

My Infinite Mana System

Chapter 16: The Null

The doorway loomed ahead, its glowing runes pulsing like a heartbeat.

The oppressive silence of the void pressed against my ears, broken only by the faint hum of the portal.

My grip on the dagger tightened as I stepped forward, my breaths shallow and uneven.

The moment I crossed the threshold, the world shifted again.

I was plunged into an expanse of absolute darkness.

For a moment, I couldn't see, hear, or feel anything.

It was as though total darkness itself had swallowed me whole.

Then, the faintest light flickered in the distance.

I moved toward it cautiously, each step echoing in the emptiness.

As I got closer, the light grew brighter, revealing a barren, desolate landscape.

The ground was jagged and uneven, a mixture of black stone and silvery veins that pulsed faintly beneath my feet.

The air was thick, heavy with an energy that made my skin crawl.

[Ding!]

[Welcome to the Null.]

The system's click cut through the oppressive silence.

[Ding!]

[Stage Two Initiated. Survive.]

“Survive,” I repeated under my breath, my voice hollow. “Everything has always been about surviving.”

The light flickered again, casting long, distorted shadows across the jagged ground.

And then I saw them.

The creatures from before were back, but they were different now, larger, stronger, more grotesque.

Their exoskeletons gleamed like obsidian, and their glowing eyes burned brighter.

They didn’t hesitate.

The first one lunged at me, its claws slashing through the air with deadly precision.

I ducked, narrowly avoiding the attack, and countered with a quick strike of my dagger.

The blade bit into its flesh, but it wasn’t enough to stop it.

The creature roared, its jagged teeth snapping inches from my face.

I unleashed a bolt of lightning, the crackling energy slamming into the creature and sending it sprawling.

It twitched violently before going still, the light in its eyes fading, so was his body.

But there were more.

They came at me from all sides, a relentless tide of claws and teeth.

I fought with everything I had, my dagger flashing as I struck out at the nearest ones.

Lightning arced between them, the bursts of energy illuminating the Null in brief, blinding flashes.

For every one I killed, two more seemed to take its place.

My breaths came in ragged gasps, the strain was weighing heavily on me.

The creatures were relentless, their attacks growing more coordinated.

They moved as if they shared a single mind, circling me like predators closing in on their prey.

I felt a sharp pain in my side as one of them got through my defenses, its claws raking across my ribs.

I stumbled back, gritting my teeth against the pain.

“Not today,” I growled, forcing myself to stand.

The next attack came from my left.

I spun, slashing out with my dagger and following up with a blast of lightning.

The creature shrieked as it disintegrated, but its death didn’t slow the others.

They kept coming, and I kept fighting.

Time lost all meaning in this so called Null.

It could have been minutes or hours, I couldn’t tell.

All I knew was the endless cycle of fighting, dodging, and striking back.

My movements grew sluggish, my muscles burning with exhaustion.

The weight of the null pressed down on me, threatening to crush me under its oppressive silence.

But I couldn’t stop.

Not here.

Not now.

The system’s rang out again.

[Ding!]

[Stage Two Complete. Proceed to the Next Gate.]

The creatures vanished as suddenly as they had appeared, their bodies dissolving into the null.

The silence that followed was deafening, and for a moment, I just stood there, my chest heaving as I tried to catch my breath.

Ahead of me, a new doorway appeared, its surface shimmering with a faint, silvery light.

I stared at it, my vision blurring from exhaustion.

My body screamed at me to rest, but there was no time.

I have to survive.