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

chapter 21-30

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

"Fuck! This is bad!!!"

Yeah, that skull-marked stick the elder goblin had left in front of my gate had become a huge problem.

Because of that stupid thing, not a single goblin had entered my castle for several days.

Sometimes, I could still see goblins approaching from a distance. But the moment they spotted the skull-marked stick, their expressions immediately changed. They would become cautious, whisper among themselves, and then slowly back away.

Even when I tried baiting them with delicious meat, they refused to come any closer.

Damn it!

If no goblin was willing to enter my castle anymore, how was I supposed to get my first citizen?

And more importantly...

How was I supposed to farm Points?

Eventually, however, I came up with a solution.

There was a skill I could unlock by upgrading one of my other shops.

[Upgrade Construction Shop to Level 2]

Upgrade Cost: 100 Points

Unlocks: Land Expansion, Building Construction

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It was Land Expansion!

The idea was simple.

If I could expand my territory far enough, I could simply encompass that stupid stick within my domain and then yoink it directly into my Inventory!

At the moment, I had 256 Points.

More than enough to upgrade the Construction Shop.

Hehehe... this should work!

Without wasting any more time, I made the upgrade.

[Ding!]

[Construction Shop Upgrade Successful!]

[-100 Points]

[Construction Shop Level 2 Unlocked!]

[Skill: Land Expansion Unlocked!]

[Skill: Building Construction Unlocked!]

[Points Remaining: 156]

The upgrade went smoothly without any issues.

Feeling rather pleased with myself, I immediately checked my newly unlocked skills.

First, of course, was Land Expansion.

[Land Expansion - Level 1]

Description: Spend Points to expand your land and increase your total territory area! Each purchase expands your land, allowing you to build more structures and providing your citizens with additional living space.

Cost: 10 Points per 10 Square Meters

Expansion Limit: 0 / 1,000 Square Meters

Note: Upgrade this skill to increase your maximum expansion limit!

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"Ooooh!"

"Now, this is a pretty nice skill!"

Just as I expected, it allowed me to expand my territory by up to another 1,000 square meters at Level 1. That would be a massive increase. It would practically triple the size of my current territory!

The cost was pretty expensive though. 10 Points for 10 square meters of land....

But.. haha!

At least here, in this fantasy world, I could actually afford to buy some land of my own.

But if I were still in the old world.. I probably couldn't even afford a shitty apartment, even if I worked myself to the bone for ten years!

Anyway, with this skill, all I needed to do was expand my territory toward the front gate until the skull stick was included within my domain.

Once that happens, I should be able to retrieve it using my Inventory skill.

At least, that was what I thought.

I spent 40 Points to expand my territory by 40 square meters.

[Ding!]

[Skill Used: Land Expansion!]

[-10 Points]

[Your Land Has Increased by 10 Square Meters!]

[Ding!]

[Skill Used: Land Expansion!]

[-10 Points]

[Your Land Has Increased by 10 Square Meters!]

[Ding!]

[Your Land Has Increased by 10 Square Meters!]

[Ding!]

[Your Land Has Increased by 10 Square Meters!]

...

Then I noticed something strange.

It wasn’t working.

"Oi!"

"What the hell is this, System?!"

I was absolutely certain that I’d spent all those Points expanding the land toward my gate.

So why the hell was that skull stick still sitting there?

No matter how much I expanded my territory, the distance between the stick and my gate remained exactly the same.

Nothing changed.

Well...

Something did change.

My front yard had gotten noticeably bigger.

But that wasn’t what I wanted!

I wanted that damned stick gone!

After staring at the expanded area for a while, I finally realized what had happened.

Land Expansion wasn’t actually expanding my territory outward.

It was expanding the amount of space contained within my territory.

In other words, the System was somehow increasing the size of my domain without changing its external boundaries.

The outside world remained exactly the same.

The castle remained exactly where it was.

And that stupid skull stick remained exactly where it had been.

Only the amount of space inside my territory had increased.

Which was just...

Ridiculous!

It completely violated every law of physics I knew!

Space couldn’t just expand inward without affecting the outside world!

Right?!

"Haha! This is some freaking higher-dimensional bullshit!!!"

And yet, there it was. It was happening right in front of me. The System had apparently decided that it had its own law of physics.

So, in the end... my brilliant plan had completely failed.

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And just like that, life settled back into a peaceful, somewhat boring routine for the next two weeks.

The skull-marked stick remained stubbornly planted where it was, but eventually, I stopped obsessively staring at it every few hours.

Sure, the goblin situation still felt pretty hopeless. They continued to avoid my castle like the plague, and I had no idea how I was supposed to convince them to come back.

But then again...

What if, one random day, I suddenly had an actual human visitor?

Or perhaps another fantasy race with greater intelligence and potential?

Thinking about that, I felt a little better.

There was no point obsessing over the goblins forever. I just had to wait for another opportunity.

Meanwhile, more and more animals continued to move into my territory.

Or rather, they returned.

Now that the goblins were no longer disturbing them, the animals seemed to have finally relaxed and started spreading throughout my territory again.

The rabbits multiplied rapidly. Birds built more nests across my towers and windowsills. Even the raccoons seemed perfectly content with their little sanctuary.

And before long...

I even received an achievement for it!

[Ding!]

[You now have more than 100 animals living within your territory!]

[Achievement Unlocked: Wildlife Haven!]

[+20 Points!]

[Points Remaining: 352]

"Nice!"

I couldn’t help feeling a little proud.

"Now let’s aim for 1,000 animals!!!"

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But then, one random evening, everything changed.

I had almost accepted that my relationship with the goblins was over.

They would avoid my castle forever, and I would probably spend the rest of my life regretting that stupid mistake with the human statue.

But that evening, it was as if the gods of this world had decided to give me one last chance.

It was another stormy night.

Just like before, the sky roared with fury. Thunder split the heavens again and again, each deafening crack making my stone walls tremble. Rain hammered down in heavy sheets, while violent winds screamed through the ancient forest like enraged spirits tearing through the trees.

And there I was, once again, quietly enjoying the raw chaos of nature.

At some point, I even found myself making a stupid little bet with myself.

I wonder if I'll get struck by lightning again like I did on Day 10? Hehe.

They say lightning doesn't strike the same place twice. So if I get another strike, shouldn't that be another achievement?

Boom!

Zap!

A few bolts came dangerously close, briefly illuminating the entire clearing in blinding white flashes.

But this time, no direct hit came.

That made me pause.

"Should I build a lightning rod?"

I mean, I had Iron now.

A simple iron pole shouldn't be too difficult to make, right?

I was still thinking about it when my external vision suddenly picked up frantic movement at the edge of the forest.

Two small figures burst out from between the trees, running as fast as they could.

I immediately zoomed in.

Goblins!

Two goblins stumbled desperately through the muddy clearing, soaked to the bone as they slipped and scrambled forward.

Their breathing was ragged, their movements frantic.

They weren't simply running.

They were running for their lives.

For a moment, I couldn't help wondering what could possibly terrify goblins this badly.

Then I heard it.

"Awooooo—!"

My attention snapped back toward the forest.

The bushes suddenly exploded outward as a massive shadow leaped into the clearing.

