

Super Necromancer System

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Aldrich saw nothing but blinding light as the fireball exploded. He stared at the bright white light of the flaming explosion with relief.

The fact that he could even see this light meant that his consciousness had not been totally incinerated away.

The light dimmed down from white to orange as the temperature of the fire dropped, and Aldrich found himself unconsciously not breathing as the oxygen in the smoky confines of the [Spirit Boundary] burned up.

Thankfully, he had no need to breathe, so he stood there tensely, waiting for the flames to fully die down.

Within a few seconds, the light dimmed substantially as the explosion died down.

Flickering flames now lit up the arena with a red and orange glow. In some areas, these flames concentrated and roared high, turning into pillars of fire type damage to avoid.

Aldrich looked up to see the Ghast's smoky skull form lined with many cracks, liable to disappear with just a light breeze.

The Ghast itself did not benefit from the barrier it created, making it an easy target to snipe.

However, its [Sturdy] passive had made it survive the powerful Pyro Bomb with a single hit point.

"Now! Swarm him!" Aldrich stepped out of the Spirit Boundary and saw Fler'Gan raise his lantern high in the air. Several red magic circles formed above his head as he gathered power for another [Pyro Bomb]. "Do not let him channel that attack again!"

"With me!" Valera rushed forwards with [Dash], turning into a black blur as she appeared right in front of Fler'Gan. She thrust her shield forward in a [Shield Bash] aimed to crush Fler'Gan's head.

Instead, Valera slammed straight into a forcefield projected all around Fler'Gan. The forcefield was tinted a dark orange, and by hitting it, flames gushed out and counter attacked Valera, forcing her back as her armor started to melt and smoke.

"Fler'Gan is a level 20 boss. Each of his spells are capable of dealing severe damage to any of you," said Aldrich. "But if you exhaust his pyrokinetic barrier, his main body is fragile."

Fler'Gan was a member of the Mind-Eater race that was known for consuming brains and mental energy to fuel themselves.

Their bodies were not physically strong and so they relied on their mental powers that involved telekinesis and mind control to attack. On top of this, they generated a forcefield around themselves for defense.

In Fler'Gan's case, he was unique in that he practiced pyrokinesis, changing his psychic attacks from dealing mental damage to fire type damage super effective against undead.

This made Fler'Gan an exceptionally difficult boss to clear for the first Trial Quest as a Necromancer with minions all weak to fire, not to mention that he was level 20.

"Alright, I'll blow that barrier up," said Dynamite Girl.

"No." Aldrich pointed his staff at Fler'Gan and casted a volley of [Chill Bolts].

They struck against Fler'Gan's barrier of pyrokinetic mental energy before sizzling and evaporating. "Any fire type damage against that barrier will do nothing. Save your attack for when the barrier is down."

"Accursed insolents!" Fler'Gan looked all around him. He was seconds away from getting dogpiled by a dozen plus undead. "Burn away!" He shook his lantern, and a red magic circle appeared in front of him.

"Retreat!" said Aldrich. Most of his undead managed to stop their attacks and move backwards, but the Big-arm Grizzly was too slow.

An omni-directional shockwave of flames emerged from Fler'Gan. This was an attack that he casted when he felt too many units were around him, and it had a long cooldown.

If it meant sacrificing the Big-arm Grizzly to bait this spell out, then Aldrich was fine with it.

"Geh!" the Geist stood in front of the Big-arm Grizzly and shoved it away.

Flames scorched the Geist's back, bubbling its skin before liquefying, revealing its bare spine and half-torched internal organs.

The Geist fell forwards, disabled. It was not dead, however, and it clenched its teeth and focused on its regeneration. Flesh bubbled up and grew again, starting to regrow the muscles and tissue around its bare and burned spine.

Aldrich commanded his units to attack again. He waved his Alloywing Eagle towards him and hopped on to get an aerial advantage.

"So what? I just gotta' sit on my ass until that thing's shield goes down?" complained Dynamite Girl.

"No, tank attacks for others when you can," said Aldrich. He looked briefly back at the Ghast. Inside of the smoke barrier was Fisk, Adam, and Elaine.

