My Infinite Mana System

Chapter 19: The First Boss

The doorway pulsed ahead of me, its crimson light a menacing contrast to the bleak Null.

My body screamed for rest, but the pressure in the air made it clear, there would be no reprieve.

Whatever is ahead was the reason this stage felt so heavy.

I stepped through, and the change in the atmosphere was immediate.

The arena was massive, an open battlefield surrounded by jagged cliffs.

The ground beneath my feet was dark and metallic, reflecting the dim glow of the red sky above.

In the center of the space stood a towering figure.

A nightmare made flesh.

The creature was at least fifteen feet tall, its massive body wrapped in a grotesque mixture of blackened armor and pulsating veins that glowed a fiery orange.

Its head bore two massive, curling horns, and in its hand was a weapon that seemed to embody destruction itself, a battle axe that radiated an intense heat, the edges flickering with embers.

It turned toward me, and its glowing eyes locked onto mine.

The pressure in the air became suffocating.

[Ding!]

[Stage Five Initiated: Eliminate The Lord Of Destruction.]

The creature let out a roar that shook the ground, a primal declaration of power.

It charged at me, each step causing the ground to quake.

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I didn't think, I reacted.

Raising my hand.

Lightning surged to life, crackling with raw energy as I sent a bolt hurtling toward the creature.

The attack struck its chest, leaving a scorched mark on its armor.

It didn't even flinch.

The creature's massive axe swung toward me with terrifying speed.

I dodged, barely escaping the arc of destruction as the blade crashed into the ground.

The impact sent a shockwave rippling through the arena, and shards of metallic earth flew in every direction.

I stumbled back.

"Fine. You want a monster?" I whispered, raising both hands toward the sky. "Then let's see how much destruction I can bring."

Lighting crackled around me, the air growing heavy with energy as I pulled from the endless well inside me.

I wasn't going to fight this creature...

I was going to obliterate it.

With a roar of my own, I unleashed everything.

Lightning rained down from above, bolts of pure energy crashing into the arena with devastating force.

Each strike illuminated the battlefield in blinding flashes, the sound deafening as the power of the storm overwhelmed everything.

The creature roared in defiance, raising its axe to block the incoming bolts.

But it was futile.

The lightning tore through its defenses, shattering its armor and exposing the glowing veins beneath.

I didn't stop.

The storm intensified, bolts of lightning striking in rapid succession.

The ground beneath us cracked and splintered, unable to withstand the sheer power being unleashed.

The creature stumbled, its movements growing sluggish as the relentless onslaught wore it down.

It tried to charge me again, but another bolt struck it square in the chest, sending it crashing to the ground.

Still, I didn't let up.

The lightning gathered above me, forming a massive sphere of crackling energy that illuminated the entire void.

"This ends now!" I said, releasing the sphere.

The attack struck the creature with the force of a meteor, the explosion consuming it entirely.

The shockwave tore through the arena, leveling the jagged cliffs and leaving nothing but scorched earth in its wake.

When the dust settled, the creature was gone.

The arena was unrecognizable, reduced to a smoldering wasteland.

I stood at the center of the destruction, my body trembling from the sheer amount of energy I had channeled.

[Ding!]

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

A new doorway materialized ahead of me.

This one glowed with a faint silver light, a stark contrast to the destruction surrounding me.

I took a shaky step forward, my breaths ragged.

The strain on my body was undeniable.

This fight just made me realize just how much power I held.

With one final glance at the ruins of the arena, I stepped toward the doorway.

Chapter 20: Descent into Madness

The silver glow of the new doorway beckoned, but the weight of my actions lingered in the air.

The wasteland I left behind, charred, broken, lifeless, felt like a haunting reflection of myself.

I stepped through, and the world shifted again.

This time, the Null wasn't as hostile.

The atmosphere was eerily calm, the suffocating pressure replaced by an unsettling stillness.

The floor beneath me was smooth and black, reflecting my image like a distorted mirror.

The silence was deafening.

[Ding!]

[Stage Six Initiated. Proceed Through the Null.]

No monsters.

No bosses.

Just a command to "proceed."

I walked, each step echoing in the vast emptiness.

My reflection beneath me seemed to ripple with every movement, distorting my figure until it became something unrecognizable.

