absolutely no idea what kind of design would actually work on goblins.

Think about it.

Goblins were monsters.

They weren’t humans, so there was no reason to assume they would share human values, aesthetics, or ideas about authority. I had no idea what kind of creature they would willingly submit to, or what kind of figure they might instinctively respect.

Perhaps a super-bulky, muscular goblin with eight-pack abs and a gigachad kind of face?

Or maybe a tall, slender, intimidating shaman covered in strange tribal ornaments?

It could even be a sexy and busty goblin queen to activate their lust!

Or...

Maybe I was overthinking it.

Perhaps a simple, ordinary goblin would work just fine?

Yeah... I could give him a much bigger club and a gigantic ham leg to represent his love of food and strength.

"Ah... man. I really don’t know..."

The only way to find out was to experiment, good old-fashioned trial and error.

The problem was that... every experiment cost Points though.

A lot of Points.

Considering how expensive custom statues were, I could easily burn through several hundreds, or even thousands of Points just trying different designs.

Not to mention, there was no guarantee the statue idea would even work in the first place.

Still, whether or not my plan worked, there was two thing I knew for certain.

One: I needed Points. Lots of them.

And two: I needed to figure out how to get my citizens if I wanted to progress.

And so, my daily routine continued.

Generate Points.

Feed the animals whenever I felt like it.

Then deal with any goblins foolish enough to wander into my territory.

All the while, I carefully observed their behavior, hoping to discover something that could give me a clue about what they actually respected.

But so far, aside from their absolute obsession with steak, I hadn’t found anything else.

*****

But then, a few weeks later, something completely unexpected happened.

This time, not one, not two, but an entire army of goblins was approaching my castle!

More than thirty of them marched toward me, brandishing crude spears, clubs, and all kinds of makeshift weapons.

Some even carried burning torches as they swarmed toward my castle, shouting and snarling with raw fury.

Worse still, there were two particularly large goblins who were nearly twice the height of the others.

They carried massive stone hammers and looked far more muscular and intimidating than the rest, with white chalk painted across their faces in fierce, claw-like patterns.

Hmmm...

Are those evolved goblins that become stronger as they level up? Or some kind of special elite type?

Either way, the sight sent a brief chill through my stone foundations.

It reminded me of those old fantasy stories where an evil lord hides inside his castle while an angry mob gathers outside to storm his fortress.

Except, well...

I wasn’t Dracula.

And my angry mob was made up of green goblins instead of pitchfork-wielding villagers.

Of course, I couldn’t understand what they were shouting. I didn’t speak Goblish.

But I could make a pretty good guess about what they wanted.

Did they somehow find out that I killed their kin?

But how?

Every time I killed a goblin, I made sure not a single one escaped.

And as they say, dead men tell no tales.

Surely a dead goblin couldn’t warn the others...

Right?

Unless...

Wait.

Did the dead goblins turn into ghosts and return to their tribe to rat me out?!

Yeah, that's ridiculous.

Probably not.

Another possibility was that they had some kind of tracking ability.

Now that I think about it, goblins do have unusually large noses.

Could they have an incredible sense of smell, like dogs?

Can they smell the blood of their own kind? The ones I mercilessly killed?

...

That was a deeply disturbing thought.

Or perhaps I'd simply been careless, and one of the goblins had witnessed everything without me noticing through the trees.

Either way, none of that mattered right now.

The real question was...

What the hell am I supposed to do about this?

Should I try to bribe all of them with food and hope for the best? Maybe they'd forgive me and accept my offer of citizenship?

Or should I keep my gates shut tight and do nothing, waiting for them to eventually get tired and leave?

But before I could decide...

The goblins attacked!

The two muscular goblins wielding the massive stone hammers charged forward first, unleashing thunderous war cries that echoed through the clearing.

The rest followed close behind in a chaotic wave, rushing toward my castle with wild abandon.

I braced myself for impact.

As they reached the castle, the two giants raised their enormous hammers and slammed them against my iron gate with all their strength.

Oh shit!

I need to come up with a defense plan.

Fast!

Reincarnated as a Castle - (LitRPG, Kingdom Building, Progression)

But then, moments later...

Bonk!

BONK!

BONK!

Well, for some reason, it barely even tickled!

I knew those big goblins were putting all their strength into those attacks, but... it was futile. It felt more like someone repeatedly tapping your leg with a spoon. More annoying than painful.

The muscular goblins certainly looked terrifying, but that was only compared to the smaller ones, who were about the size of human children.

In truth, the two giants were little more than average dudes who had spent a bit too much time at the gym. Sure, their muscles were bulky, and their baldy heads were scary, but they were still far too weak to threaten me. Their attacks couldn’t even leave a scratch on my sturdy iron gate.

With that realization, all my worries vanished in an instant.

Haha! Looks like I was scared for nothing!

My walls were thick and sturdy, and my gate was made of solid iron. It wasn't something a mere bunch of angry goblins could break so easily.