A wolf!

No...

Not just a normal wolf.

I'd never seen anything like this before!

The creature was enormous, easily the size of a bull. Its thick gray fur was slick with rain, while two curved horns jutted from its skull, giving it an almost demonic appearance.

Its glowing eyes remained locked onto the fleeing goblins, filled with nothing but predatory hunger.

Then another shadow emerged.

Then another.

And another!

Within seconds, an entire pack poured out of the forest, snarling and barking as they continued the chase.

Their howls mixed with the thunder, creating a terrifying symphony as the hunt continued across the rain-soaked clearing.

And that alone answered one of my earlier questions.

So this forest really does have other, far more dangerous monsters!

Compared to those beasts, the two goblins looked absolutely tiny and fragile.

I could see them more clearly now.

One was slightly taller and more muscular, most likely male.

The other was smaller and thinner, with a ponytail and distinctly feminine features.

Both had the same strange white markings painted across their faces.

That similarity immediately caught my attention.

Are they family?

Perhaps siblings?

For now, that was my best guess.

So I watched in silence as the tense scene unfolded.

The two goblins were running straight toward my castle now.

More accurately... that was the only direction left for them to run.

Then it happened.

The smaller goblin’s foot suddenly slipped on the rain-soaked ground.

Oh no!!!

She lost her balance and crashed face-first into the thick mud.

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Chapter 23: Between life and death

Oh no!

A wolf lunged straight at her!

But the taller goblin heard his little sister's terrified scream.

He spun around without a moment's hesitation and charged back with a raw, desperate roar. Raising his crude wooden club, he swung with every ounce of strength left in his battered body.

BAM!

The club slammed into the wolf's snout!

The massive beast yelped and staggered sideways, letting out a sharp, pained whimper.

But of course...

It wasn't nearly enough!

The wolf violently shook its head, sending rain flying from its thick fur. Its glowing eyes locked back onto the goblin, burning with even greater fury.

Then another wolf lunged from the side!

Its claws flashed through the pouring rain, heading straight for the siblings.

But the goblin brother reacted just in time.

In one desperate, instinctive movement, he grabbed his sister and turned his body to shield her.

The claws struck his back.

SLASH!

He staggered forward, a deep wound opening across his back as blood quickly mixed with the pouring rain.

Damn... that's brutal.

For a moment, I thought it was over.

I thought the goblin had finally fallen, and that the pack would tear into their helpless prey.

But to my surprise...

He got back up.

The goblin screamed through the pain and forced himself upright, his legs trembling beneath him.

Adrenaline must have been flooding through his body, drowning out everything except the instinct to survive.

He couldn't stop.

Not yet.

With trembling arms, he hoisted his sister onto his back and staggered forward.

Another wolf lunged.

The goblin ducked at the last possible moment.

He twisted his body, narrowly avoiding the attack, then pushed forward again.

And ran.

Straight toward me!

He screamed as he ran, his legs pumping desperately as he splashed through the mud.

He didn't slow down.

He didn't look back.

He simply kept running toward my castle as though his life depended on it.

And seeing that, something unexpected ignited inside me.

What the hell?

Is this guy an anime protagonist or something?!

This is ridiculous!

I'd killed countless goblins before.

I'd never really felt bad about it. As far as I was concerned, they were just greedy little monsters that wandered into my territory.

They were my walking bags of Points.

But this time... I suddenly found myself cheering for them.

COME ON!

COME ON! YOU'VE GOT THIS!

I raised my gate.

Get in! Hurry!

But then...

The goblin suddenly skidded to a halt.

My heart sank.

Because there it was – That damned skull-marked stick! The warning sign the elder goblin had planted in front of my gate!

And now, it was standing directly between the siblings and their only path to safety.

OH, GOD DAMN IT!

JUST FUCKING GET IN!

The goblin brother hesitated.

Rain streamed down his face as his eyes darted frantically between the ominous warning sign and the snarling monsters rapidly closing in behind him.

His sister clung tightly to his neck, her small arms wrapped around him as her entire body trembled.

Behind them, the wolves were getting closer.

Fast.

The goblin stood frozen at a terrible crossroads.

Death behind him.

Fear in front of him.

There was no time left to think.

So what would he choose now?

...

...

...

"YAAAAAARRRR!"

The goblin suddenly screamed and charged straight into my castle!

YES!

I immediately slammed the gate shut.

CLANG!

But just as the heavy portcullis descended, one of the wolves suddenly lunged forward with terrifying speed.

It managed to slip through the narrowing gap!

The beast landed inside my courtyard and skidded across the wet stone, water spraying beneath its massive paws.

It slowly raised its head.

Its lips curled back into a savage snarl, revealing rows of sharp fangs as drool dripped from its jaws.

The exhausted goblin siblings turned around.

They froze.

Their faces drained of color as they stared at the enormous beast.

Above them, thunder boomed through the storm like a war drum.

For a moment, everything went silent.

The wolf lowered its body, muscles tensing as it prepared to pounce.

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However...

Despite their overwhelming terror, the goblin brother still stood his ground.

He positioned himself in front of his little sister, shielding her with his own body as he gripped his wooden club so tightly that his knuckles turned pale against his green skin.

Both of them were trembling violently as they faced the monstrous wolf.

Even so, the brother clearly had no intention of going down without a fight.

But his body betrayed him first.

He had already lost too much blood.

With a weak gasp, his legs finally gave out, and he dropped heavily to his knees. His chest heaved as he struggled to remain conscious.

The wolf answered with a low, rumbling growl.

Then it began creeping closer.

One slow step at a time.

The goblin brother clenched his teeth and forced himself to remain upright, desperately trying to keep his body from collapsing completely.

Then something unexpected happened.

The little goblin sister suddenly stepped forward.

She placed herself directly in front of her injured brother and spread her small arms wide.

Her thin body trembled violently, looking as though it could barely withstand the force of the storm.

And yet... her eyes were fierce.

She stared directly at the approaching monster without backing down. It was as if she were saying with every fiber of her being:

"If you want to eat my brother... then eat me first!"

The goblin brother’s eyes flew open in shock and horror.

And I froze too.

I hadn’t expected something like this from either of them.

After all...

Were these really the same foolish, greedy goblins I had killed so many times before?

Even with death staring them directly in the face, their courage was undeniable.

Unfortunately, courage meant nothing to the wolf.

It wasn't interested in their bravery.

It was hungry.

The massive predator suddenly lunged!

Both goblins instinctively turned away and squeezed their eyes shut, bracing themselves for the end they believed they couldn't escape.

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But of course.

I had no intention of letting them die that easily!

They were inside my castle now.

And that meant they were under my protection!!!

BOOM!

A massive slab of stone suddenly dropped from above and slammed into the wolf with tremendous force!

The beast went limp instantly.

Just like that. The threat was gone.

The goblins slowly opened their eyes.

For a moment, neither of them seemed to understand what had happened.

Then they looked down.

What greeted them was the motionless body of the wolf.

The sight sent another jolt of terror through them.

Both goblins shrieked and scrambled backward in panic, losing their balance and landing heavily in the mud.

Outside the gate, the remaining wolves reacted as well.