My black hair seemed longer, wilder, and my eyes glowed faintly with the same electric light that had destroyed the last arena.

"Is this me?" I whispered, staring down at the shifting reflection.

No response came, only the faint sound of my footsteps against the unnatural surface.

Minutes stretched into hours, or maybe it was the other way around.

The Null had no sense of time, time was absent here, and I could feel it gnawing at the edges of my mind.

The first signs of the Null's effects were subtle.

The sound of footsteps that weren't mine.

Shadows flickering just out of view, even though the space was devoid of light.

Whispers, faint and unintelligible, tickling the back of my mind.

I ignored them at first, chalking it up to exhaustion.

But the longer I walked, the harder they became to dismiss.

"You shouldn't have existed," a voice hissed, faint but sharp.

I froze, spinning around.

The void was empty.

"Who's there?" I demanded, my voice echoing back at me.

Silence.

I pressed forward, but the voices grew louder.

"Monster."

"Destroyer."

"Lightning"

Each word sent a jolt through me, like a knife twisting in wounds I thought had healed.

"No," I muttered, shaking my head. "Shut up!."

But it didn't stop.

The reflections beneath me began to change, showing me scenes I didn't want to see.

And then-

"Mom? Dad?"

Their faces stared back at me from the reflective floor.

They looked just as I remembered, kind, warm, and so painfully out of reach.

"Allen," My mother's voice called, soft and gentle. Suddenly their faces shifted to a angry and annoyed expression. "You are a mistake, Allen" "You should not have been born" "You should not have existed" "No." My voice cracked, and I clenched my fists. "You're not real. This isn't real." "You are just another monster who deserves to be dead" "Noooo!" I shouted, my head, my existence, felt like it was... "You bastard" "You heartless monster" "You are just a empty soul" "Just kill yourself" "No!" I shouted again, expecting the images to just fade, but it didn't fade. I looked at the floor, but I didn't see my parents appearance again, instead I saw a reflection that looks exactly like... me. No... It was me. "Right..." i said. I dropped to my knees, gripping my head as i was grinning like I have lost my mind. I began hearing voices all around me saying... "Yes, Yes," "You're no hero." "You're just another monster." "You'll destroy everything." "You are dangerous to humanity." "Just stop existing" I saw my grin widen from the reflection. "Yes, maybe I should just stop existing... Just die"

Lighting began crackling on my hands, as i moved my hand at my head. "This is truly the most magnificent way to just erase myself" Then... I struck myself with my own lighting. All I saw was just light. For a moment, I wondered. Was this how it felt to be erased out of existence? It was calm. It was calm to be absent of all reality problems and struggles I guess... it isn't that bad. Then I heard a voice, the voice sounded so desperate, it was vague I couldn't hear it clearly... Then, I heard it. "Allen...!" It sounded just like someone I knew. No, it was... Mom. And then... "Son, all of those nonsense you heard are all lies, don't tell me you didn't know," Lies? "And don't tell me you want to just give up like that after everything you have passed through," ...Dad. "Remember what you promised us, you would survive no matter what. what happened to that promise, Son?" But how am I hearing them, why. "Don't just give up like that, this is the most stupid way to die, at least choose a better way... Or don't even choose one" Dad... "What happened to your determination to survive no matter what" I felt like tears was dropping from my eyes.

But... I erased myself, I don't think they is anyway back.

"You can never be erased until you decide that for yourself..."

Huh...

"Now get up!"

Suddenly my view cleared, and i slammed my fist into the ground, the impact sending a pulse of lightning through the reflective surface.

Everywhere was silence, and the distorted images faded, leaving me alone again.

"It seems like somehow I came back again."

I raised my hand to touch my face, my head was still intact.

I am still alive, still existing.

So i can't be erased until I decide it for myself.

It's my will to live.

And fortunately, my own ability can't kill me.

I stayed there for a moment, my breathing ragged.

I couldn't afford to lose myself, not now, not ever.

I pushed myself to my feet, my legs trembling.

"Thanks Dad. Thanks Mom," I muttered. "I promise I wouldn't fail you again"

Ahead of me, another doorway appeared, this one pulsing with a deep purple light.

It was a reminder that this wasn't over.

With a deep breath, I stepped forward.