

Building a Better World - Part 1/5

The Demon King's tower stood cracked atop the smoldering peak of Mt. Hotshit, its great black form tilted at a noticeable angle. Though the Final Battle had left it battle-scarred and cracked, it retained its structural integrity and, more importantly, its magic. It would make an excellent site for the Ritual of Remaking.

Nice place, thought the Sorceress Dia Morphine as she marched up the tower's many steps, using her staff to knock aside stray pieces of debris. She liked the irony of the choice more than anything. How fitting that they should fix the world from the same place ol' Horny Helm had torn it apart.

As she clambered up the battered steps that led to the Dark Tower's top, Dia paused to peek out of a little window, down into the valley of lava pouring out of Hotshit's side. The crack ran down the mountain itself and off along the wasteland beyond it, spewing out the smoke and ash that blanketed the sky.

Dia shook her head. "What a fucking mess." Waving aside some ash, she climbed on.

Ten minutes or so later, the Sorceress arrived, out of breath and annoyed, at the very top of the Dark Lord's Dark Tower, wondering if she could have spared the slightest mana for a short-range teleport.

A ring of impatient faces greeted her—the other mages. All the wizards and warlocks and witches and sorcerers and even a couple of petty conjurers. All of the world's surviving magical talent. There weren't as many as she liked.

"Alright," she said, gathering herself up and slamming her staff against the ground to make it clear she was in charge. "Let's summon some fucking losers."

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The Ritual was her idea. During the worst stage of the War, her mentor, Ben Zodiazepine, had, while exploring the outer realms of cognition, conceived of a way to fulfill an ancient prophecy and defeat the Dark Lord in one by summoning a Hero (capital-H) from another world.

It'd seemed like a bit of a long shot at the time, but hey, they didn't exactly have a pile of options to choose from.

So she'd helped him cast the spell and called in what *appeared* to be some talentless slob from a magicless world called 'Earth' of all things. (Earth! She doubted there was a dumber name in all of Cumworld.) She'd personally accompanied Mr. 'What Do You Mean Magic Is Real?' on his journey, casting buffs and watching from the sidelines as the talentless schmuck inexplicably plowed through the Demon King's vast army.

How? Well, she put most of it down to her spells. The Hero himself claimed his success came from his knowledge of 'ar-pee-gee's' ...which meant nothing to Dia. Didn't matter—whatever the reason, the result was the same: the War had been over in a year, and the Hero packed off back to Earf with a harem of beautiful women.

Shame 'ar-pee-gees' hadn't warned him about 'collateral damage'. It would've been nice if he could have beat the Dark Lord without their final battle splitting the world in half, you know?

Well, whatever, Dia thought, as she finished using the base of her staff to draw the ritual circle. *You take what you get*.

There was nothing saying they couldn't reach into the grab-bag a few more times though.

Finishing the last little twirly sigil, she stepped back to watch as the other mages finished their own portions of the circle. Everything was coming together.

The last Hero hadn't been what they'd expected, but she had a plan to make the new ones a little more appropriate. They might *start* as muscleless slobs, but by the time they arrived here, they'd have the bodies of *true* Heroes.

...Or, rather, whatever else she decided the world needed.

"Everyone finished?" she asked, as the last mage finished scribing and the circle started to glow with azure energy. "Alright, everyone to their places and get ready to chant. You all know the words."

As the other mages hurried to their spots, Dia stepped into her own, raised her arms, and started to chant:

"Takachiho, Tomino, Yamaguchi, Nagatsuki...!" As she reeled off the arcane words, the circle's glow grew even brighter. One by one, the other mages joined in with her, and their feeble voices resonated in a single mighty chorus. "...Kawahara, Amazake-no, Zen, Maganote...!" With each word she spoke, the tension in the air became more and more palpable. She could feel the pressure, feel the unborn spell waiting to be cast. All she had to do was speak the trigger word. She bit her lip. *Now or never...*

"Isekai!"

Arcane light lit up the world.

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The spell had several different components, but one of the first things it did was kinda plug her into the multiverse. Most people didn't even know there was more than one world, but if you spoke the right word, you could dip your head into the barrel of the cosmos and see them bobbing about like apples.

It didn't take her long to find the one she wanted. "Okay," she said, back in the real world, "what are we starting with?"

Some of the other mages mumbled. She couldn't see them with her cosmo-goggles on, but she knew who it would be. It had taken more than a little shepherding to get *this* flock of sheep together.

"Remember," she said, aiming her voice at the biggest doubters, "you all agreed to this. It's too late to back out now."

The mumbling became a little more affirmative. Still no-one offered any ideas though.

Just as she was about to make a suggestion herself, she heard a reedy voice she recognized as Scatagast the Brown. "What about some trees?"

Dia rolled her eyes. Of course the *Druid* wanted trees.

"Sure, we can do trees," she said. "Why not? Let's make some trees."

Scatagast made a sound like a goat in heat. Ignoring him, Dia turned her attention back to the wider cosmos and the little blue marble rather lamely titled 'Earth'. Time to summon some 'trees'...

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As they walked, Mary clung to her girlfriend's arm, anxiously avoiding the attention of the other men and women present in the gardening center. Sweat slipped from her brow, and not just because of how shockingly warm the air was in here.

In the corner, a water fountain trickled. It made her need to pee.

"You don't have to squeeze quite so hard," said Hannah, giving a little laugh.

Mary nuzzled up close to her. "I don't like being outside," she said, quietly.

"Yeah, yeah, I know, I know. I mean, we're *inside* at the moment, but I get you."

Mary frowned. "A greenhouse doesn't count as inside," she said with a huff. "It's just a big box of *outside*." She pointed at the water fountain. "See, you don't have fountains *inside*."