The moment they saw one of their packmates suddenly fall, their aggression faltered, replaced by fear and unease. They backed away cautiously, growling and baring their teeth as they stared into my courtyard.

And eventually, after a few tense moments, the pack finally turned around.

As if bidding farewell to their fallen companion, they released one final, mournful howl.

"Awoooooooo...!"

The sound echoed through the stormy forest before gradually fading into the distance.

One by one, the wolves disappeared between the trees, leaving the two goblins alone inside my castle.

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For the next few minutes, I simply watched in silence, giving the two goblin siblings time to calm down.

Their raw terror slowly faded, replaced by the fragile realization that they had somehow survived.

They looked at each other in stunned silence for a long moment.

Then, all at once, they threw their arms around each other in a tight, desperate embrace.

Their small green bodies trembled as they clung to each other, rain still dripping from their soaked hair and ragged clothes.

The sight tugged at something deep inside me.

I felt my non-existent chest tighten slightly.

They’re really just siblings...

Still, sentiment could wait.

I needed to get them inside.

I couldn’t leave them out there, soaked to the bone and shivering in the cold rain. More importantly, the brother was badly injured and clearly needed somewhere warm and safe to recover.

So, I opened the gate leading into my main hall.

The heavy wooden doors groaned loudly as they swung open on their old hinges.

I even lit the torches along the walls, warm golden light spilling into the courtyard and illuminating the dry interior beyond.

Come on. It’s safe inside.

However, the goblins didn’t seem to understand my good intentions.

If anything, the sudden movement of the doors only frightened them again.

They didn’t step forward.

Instead, both goblins immediately dropped to their knees and prostrated themselves on the wet ground.

Their bodies trembled as they remained pressed against the ground, almost as though they were kneeling before an actual deity.

"Oh, god."

I froze for a moment, completely taken aback by the sudden display of worship.

But then...

I realized it.

"Wait a minute."

"This is it!"

"My long-awaited moment!"

After all, I had just saved them by displaying overwhelming power.

To them, I must have looked like some kind of higher being, a mysterious, god-like entity that had protected them from certain death.

That meant the conditions should finally be met!

Intelligent enough?

Check.

Aware of my existence?

Check.

Sufficient affinity?

Check.

Able to recognize and accept me as their Sovereign?

Check!

It was time.

My first citizens!

"System. Grant these two citizenship! Now!"

[Ding!]

[Would you like to use Citizenship Granting on these two Forest Goblins?]

[Cost: 13 Points]

"Do it!"

I confirmed without hesitation.

The bodies of the two goblins began to flicker, faint light rippling across their forms as the Citizenship Granting process began.

The next few seconds felt much longer than they actually were.

Come on...

Come on!

Then, all at once, both goblins were enveloped in brilliant light.

At the same time, the System's familiar chime rang out.

[DING! Congratulations!]

[You have successfully granted citizenship to a Level 8 Forest Goblin!]

[You have successfully granted citizenship to a Level 6 Forest Goblin!]

[Ding! Achievement Unlocked: First Citizens!]

[Points +20]

[Points Remaining: 359]

[You currently possess no Sovereign Skills.]

[The System recommends visiting the Sovereign Shop to acquire skills for managing your citizens.]

"Oh, hell yeah!"

"Finally..."

"FINALLY!"

Excitement surged through me like a raging fire.

I had done it.

I really did it!

After all this time, I finally had my first citizens!

Without hesitation, I immediately opened the Sovereign Shop and purchased [Eye of the Overlord].

It was a passive skill that allowed me to observe the basic status of any citizen under my rule.

With this skill, I would finally be able to see the stats of my citizens!

Now then...

"Let’s see what you’ve got, little goblins!"

****

As I activated the skill, two clear status windows appeared before me.

[Citizen Status]

Name: Unnamed (Designation Required)

Race: Forest Goblin

Sex: Male

Rank: ★

Level: 8

Vital Status

- HP: 25 / 110 ⚠

- MP: 10 / 10

- Stamina: 12 / 100 ⚠

Core Attributes

- Attack: 8

- Defense: 3

- Magic Attack: 0

- Magic Defense: 0

- Magic Capacity: 0

- Speed: 2

Recovery Rates

- HP Regen: 0.25 / min

- Mana Regen: 0.1 / min

- Stamina Regen: 1 / min

Skill List

- Hunting Lv.1

- Fishing Lv.1

- Carnivorism Lv.1

- Regeneration Lv.1

Active Status Effects

- Bleeding Lv.1

- Fatigue

- Cold

*****

[Citizen Status]

Name: Unnamed (Designation Required)

Race: Forest Goblin

Sex: Female

Rank: ★

Level: 6

Vital Status

- HP: 70 / 90

- MP: 10 / 10

- Stamina: 23 / 100 ⚠

Core Attributes

- Attack: 6

- Defense: 2

- Magic Attack: 0

- Magic Defense: 0

- Magic Capacity: 0

- Speed: 1

Recovery Rates

- HP Regen: 0.25 / min

- Mana Regen: 0.1 / min

- Stamina Regen: 1 / min

Skill List

- Cooking Lv.1

- Carnivorism Lv.1

- Regeneration Lv.1

Active Status Effects

- Fatigue

- Broken Bone

- Cold

****

"Oh yeah!"

Seeing those status screens for the first time filled me with excitement.

It’s just like a game!

Stats, skills, status effects... I even had proper health and stamina bars to keep track of!

My gamer senses were tingling already.

I’m gonna level these guys up to max and turn them into the strongest goblins ever!

But first, there was an urgent problem I needed to deal with.

The brother’s negative status effect.

[Bleeding Lv.1]

Description: Causes the target to continuously lose HP. The amount depends on the skill level.

Effect: -3 HP/minute.

Duration: 1 hour.

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He only had 25 HP left.

Worse, his HP regeneration was far too weak to offset the bleeding, restoring only a pathetic 0.25 HP per minute.

If I didn’t do something soon, he would lose the remaining HP in less than ten minutes.

As I watched, his HP ticked down again.

24 HP.

Blood had already begun pooling beneath him, mixing with the rainwater until the two were almost indistinguishable.

His eyes were dull and unfocused, and his breathing had become increasingly labored. He looked like he could collapse at any moment.

Alright. First things first.

I need to get them inside.

I dropped a piece of meat just beyond the entrance to my main hall.

The goblins hesitated for only a moment before seemingly understanding what I wanted.

The little sister hurried to her brother’s side, helping him back onto his feet and carefully guiding him into the castle.

Once they were inside, they were finally sheltered from the cold rain.

The little sister picked up the meat.

But she didn’t eat it.

Instead, she immediately handed it to her brother.

Thankfully, he could still chew.

Despite his injuries and the blood he had already lost, he devoured the entire steak in moments.

I dropped two more pieces of meat.

This time, both goblins ate.

While they were eating, I pulled up their status windows again and carefully scanned every description line by line.

There had to be something.

Anything that could stop the bleeding before it was too late.

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And then, I found it.

There were still a few things that could save him.

The first was his skill.

[Regeneration Lv.1]

[Effect: Restores 0.5% of maximum HP per minute.]

