

My Infinite Mana System

Chapter 18: Null Creatures

The doorway shimmered like a distant mirage, promising another test in this endless nightmare.

My legs felt like lead, my breaths shallow, but I forced myself forward.

This wasn't just a challenge.

It was breaking me.

Crossing the threshold, I was greeted by a sight that was both mesmerizing and horrifying.

The landscape had transformed into a labyrinth of black crystalline structures, each shard reflecting distorted images of the null.

Pulses of faint light traveled through the crystals, casting eerie shadows that danced across the jagged ground.

But the most unnerving part was the sound.

A faint, high-pitched chittering echoed around me, coming from every direction.

It was a noise that made my skin crawl, setting my instincts on high alert.

I tightened my grip on the dagger, its familiar weight anchoring me.

[Ding!]

[Survive. No other directive provided.]

I clenched my jaw, frustration bubbling beneath the surface.

The chittering grew louder, and the shadows began to shift.

Then I saw them.

They emerged from the crystalline structures, their forms fluid and unnatural.

These creatures were unlike the ones I'd faced before.

Their bodies seemed to shimmer, shifting between solidity and translucence.

They moved with an unnatural grace, their elongated limbs ending in razor-sharp claws.

Their eyes, or what passed for eyes, glowed with a faint, sickly yellow light.

I counted at least five of them circling me, their movements erratic and unpredictable.

The first one struck without warning, its claws slashing toward my face.

I barely managed to dodge, the air whistling as the attack passed inches from my skin.

I retaliated with a bolt of lightning, the energy crackling as it struck the creature.

It let out a shriek, its body convulsing before it dissolved into a mist-like vapor.

But there was no time to celebrate.

The others attacked in unison, their movements synchronized in a way that sent a chill down my spine.

I spun, using my dagger to block one while releasing a wave of lightning to push back another.

They were faster than anything I'd fought before, their strikes precise and relentless.

I focused on the rhythm of their attacks, finding openings where I could counter.

My dagger sliced through one, its form dissipating like smoke, but two more took its place.

Bolts of lightning lit up the battlefield, illuminating the crystalline labyrinth in brief, blinding flashes.

But no matter how many I destroyed, they kept coming.

The air grew thick with the scent of burning ozone, the constant use of lightning taking its toll on the environment.

Sweat dripped down my face, my breaths ragged as I fought to keep up with the relentless onslaught.

One of the creatures managed to get through my defenses, its claws raking across my back.

I stumbled forward, biting back a cry of pain.

“Damn it,” I hissed, forcing myself to turn and strike back.

The creature dissolved under the weight of a concentrated lightning bolt, but the damage had been done.

The chittering intensified, and I realized with a sinking feeling that there were more of them coming.

Panic threatened to creep in, but I shoved it down.

“Focus,” I told myself. “You’ve made it this far. You’re not dying here.”

Allowing the energy to course through me like a raging storm.

My body protested, the strain threatening to overwhelm me, but I pushed forward.

The lightning I unleashed wasn’t just a single bolt, it was a torrent, a storm of raw power that surged through the labyrinth.

The creatures shrieked as the energy consumed them, their forms disintegrating into vapor.

When the storm finally subsided, the Null was silent once more.

I collapsed to my knees, my body trembling with exhaustion.

The ground beneath me was scorched, the crystalline structures cracked and blackened from the intensity of the fight.

[Ding!]

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

A new doorway materialized ahead of me.

I stared at it, my vision blurring as the adrenaline began to wear off.

“Going through the next door...” I whispered, my voice hollow. “Will be a death sentence.”

My body screamed for rest.

But I can't rest here.

Resting here would also be a death sentence.

I forced myself to stand, every movement a battle against the exhaustion threatening to pull me under.

I have no other choice, there is no escape.

I just have to keep moving, that is my only hope out of here.