Hannah tapped her chin. "I went to a mall with a fountain once," she said. "That's inside, isn't it?"

"Malls aren't *inside* either."

Hannah gave her a look that said 'Well that's just silly'.

Mary sighed. "Look," she said, giving her girlfriend a pleading glance. "Can we just get what you want and go? All these people make me nervous."

Hannah gave her a reassuring smile. "Okay, okay," she said, holding up her hands in defeat. "We'll go home, and I'll wrap you up nice and snug in a blanket and we can sit on the couch and watch Netflix, okay?" She paused, as if trying to resist something, and finally gave in: "Does *that* count as inside?"

Mary laughed, despite herself.

As the two of them carried on walking, the atmosphere changed. All of a sudden, the heat vanished, and Mary felt her skin tingling as if she'd stepped into the cold. Taking a deep breath, she tasted copper in the air.

The walls of the greenhouse dropped like a pair of falling curtains. Mary screamed and clasped her girlfriend as the floor and the rest of the place's contents vanished too. Together, the two of them tumbled into the void.

A blast of mild air struck her face, and Mary looked to find they were falling through a vortex of swirling blue ribbons and pink lights, like space as painted by an overly-creative child. Her heart stopped as she took in its vastness. Eyes quaking in their sockets, she screamed.

Even as her own cry cut through the void, Mary heard another's voice and looked to see they weren't alone. Above and to their right was a woman she recognized as the gardening center's receptionist. To *her* right, another couple that Mary had seen inspecting the petunias.

The shock of recognition cut through her panic. *What's happening to us?! What the hell is going on?*

With a sound like a cracking whip, a fresh blast of ether-air flew up from below. Mary could only gasp as it tore through her clothes, carrying the tattered scraps away into the impossible space above them. Mary squealed and clasped her exposed chest and sex. "Hannah?! What's happening?!"

"Don't worry!" cried Hannah, struggling to cover her own parts. "I've got you!" She wrapped her arms tight around Mary's waist.

Before Mary could gain any comfort from this, another fresh wind whipped up from below. This one was... not *cold*, but nonetheless freezing. It flowed through her without resistance, chilling her, locking her muscles in place. When she tried to scream again, she found she couldn't move her jaw. When she tried a little harder, she found she couldn't move at all. All she could do was lie in her girlfriend's arms.

Hannah! she cried out in her mind.

Mary! came an equally mental reply.

From below came a third wind, a brighter, pinker wind than the previous. As its ribbons coiled through her flesh, Mary felt a strange tingling in her toes. Coursing up her legs, it settled in her groin and made her think of the last time she and Hannah had cuddled naked. She turned a deep shade of red, wishing she could still move her hands—she wanted nothing more than to stick her fingers in her pussy.

Looking down, Mary could only watch as her tingling toes turned a rich brown and *lengthed*, stretching like rubber till they were long and thin and spindly. As she tried to scream, her feet *split*, allowing her toes to spread in a circle around her, like, like—she didn't want to think it—like *roots*.

Ah! came Hannah's voice, and Mary realized half the roots she could see below were extending from her girlfriend. Where they intertwined with her own, she felt a strangely erotic feeling—the same kind she felt when her girlfriend's fingers tiptoed over her vulva.

Hannah! she thought-squealed.

As she tried to writhe in delight, the brownness spread up from her feet, flowing over her ankles and leaving the flesh of her lower legs gnarled and patterned like bark. With this change came a strange warmth that only intensified as it nearer her sex. She found her heart racing and tried to moan in delight. Since she couldn't do it aloud, she did it in her mind instead—she heard Hannah do the same less than a second later.

Slowly, the transformation reached her sex. As her pussy bulked into two thick lips of bark, the fire burning inside turned white hot, and Mary's thoughts lost all their remaining coherency. She and her girlfriend screamed in their minds, big globules of sap spurting out of their altered sexes.

As Mary's psyche burned in delight, the transformation continued to spread onward and up. She barely even noticed as it reached her torso, fusing Hannah's arms to her belly, before rolling over her breasts and leaving them as two big lumps of wood. Only as the change reached her chin did she regain enough sanity to make one last attempt to scream. It didn't work, of course—her lips turned to bark before the sound could even leave her mouth. Her head followed suit seconds later.

For several seconds, the two floated in the abyss, a pair of uprooted trees with their trunks tangled erotically. From the wood of their heads and shoulders and upper arms sprouted hundreds of little branches, leaves already forming along their lengths. In seconds, the two shared a respectable canopy.

Beneath them, the color of the emptiness changed as something flew towards them. Before Mary had a chance to process what had happened (not that she was in much of a state to process anything) they landed with both incredible speed and none at all. Her leaves rustled. Her roots tasted dirt. Her sap dripped, landing with little splotches on the dirt.

If Mary had still had lungs, she would have been panting. *Wh-where are we?* she thought. Around them stretched an endless expanse of wasteland. A little green thing stood in the distance, but she couldn't make out what it was.

As Mary watched, tree after strangely-humanoid tree landed around them. One looked like the receptionist. Another pair, twined together, looked like the couple buying petunias. Sap poured from the woman's wooden pussy and man's wooden penis.

Mary didn't know if she had a heart anymore, but she felt it pounding all the same. *A-are we trees?*

She heard Hannah mentally gulp. *I-I think so?*

Trees continued to fall into existence, slowly building up a respectable treeline and thick, concealing canopy that cut off all but a few of the sun's rays and threw their new world into a strange kind of twilight. Around their legs sprouted a carpet of grass and little mushrooms. Soon enough, the only distinction between them and a normal forest was the strangely humanoid shapes of their forms.

Trapped in her girlfriend's embrace, Mary could only watch a squirrel scamper up her legs, an acorn in its mouth.

What happened to us?!