[With a maximum HP of 110, that should have given him 0.55 HP per minute.]

But there was still a major problem weighing him down.

[Fatigue]

[Description: Once Stamina drops below 25, the victim's Speed, HP Recovery, and MP Recovery are halved. Damage output is reduced, while all incoming damage and negative status effects are amplified by 50%.]

That was a brutal debuff.

It didn't just weaken his natural recovery. It also made his bleeding worse, accelerating the loss of HP.

So the priority was obvious: I needed to get rid of Fatigue.

But waiting for his Stamina to recover naturally wasn't an option. At this rate, he would be dead long before his Stamina climbed back above the threshold.

Fortunately, I'd already taken action without even realizing it.

By feeding him that steak earlier, I had unknowingly triggered another one of his skills.

[Carnivorism Lv.1]

[Description: After consuming meat, grants a significant boost to Stamina Recovery and HP Regeneration. The duration depends on the type and amount of meat consumed.]

[Effect (Beef Steak, 500g):

- Stamina Regeneration: +1 per second

- HP Regeneration: +1 per minute]

[Duration: 20 minutes]

And just like that, everything changed.

Within half a minute of activating Carnivorism, his Stamina surged past the danger threshold. The Fatigue debuff disappeared, taking all of its nasty penalties with it.

Now that he was no longer suffering from Fatigue, his Regeneration skill could function at full strength.

Combined with Carnivorism, his HP recovery climbed to 1.5 HP per minute.

Better.

But still not enough.

Even without Fatigue amplifying it, Bleeding was draining 3 HP every minute. That left him with a net loss of 1.5 HP per minute.

With nearly an hour remaining on the bleeding effect, the outcome hadn't actually changed.

Death.

Just slower.

I thought of giving him another steak, but that wouldn't help either, since it would only extended the duration of Carnivorism instead of increasing its effect.

Which meant there was only one option left.

Level up!

Either his actual level, or his Regeneration skill!

I spent another 20 Points and purchased [Lord's Blessing Lv.1] from the Sovereign Shop.

[Ding!]

[Purchase of Lord's Blessing Level 1 completed.]

[The skill is now available to use.]

****

[Lord's Blessing - Level 1]

[Type: Active]

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

I immediately activated it on the injured goblin.

A new panel appeared before me, which 2 types of action to choose from.

[Level Up]

[Current Level: 8]

[Please input the target level you want your citizen to reach.]

[Skill Level Up]

[Please choose the skill of your citizen that you want to level up.]

Since he was still bleeding, leveling up his Regeneration skill seemed like the obvious choice. If I could increase his HP recovery enough to offset the bleeding, he should be able to survive.

However... The option was greyed out.

Frowning, I looked closer and quickly found the reason.

[Skill: Regeneration - Level 1]

[Upgrade Requirement: Reach at least Level 10 and complete the first evolution into a stronger variant.]

That was unfortunate.

But it also gave me some very interesting information.

Oh.

So these guys can evolve once they reach Level 10?

That's so cool!

That meant those larger, stronger goblins I'd seen before probably weren't a completely different species. They were evolved goblins!

With that discovery, I immediately switched my attention to raising his actual level.

As I entered the target level, the System automatically calculated the required Points.

Going from Level 8 to Level 9 cost 10 Points.

Going all the way from Level 8 to Level 10 cost 22 Points in total.

So the System clearly displayed the increasing cost for each additional level.

The higher the level, the more expensive it became.

Well...

That was fair enough.

I selected Level 10.

A confirmation window immediately appeared.

[Confirm leveling up Level 8 Forest Goblin to Level 10?]

[Yes / No]

"Yes!"

I hit Yes.

Instantly, the goblin’s eyes snapped open in shock as a brilliant light enveloped his body.

"RAAAAAARR!"

A powerful roar tore through the room, startling his little sister.

The light continued to surge around him for several seconds.

Then, just as suddenly as it had appeared, it faded.

The goblin lurched upright.

He looked completely different.

The exhaustion was gone from his eyes, and his entire body seemed to be overflowing with energy.

"Haha. Looks like it worked!"

I quickly checked his status.

He was still bleeding though, but at least he wasn’t about to collapse anymore.

His maximum HP had increased enough to give him a much larger buffer, allowing him to survive the remaining duration of the Bleeding effect.

The goblin turned toward his sister, who was still staring at him in complete shock and confusion.

He then said something excitedly in goblin language, probably trying to explain what had just happened.

A moment later, the goblin girl expression changed.

Her eyes lit up with joy.

She jumped to her feet, and the two goblins began celebrating together, laughing and awkwardly bouncing around the room as they hugged one another.

Watching them, I couldn't help but feel a strange sense of satisfaction.

I really am getting the hang of this ruler thing.

Bringing happiness to my citizens...

Yeah.

That felt pretty nice.

With the matter settled, I then searched the goblin's status for something else: Evolution.

Earlier, the System had mentioned evolution.

That probably meant turning into one of those taller, more muscular goblins who had tried to raid my castle.

But how exactly?

Hmmmm...

Do they need to complete some kind of evolution quest?

Or maybe I have to give them a special item?

A magic stone? An evolution pill?

As it turned out...

None of the above.

As I was still wondering, the goblin suddenly began glowing again. His little sister stared at him with wide, sparkling eyes as light poured from his body.

His silhouette began stretching upward.

Taller...

Broader...

Larger.

His frame expanded, his muscles thickening as his entire body transformed.

But as I watched the transformation unfold, I suddenly froze.

Something was wrong.

Or rather...

Something wasn’t what I expected.

The silhouette taking shape before me was changing into something completely different from what I’d imagined.

My curiosity quickly turned into surprise.

"Wait... Don’t tell me!

Boom!

A subtle burst of light marked the evolution completed!

"YARAAAAAAA!!!"

The goblin threw his head back and roared!

His voice was deeper now, carrying far more power than before.

The brilliant light surrounding him shattered away, revealing his new form.

[Ding!]

[Congratulations! Your citizen (Unnamed) has successfully evolved!]

[New Variant Unlocked: Super Forest Goblin!]

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

...

Eh?

Super... Forest Goblin?

Is that really their official variant name?

I was a little confused.

No, actually...

I was very confused.

Honestly, I'd expected something like Hobgoblin.

That was how it always worked in the fantasy novels and movies I'd consumed. Goblins evolved into Hobgoblins. It was practically a law of the genre!

But no.

This time, I got...

Super Forest Goblin!

Just what the hell is happening?!

Anyway, names aside, his new appearance was surprisingly impressive.

I'd initially expected him to evolve into one of those tall, bulky yet still very ugly goblins that had attacked my castle before.

But instead, he looked... more human now.

Much, much more human.

His new body was lean and well-defined, with a noticeably stronger physique and clearly defined muscles. His face had also changed dramatically, becoming surprisingly handsome even by human standards.

Well, his nose was still a little large, his ears remained pointed, and his skin was still greener than grass.

Even so, the transformation was far beyond what I'd expected.

If anything, he looked like some strange combination of a goblin and an elf.

If I didn't already know he was a goblin, I might have mistaken him for an elf at first glance.

...Wait.

Could this be because I evolved him?