But damn...

These goblins were persistent!

Even when their attacks failed to leave so much as a scratch, they kept hammering away at the gate without giving up.

BONK! BONK!

CLANG! CLANG!

Some of them even tried committing arson.

They hurled burning torches over my walls, apparently hoping to set my castle ablaze.

But...

Well, I was an empty castle!

It wasn't like I had much inside that could actually catch fire!

At worst, they could burn a little grass in my overgrown courtyard.

Still, I didn't want to take any chances. So, before the torches could even touch the ground, I activated my Inventory skill.

[Ding!]

[Obtained: 1 Torch]

[Obtained: 1 Torch]

[Obtained: 1 Torch]

[Obtained: 1 Torch]

[Obtained: 1 Torch]

[Obtained: 1 Torch]

...

Yoink!

Any torch that entered my Inventory’s designated area, which basically covered my entire territory, was instantly absorbed!

But the stupid goblins just kept throwing them.

Again.

And again.

And again.

Until they had nothing left.

In just a few minutes, they’d practically handed me thirty free torches.

Thirty!

If I sold them later, that was another three easy Points!

Soon enough, the goblins were absolutely bewildered when they realized their torches were mysteriously disappearing into thin air. And that only made them angrier.

Meanwhile, I was laughing internally.

"Muahaha! Let me see what else you’ve got!"

Eventually, some of them decided to climb over my walls.

This time, however, unlike their previous attempts, they had brought ladders! If they used them properly, they could actually climb over the walls with relative ease.

I had to admit, these guys knew how to make basic tools. So they clearly possessed at least some level of civilization.

Anyway, several goblins propped their ladders against my outer walls and began climbing. And before long, five of them had made it into my courtyard, including the two big, muscular ones.

The moment they landed, they immediately marched toward my main wooden door.

That door was made of thick wood, so it obviously wasn’t nearly as sturdy as my iron gate. If those two giants started smashing it with their stone hammers, there was a real chance they could eventually break through.

I couldn’t let that happen.

So I did what I had to do.

A massive block of stone, which I'd purchased from the shop earlier, suddenly dropped from above and landed directly in front of them.

BAM!

The goblins shrieked and jumped backward in panic.

Then I dropped another block.

BOOM!

That got the message across.

Come any closer, and I'll crush the lot of you with these rocks!

"YARAA!"

The goblins finally seemed to realize that invading my castle was a terrible idea. Fear spread rapidly through the group, and they began retreating.

Everyone was in complete panic now.

They hurried back toward the ladders.

But then... another evil idea popped into my mind.

Well... now that there's a perfectly good ladder sitting inside my territory...

Muehehehe...

It's mine!

[Ding!]

[Obtained: 1 Ladder!]

"YAAAAAAAAARRRR!!!"

The moment the ladder mysteriously disappeared, the five trapped goblins screamed in pure terror!

They ran around wildly, jumping desperately at the walls and searching for another way out.

But there was none.

They were now trapped like rats in a cage!

"Muahahaha!"

I couldn’t help laughing internally as I watched them scramble around in panic. For some reason, this was incredibly amusing!

I could have dropped my spears and eliminated those goblins right then and there. But after thinking it over, I decided against it.

The other goblins outside were watching everything.

They were already terrified.

The goblins trapped inside were screaming for help, while the others could do nothing but watch.

If I killed them now, it might completely destroy whatever impression I’d managed to make on the group.

And with my long-term plan of eventually turning a goblin into one of my citizens, that could be a disaster.

Then, to my surprise, the goblins outside suddenly dropped to their knees. They began bowing and pleading with me to spare their companions.

Huh?

I was genuinely surprised.

They actually care about each other?

That somehow contrasted deeply with how I had always been viewing these guys. After all, the ones I killed were all willing to kill their own kin over a tiny piece of steak.

Well... in that case, I decided to be a merciful castle.

I opened the gate and released the trapped goblins.

The moment they were free, they scrambled back to their companions, some of them embracing one another in obvious relief.

The leader then stepped forward and bowed deeply toward me.

Even though I couldn’t understand a single word of Goblish, the gesture was impossible to misunderstand.

It was gratitude.

And perhaps an apology for attacking me in the first place.

Yep.

I’d shown them mercy.

I sincerely hoped this would lead to a better future. A future where I could finally gain my first goblin citizens.

But then... I suddenly realized something.

I fucked up.

As the group regrouped, the elder goblin walked up to my gate and placed a wooden stick in the ground.

The stick was decorated with crude skull carvings and strange markings.

After placing it there, the goblin turned around and shouted something to the others.

Then the entire group left.

At the time, I had absolutely no idea what it meant.

But soon... I figured it out.

It was a warning sign. A message to every goblin who might wander into this territory.

It basically said:

"Fellow goblins, DO NOT ENTER THIS CASTLE!"