A special evolution?

Did my influence somehow grant him a unique form?

But how?

While I was still trying to figure it out, the little goblin sister stared up at her brother in awe.

Her eyes were wide with wonder as she slowly took in his new appearance.

The newly evolved goblin smiled gently, before reaching down and gently patted her head.

The little goblin sister giggled, apparently delighted by the affectionate gesture.

"Aww!"

That sight warmed my heart.

There was something incredibly genuine about those smiles, filled with the quiet affection of an older brother who had just survived a life-or-death situation with his little sister.

And as if that weren't enough, another achievement suddenly appeared.

[Ding! Achievement Unlocked: First Evolution!]

[+20 Points Earned!]

"Oh, damn! So I basically got my investment back for free?"

"Haha! This is amazing!"

I'd spent 22 Points raising him from Level 8 to Level 10, and the achievement had immediately rewarded me with almost the same amount.

For once, it felt like the System was actually on my side!

Anyway, after the initial celebration, the newly evolved Super Forest Goblin suddenly dropped to one knee and bowed deeply. He muttered something in Goblish that I still couldn't understand. Probably praising or thanking me for saving their lives and evolved him.

"Haiz..."

"So even after successfully making him my citizen, I still can’t understand his language."

With this, I already imagined the language barrier would be a pain to deal with later.

But for now, I was still too happy about finally succeeding with Citizenship Granting to worry about it.

Then another thought suddenly occurred to me.

"Now that I’ve evolved the brother goblin, I should evolve the sister too!"

"It wouldn’t be fair to upgrade only the brother, right?"

And so, I did exactly that.

It cost another 38 Points to raise her from Level 6 all the way to Level 10.

Just like her brother, she immediately began to glow. Light wrapped around her small frame, and her body began to change.

She grew taller...

Her limbs lengthened.

Her figure became more mature and athletic.

Even her posture changed, becoming more confident and graceful as her transformation continued.

I watched in fascination.

What variant will she become?

A Hobgoblin?

Or will she become another Super Forest Goblin, just like her brother?

Judging by the shape of her growing silhouette... It looked like the latter!

Awesome!

I held my non-existence breath. Excited as hell.

A few seconds passed, the light intensified.

Then, with a sudden burst, it exploded outward.

[Ding!]

[Congratulations! Your citizen (Unnamed) has successfully evolved!]

[New Variant: Super Forest Goblin!]

As the evolution completed, I was once again completely frozen.

This time, the transformation was even more surprising than her brother's!

"Holy crap!"

"System?! What the hell?!"

"Hohoho! System, my dear brother... aren't you actually "cultured" too?"

Because standing before me was no longer the small, scruffy goblin girl I'd met earlier.

Instead, she had transformed into a striking young goblin woman!

She was now tall and graceful, with a cute yet mature face framed by a long green ponytail. Her pointed ears remained, as did her distinctive green skin and white facial markings.

Her new physique was athletic and well-proportioned, with clearly defined muscles that gave her a strong yet feminine appearance. Her posture was more confident now, and even the way she carried herself had changed completely.

Compared to the small, scruffy goblin girl from earlier, the difference was simply enormous!

That gave me a silly thought.

Could it be... my System was secretly some kind of "Waifu and Husbando Maker" System?

Is it capable of turning every monster, and perhaps even every beast, into pretty anime-style monster girls and handsome monster dudes?

Muahaha!

Well, I certainly can't complain about that!

*****

After the evolutions, I once again checked their statuses, curious to see if there was anything new or if their stats had seen any major improvements.

And sure enough...

They had gotten considerably stronger!

[Citizen Status]

Name: Unnamed (Designation Required)

Race: Forest Goblin → Super Forest Goblin

Sex: Male

Rank: ★ → ★★

Level: 8 → 10

Vital Status

- HP: 250 / 250 (Max ↑ +140)

- MP: 20 / 20 (Max ↑ +10)

- Stamina: 250 / 250 (Max ↑ +150)

Core Attributes

- Attack: 15 (↑ +7)

- Defense: 10 (↑ +7)

- Magic Attack: 0

- Magic Defense: 0

- Magic Capacity: 0

- Speed: 5 (↑ +3)

Recovery Rates

- HP Regen: 2.25 / min

- Mana Regen: 0.5 / min

- Stamina Regen: 5 / min

***

[Citizen Status]

Name: Unnamed (Designation Required)

Race: Forest Goblin → Super Forest Goblin

Sex: Female

Rank: ★ → ★★

Level: 6 → 10

Vital Status

- HP: 230 / 230 (Max ↑ +140)

- MP: 25 / 25 (Max ↑ +15)

- Stamina: 200 / 200 (Max ↑ +100)

Core Attributes

- Attack: 12 (↑ +6)

- Defense: 10 (↑ +8)

- Magic Attack: 0

- Magic Defense: 0

- Magic Capacity: 0

- Speed: 6 (↑ +5)

Recovery Rates

- HP Regen: 2.2 / min

- Mana Regen: 0.5 / min

- Stamina Regen: 4 / min

Not only had their HP, MP, and Stamina nearly doubled, but their Core Attributes had skyrocketed as well! On top of that, their Rank had increased from one star to two.

Unfortunately, they hadn't gained any flashy new skills through evolution, such as Regeneration Lv.2. Still, at least the prerequisite for unlocking it had now been met. I had a feeling they would gain some powerful new skills soon.

Then I started wondering...

With their improved stats, will they be able to defeat those wolves if they ever encountered the pack again?

I had a feeling they would stand a decent chance now.

But considering how massive and terrifying those wolves were, I wasn't about to take any chances.

Anyway, with everything settled and their evolution complete, I was feeling pretty excited. I wanted to give them a quest immediately. I'd even already purchased the [Quest Creation] skill from the shop.

But...

It was nighttime now.

Those two had already been through quite an eventful day. They had narrowly escaped a pack of monstrous wolves, nearly lost their lives, become my first citizens, and then evolved into a stronger variant.

Surely, they deserved a little rest.

So, as the most benevolent ruler ever, I decided to let them sleep peacefully tonight.

...

So that I could exploit their labor at full strength tomorrow.

Muahaha!

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

The next morning, as the first rays of sunlight appeared over the horizon and slowly illuminated the world, the two goblin siblings were already awake.

They had apparently slept quite well.

Throughout the night, they had stayed close to each other, even holding hands as they slept. I couldn't exactly leave my first citizens sleeping on the cold stone floor, so I'd purchased them a simple wooden bed.

And yet...

They still ended up sleeping on the floor.

Haha...

Well, whatever.

There was something else that had been bothering me since their evolution.

When they evolved, their bodies had changed dramatically. They had become taller, larger, and far more physically developed.

So...

How the hell did their clothes still fit perfectly?

Seriously.

Their simple animal-pelt outfits hadn't changed at all!

Is this some kind of law in this world?

Does every humanoid creature automatically get magically resized clothing whenever they evolve?

Or perhaps...

Did the System evolve their clothes along with them?

Maybe it had somehow adjusted their equipment so they wouldn't suddenly end up completely naked after evolving.

Hmm...

That was actually a pretty convenient feature. And honestly, probably for the best.

Otherwise, things could have gotten pretty awkward.

Still, it was definitely something worth investigating later.

Anyway, the goblin brother slowly sat up and yawned. He stretched his arms before standing, then rolled his shoulders and neck. Several joints popped loudly as he loosened up his newly evolved body.

Meanwhile, his sister seemed to have a much harder time waking up.

She sat there for a while, fighting against her remaining sleepiness. Her eyes were still heavy as she rubbed them with both hands, looking almost comically adorable.

"Well, well. Good morning, my new citizens!" I greeted them enthusiastically through my thoughts.

Unfortunately...

They still couldn’t hear me.

Damn.

I really needed some way to communicate with them.

I wondered if the System would eventually give me some kind of skill for that.

****

Now that they were awake, I wanted to give them some quests right away.

But first things first...

I needed to give them names.

With hundreds, maybe even thousands, of creatures potentially flocking to my castle and becoming citizens in the future, I knew I needed some kind of proper naming system.

It was mainly for my own sanity.

I wanted to look at a name and immediately know what race I was dealing with. Otherwise, things could get chaotic and confusing pretty quickly.

Technically, the most efficient method would have been something like Goblin 1, Goblin 2, Goblin 3, and so on.

But that felt way too boring and lazy.

These were my citizens now.

I should at least put some effort into naming them and make things feel a little more personal.

After thinking about it for a while, I eventually settled on the prefix "Gopu."

From now on, every goblin citizen I acquired would receive a name starting with Gopu, followed by something unique.

The first two ended up being Gopuro for the brother and Gopuran for the sister.

Simple.

Easy to remember.

And, honestly...

Kinda cool!

I liked them!

[Ding!]

[Naming Process Completed!]

[New Name Registered: Gopuro]

[Ding!]

[Naming Process Completed!]

[New Name Registered: Gopuran]

"Gopu...ro?" the brother goblin repeated hesitantly, as if getting used to the unfamiliar sound.

Then his expression brightened, and he gave an enthusiastic nod.

"Gopu...ran!" the goblin girl repeated as well, her face lighting up with an equally happy expression.

They both seemed to like their new names.

Perfect!

I was glad my first naming ceremony had gone smoothly.

With that important matter taken care of, I finally moved on to the next thing. It was time to test [Quest Creation]!

I activated the skill and studied the information for a moment.

Turns out, it was far more complicated and interesting than I had expected. The instructions were surprisingly clear and detailed, explaining almost everything I needed to know about creating and managing quests.

This made me wonder...

Could it be that this System was actually created by multiple different entities?

After all, whoever designed [Citizenship Granting] was absolutely terrible at explaining anything. I had been forced to figure out almost everything through painful trial and error.

Meanwhile, whoever designed [Quest Creation] seemed to be very good at explaining things properly.

Now that's an interesting thought...

****

As I activated [Quest Creation], a blue interface appeared before my mind's eye.

[Quest Form]

Please fill in the following information to create a quest.

- Quest Name

- Prerequisite (Optional)

- Quest Info

- Quest Type

- Objective

- Reward

- Penalty (Optional)

Quest Name, Prerequisite, and Quest Info were all pretty self-explanatory.

As for Quest Type, when I mentally selected the blank field, a dropdown menu appeared, revealing several different options.

One-Time.

Repeatable.

Periodic.

Chain.

Group Quest.

Whoa...

There were quite a few choices!

If I set a quest to Repeatable, I would only need to create it once, and the quest could then be completed repeatedly without me having to manually create a new one each time.

That was pretty neat.

I could also create a chain of quests, just like in classic RPG adventure games, where completing one quest would unlock the next.

With all these options, creating and managing more complex quests would be much easier than I had expected.

Then came the Objective section.

The System recommended making objectives as specific as possible.

And that made perfect sense.

If I made the objective too vague, something like "Chop some wood," the System might have trouble determining whether the citizen had actually completed it.

But if I specified something like "Chop 30 Units of Wood within 2 Hours," the System could track the objective automatically, while the citizen would have a much clearer idea of exactly what I wanted them to accomplish.

Pretty convenient.

And finally, there was the Reward section...

"Huh?"

I froze for a moment.

"What the hell is a Powerstone?"

Apparently, I could use meat, resources, equipment, or basically anything else currently stored in my Inventory as a quest reward.

However, the System strongly recommended using something called a Powerstone instead.

"But what the hell is a Powerstone? Do I even have any?"

Just as I wondered about that, another notification appeared.

[Ding!]

[Your Powerstone Balance is: 0]

[Would you like to convert Points into Powerstones?]

Oh?

A new conversion window immediately appeared.

[Conversion Menu]

[You can convert your Points into Powerstones.]

[Powerstones can be exchanged for Points or vice versa at a fixed rate.]

[System Fee: 10%]

[Automatically deducted from the converted amount after every 100 Points converted.]

[Exchange Rate: 5 Points → 1 Powerstone (F)]

The icon beside the Powerstone showed a small, glowing white crystal.

When I focused on it, its description appeared.

[Powerstone]

Description: The materialization of Points in the real world. It contains the essence of power and magic, with endless potential. Wanted by all beings and creatures.

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Since I had some Points to spare, I exchanged 25 Points for 5 Powerstones.

[Points Remaining: 268]

With that taken care of, I moved on to creating the quest, filling in the remaining fields of the form.

[Quest Creation Form]

- Quest Name: Wood Gathering Quest

- Prerequisite: None

- Quest Info: Collect wood from the surrounding forest to help build and expand the castle.

- Quest Type: Repeatable

- Objective: Gather 100 Units of Wood from the forest, and drop them within the castle territory.

- Reward: 1 Powerstone (F)

When I entered 100 Units of Wood as the objective, the System recommended a reward between 0 and 1 Powerstone.

But when I increased the requirement to 200 Units, the recommendation changed to 0 to 2 Powerstones.

"Wait... a 0 Powerstone reward? Is that even possible?"

That was basically no reward at all. It meant they would be working for me for free.

But after thinking about it for a moment, I understood why the System considered it reasonable.

The goblins now saw me as some kind of powerful being. I had not only saved their lives, but also helped them evolve into stronger forms. Even if I offered them no reward at all, they would probably still be willing to accept my quests.

But...

I wasn't that heartless of a ruler.

They were my citizens, not slaves!

They deserved fair compensation for their work!

By my calculations, if I sold 100 Units of Wood back to the System, I could get 30 Points in return.

The shop sold 3 Units of Wood for 1 Points, but when buying materials back from me, the System would be taking a 10% transaction fee.

That meant 100 Units of Wood were worth around 33 Points at the shop's standard rate, minus the 10% fee, leaving me with 30 Points.

And 30 Points was roughly equivalent to 6 Powerstones.

So, paying 1 Powerstone for the labor meant I was giving them roughly 16% of the value I could get from the wood.

That seemed pretty fair to me.

And if they did a particularly good job, I could always consider giving them performance bonuses later.

Not to mention, whatever profit I made would eventually be reinvested into the castle, which would improve their living conditions as well.

It was basically a virtuous cycle!

"Yeah, let's go with it!"

Once everything was set, I pressed the [Create Quest] button.

[Are you sure you want to create this quest?]

[Warning: Once a quest has been issued, it cannot be modified unless you take it down. Once it has been accepted, it can no longer be modified or canceled!]

I paused to read the warning carefully.

So, basically...

No take-backs.

That meant I needed to be careful. I definitely didn’t want to accidentally add an extra zero and end up paying ten times the intended reward or something ridiculous like that.

At the same time, this rule also meant I couldn’t scam my own citizens by canceling a quest right before they completed it.

Which was actually pretty nice.

"Tch, I’m not that evil, you know!" I muttered toward the System. "Unlike you, you scammy System, I would never scam my own citizens! Haha!"

Finally, I double-checked every detail one more time to make sure everything was correct before pressing [Confirm].

The moment I did, a scroll icon appeared in my vision.

The quest information swirled into it, and a second later, a physical scroll materialized inside my Inventory.

Its description perfectly matched the quest details I had entered.

Now came the next question.

How exactly am I supposed to distribute it?

A new System message immediately answered me.

[To issue the quest, either give it to a citizen or post it on a flat surface.]

[If you give the scroll to a specific citizen, it will be assigned to them only.]

[If you post it on a surface, that surface will become a Quest Board. Anyone who sees the quest can accept it.]

"Alright!"

That sounded simple enough.

I followed the instructions and focused on one of the stone walls.

A sheet of paper suddenly materialized on the surface, displaying the quest details in neat writing.

Then...

DING!

The sound echoed through the room.

This time, it wasn’t just inside my head. It was loud enough for the goblins to hear.

Gopuro and Gopuran immediately perked up, their heads snapping toward the wall.

They scrambled to their feet and hurried over to the notice, staring at it for a solid minute.

"Ooo! Wara wara!" Gopuro exclaimed, his eyes widening with excitement.

Gopuran was no different. The moment she finished reading the quest, her expression brightened with obvious enthusiasm.

The two goblins placed their hands on the paper.

[Ding!]

[Gopuro has accepted your "Wood Gathering Quest" quest!]

[Gopuran has accepted your "Wood Gathering Quest" quest!]

"Nice!"

Excitement surged through me.

"But wait a minute!"

Something suddenly occurred to me.

The quest on the wall was written in English.

How the hell could the goblins understand English?

"Hmmmm... Is this the System’s doing?"

I thought about it for a moment.

"If the System can make the goblins understand English, then it must also have some way for me to understand Goblish, right?"

But since neither goblin had an [English] skill listed on their status screen, I figured it had to be something else.

Perhaps the System used some kind of magical writing that automatically displayed text in a language the reader could understand.

In other words, the quest details appeared in English when I looked at the paper, but when the goblins looked at the exact same sheet, the words might have automatically changed into Goblish?

That would actually make a lot of sense.

Still...

There has to be some way for me to understand these guys!

For some reason, I felt certain of it.

After all, how was I supposed to rule over my citizens if I couldn't understand a single word they were saying?

Maybe once I upgraded the System Shop further, I would be able to unlock some kind of language skill?

I really hope that's the case.

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

Anyway, the goblins had accepted the quest and were now ready to head out.

But before they could leave, there was one small problem.

They couldn't exactly chop down trees with their bare hands, could they?

Fortunately, I had already prepared for this.

I summoned the two stone axes I had purchased from the System earlier and dropped them onto the floor in front of the goblins. Both axes came equipped with the [Lumberjack] skill, making them perfect for the job.

Yeah...

Either I got really lucky... or the System actually has a higher chance of rolling relevant skills on equipment rather than completely useless ones.

That was definitely something worth investigating later.

For now, though, it was nice to have some tools ready.

The moment the two goblins saw the axes, they immediately snatched them up.

They held the weapons aloft as if I had just bestowed upon them a pair of priceless treasures, their eyes sparkling with excitement.

Gopuro even gave his new axe a few experimental swings, clearly eager to put it to use.

Whoosh!

Whoosh!

He swung the axe through the air, testing its weight and handling.

Gopuran did the same, giving her own axe a few practice swings.

Then they looked at each other and nodded confidently.

Both of them seemed incredibly excited about their first task as my citizens.

Haha! Go, my minions!

Go forth and make me some wood!

****

A few moments later, the siblings arrived at the edge of the forest.

Towering trees, some more than ten meters tall, stretched before them, their trunks surrounded by dense bushes and undergrowth.

At first, I thought I would be able to expand my vision by following what my citizens could see, just like in those RTS games where your units roam around and gradually dispel the fog of war.

But nope.

Even when the goblins stood right at the edge of my vision range, I still couldn’t see beyond my own limits.

Well, that would have been too convenient.

Still, watching the two of them chop down trees was surprisingly fun.

They had each chosen different trees and were swinging their axes with all their might, almost as if they had turned the whole thing into a competition.

Since Gopuran had picked a smaller tree, though, I found myself wondering who would finish first.

Gopuro had a higher Attack stat, so his swings were obviously more powerful. Each strike bit into the oak with a heavy THUNK!, sending vibrations up through his arms. His muscles tensed beneath his green skin as he put his newfound strength to work.

But Gopuran wasn't exactly slacking off either.

In fact...

A hot, muscular goblin girl waifu doing lumber work?

Hell fucking yes!

Her chests bounced with every swing. Her hips swayed, her butts jiggled, and sweat glistened across her body under the sunlight. Fallen leaves clung to her ponytail, somehow making the whole scene even better.

It was absolute peak fan service!

And that was maybe why time seemed to pass much faster than it should have.

The trees were fairly large, so it took a while to bring them down. On top of that, the goblins still had to chop the fallen trees into manageable logs before they could carry everything back to the castle.

And speaking of carrying...

Something interesting happened.

I had been wondering how the hell these two were planning to haul all that wood back to me, only for them to come up with their own solution.

First, they found two long poles among the fallen branches of the trees they had just cut down.

Then, after spending another twenty minutes rummaging through the surrounding woods, they managed to weave together a simple harness out of sturdy vines.

Using the poles and vines, they fashioned a crude drag sled and loaded the freshly cut logs onto it. After securing everything with a few more lengths of vine, they were able to drag the entire load back toward the castle.

Damn... how are these guys actually smarter than me now?!

I felt a little ashamed.

I had somehow lived for thirty years without knowing how to make something as simple as a wooden sled.

Still, I couldn't help feeling confused.

How did these two even know how to make one?

There was no way they had invented it completely on the spot. They had clearly done something similar before.

Did they learn it from other goblins?

Then I suddenly remembered something.

Back when the goblins had attacked my castle, they had brought ladders with them.

So maybe primitive technology like this wasn't all that unusual for them after all.

Well, that's definitely good news.

If my citizens already possessed some basic knowledge of tools and construction, that meant I wouldn't have to teach them everything from scratch.

And since I could store any item in my Inventory as long as it entered my territory, I immediately snatched up the wood the moment the goblins passed through the gate and dropped their loads.

[Ding! 1 Wood Obtained]

[Ding! 1 Wood Obtained]

Each unit of Wood weighed 10 kilograms.

The two trees yielded roughly 100 Units each, more or less. That meant a single tree was already enough for them to complete the quest.

But even so...

It took them around three hours each to finish.

Yeah, I definitely need to find a way to improve their efficiency later.

Perhaps better tools would help.

Right now, stone axes were definitely not the ideal thing to be used to chop wood.

Or maybe I could eventually find some kind of equipment that would increase their strength or speed.

There were plenty of possibilities.

For now, though, I would have to make do with what I had.

Gopuro completed the quest first.

[Ding!]

[Gopuro has completed your "Wood Gathering Quest" quest!

He plopped down onto the ground for a moment, breathing heavily as he wiped the sweat from his brow.

Despite his exhaustion, however, a huge smile stretched across his face.

Less than two seconds later, he was already back on his feet.

Wait... is he seriously ready to do it again already?

Apparently, he was. Brother was already about to walk toward the quest board to accept it again.

Just then, another chime rang out.

[Ding!]

Gopuro looked up.

[Processing Quest Reward... Completed!]

Something materialized out of thin air.

Slowly drifting downward into Gopuro’s hand was a small white crystal that emitted a faint, gentle glow.

It was the Powerstone! His quest reward, automatically delivered by the System!

At the same time, I noticed that my Powerstone balance had decreased by one.

"Nice! So rewarding my citizens is an automatic process. That means I won't need to micromanage everything!"

Gopuro stared at the crystal for a moment before his face lit up.

He cheered and pumped his fist into the air, looking like a child who had just received a brand-new toy.

Haha! I'm glad he's happy with the reward!

I wonder how he'll use the Powerstone, though...

But the moment that thought crossed my mind, Gopuro tossed the crystal straight into his mouth.

Crunch!

He ate it like a piece of hard candy!

"..."

I stared at him in disbelief.

You... can eat it?!

His entire body briefly glowed before the light faded away.

I immediately checked his status, but I didn't notice any major changes.

Except...

His Mana and Stamina had recovered slightly.

"Huh?"

That was interesting.

But given how happy Gopuro had been just moments ago...

There's no way the Powerstone's only purpose is recovering MP and Stamina, right?

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

Chapter 30: Hard Workers

I had a theory.

What if... by consuming the Powerstone, he's gaining Experience Points? And when his Experience is high enough, he levels up?

Since Gopuro's status screen didn't display an EXP bar, I had no way to verify it. Still, it felt like the most likely explanation.

Even if he was gaining EXP, perhaps he simply hadn't accumulated enough yet to trigger a level-up. That would explain why I couldn't see any noticeable changes in his stats.

Then it's easy! I just need to have Gopuro complete the quest a few more times!

Anyway, Gopuran also completed the quest shortly afterward and received her reward.

I had assumed they would need to sit down and recover for at least a few minutes.

But they didn't even need to rest!

After consuming the Powerstones, both of them were already back on their feet, walking toward the Quest Board to accept another Wood Gathering Quest with eager steps.

"Woah! These guys are insanely hardworking!"

And just like that, they worked and worked, chopping trees like there was no tomorrow.

The sun climbed higher into the sky, casting shifting patterns of light across the forest floor. Sweat rolled down their green skin, glistening beneath the bright sunlight as their arms moved in steady, rhythmic motions.

Swing, pull. Swing, pull.

The sharp sound of axes biting into wood echoed through the clearing like a steady heartbeat, accompanied by the occasional crack of splitting timber and the rustle of falling branches.

Eventually, the last rays of sunlight disappeared behind the trees, and the forest slowly sank into twilight.

Their work for the day had finally come to an end.

They had completed the quest four times each.

Since each run took around three hours, they had worked for nearly twelve hours in total, stopping only briefly to eat the simple snacks that I gave them.

I couldn’t help feeling a little bad.

It almost felt like I was some villainous boss exploiting my own citizens.

Am I overworking these guys now?

I’m actually not really sure.

On one hand, working such long hours must seem like a terrible idea by human standards.

But on the other hand... these goblins seem to really enjoy doing the quests...

And it’s not like I’m forcing them to work or anything!

Yeah.

All I had done was post the quest on the board. Whether they accepted it or not was entirely up to them.

In fact, the two goblins even tried to take the quest for a fifth time.

They reached toward the poster with tired but determined hands, but I quickly removed it before they could accept it again.

"Come on! It’s already night! I can’t have you two going outside to work in the dark! It’s too dangerous!"

"What if those wolves come back?"

"Seriously, have you guys already forgotten what happened yesterday?"

The moment the quest disappeared, however, both goblins froze.

They stared at the now-empty wall, their expressions immediately turning disappointed.

Their ears drooped.

Gopuro’s shoulders slumped heavily, while Gopuran tilted her head at the blank stone wall as if sheer willpower alone might somehow make the quest poster magically reappear.

"Hey, hey, don’t worry. I’ll give you the quest again tomorrow! But for now, you two need to rest!"

Deciding that these two deserved an extra reward for their hard work, I materialized a few thick cuts of steak in front of them.

The goblins immediately cheered up and accepted the meat.

They didn’t even forget to bow to me to say thank you!

"Wahaha! I’m such a good ruler now!"

"Just work hard and remain loyal to me, and you two will have unlimited steak for life!"

To my surprise, however, they didn’t devour the meat on the spot.

Gopuran muttered something to Gopuro in their rough goblin tongue before stepping outside to gather twigs and dry grass.

She returned a few minutes later and carefully arranged the kindling within a rough circle of stones she had collected from the forest floor, forming a simple firepit.

Oh? What’s this?

I watched curiously as she arranged everything.

Then I realized what she was trying to do.

She wanted to cook the steak!

And that reminded me... Gopuran actually had [Cooking Lv. 1]!

The goblin girl picked up two pieces of rock and began striking them together.

Clack! Clack!

Spark after spark flew into the dry grass, bright but fleeting.

She was trying to start a fire the old-fashioned way.

But even after five full minutes of persistent effort, no flame appeared.

Gopuran frowned, her arms beginning to tremble slightly from fatigue. Each spark flared briefly before dying out, never catching the tinder. Only a few thin wisps of smoke rose from the grass.

Gopuro eventually stepped in to take over, using his greater strength to strike the rocks together.

But he met the same frustrating result.

Clearly, raw muscle power wasn't enough.

"Oh, come on."

I chuckled to myself.

"Are you guys silly?"

"Fire?"

"Why make fire when there's already fire in the castle?"

My torches were already burning throughout the castle, providing plenty of light. The flames danced along the stone walls, filling the chamber with a warm glow.

Yet for some reason, neither of them seemed to consider using them.

Hmmm... Perhaps... they think they're not allowed to use my fire?

If that was the case, then I needed to intervene.

Just then, I noticed something else.

The small firepit had already been registered by the System as [Small Firepit].

And if it was recognized as an object within my territory, I could control it just like I controlled all the torches with my [Lighting Manipulation] skill.

"Haha! Let there be fire!"

I focused my will on the firepit.

The flames suddenly roared to life.

Fwoom!

The dry twigs caught almost instantly, sending a warm glow across the clearing.

Both goblins jumped back in surprise, their eyes widening.

For a moment, they simply stared at the fire.

Then, slowly, their faces lit up with pure wonder and delight.