Fisk looked at Aldrich staring at him and raised his arms in surrender, all his previous bravado gone at the sight of Fler'Gan's might. "S-sorry boss, but if you want me fight that, well, I don't think I can do much-,"

"I know. Just stay put. Defend Adam and Elaine with your life, even if it means taking a hit for them," said Aldrich. He flew ahead to survey the battle better.

"Burn! Burn! Burn!" Fler'Gan madly shook his lantern and waved it at the units approaching closest to him. He fired [Fire Bolts], and though it was a basic cantrip, it easily had the power to two or three shot his units.

Valera led the offensive charge and blocked the [Fire Bolts] with her shield. Behind her, the Alpha Striker and the Big-arm Grizzly leaped ahead, closing the distance to Fler'Gan. They bit and swiped and tackled at his flame barrier, but each time they did, flames retaliated from his pyrokinetic barrier, damaging them.

The damage was not light, either.

Each attack the Variant undead made cost them a limb in terms of damage, torching their skin and flesh into blackened liquid messes.

"Quick attacks and quick retreats!" said Aldrich. "Do not take too much damage from attacking, it simply isn't worth it! Protect the Mud Crabs instead!

"Gah!" Fler'Gan flew backwards as the Troll Chieftain smashed into his barrier with its broad shoulder, tackling him backwards.

Using this moment of distraction, the Mud-Crabs pointed their pincers at Fler'Gan and fired off two streams of pressurized water. The water sizzled against Fler'Gan's barrier and dealt super effective damage.

"Water!? You dare!?" Fler'Gan immediately aimed at the Mud-Crabs that stood a dozen meters away and threw out a [Fire Bolt Barrage]. Six balls of flame spiraled out towards them.

"Protect the crabs!" said Aldrich.

"I'll take the left crab!" Valera stood in front of a crab with her shield and blocked three fire bolts.

"And I'll take the right!" Dynamite Girl defended the other crab and punched away the fire bolts, letting them explode on her body without dealing any damage due to her fireproof skin.

"I swear I will incinerate these accursed crabs!" Fler'Gan ignored the undead swarming around him and just fired more Fire Bolts at the crabs. Once again, Valera and Dynamite Girl defended against these,

Aldrich commanded the Troll Chieftain and Great Centipede to attack. The Chieftain punched Fler'Gan's barrier while the centipede unborrowed its tail from the ground and whipped at the Mind-Eater.

"Pests. Take your time burning yourselves upon my barrier. I will deal with you later." Fler'Gan ignored them and started to charge a swirl of orange energy into his lantern, ready to cast a [Flamethrower] to throw out an unbroken stream of fire that was much harder to block than individual fire bolts.

Aldrich raised a brow of concern.

Fler'Gan was smarter than in the game.

He had some recognizable behaviors from his game A.I. such as casting [Flame Wave] when there were more than five units around him, but usually other than that, he was pretty dumb.

Anything that hit his barrier would draw his aggro, so Aldrich's strategy was to just have his undead perform hit and run attacks to draw Fler'Gan's attention until the crabs recharged their [Water Gun] attacks.

This way, he estimated he would lose maybe one or two units at max until Fler'Gan's barrier was down from [Water Guns].

When the flame barrier ended, Fler'Gan would become much stronger offensively with more intense flame spells and more aggression to boot, but at this point, Dynamite Girl could just rush him and one shot him.

Fler'Gan, like other Mind-Eaters of his kind, had a weakness to fire.

He covered this weakness with his lantern that granted fire resistance, but it only made him take neutral damage to fire.

A full-force attack from Dynamite Girl, especially now that she knew how to go all out beyond her body's limits, would blow up Fler'Gan instantly as his barrier was 70% of his maximum health.

But Fler'Gan was not acting like his A.I. He was not taking easy bait from short hit and run attacks.

"And once those crabs are done with, I will burn you, accursed summoner of the dead," said Fler'Gan as he eyed Aldrich above.

Fler'Gan was conscious. Aldrich could see it in the Mind-Eater's three bulbous eyes. There was thought in them.

Deranged, insane thought, but thought nonetheless.

This made Fler'Gan much more dangerous.

Chapter 40: Secret Boss III

Thankfully, Aldrich had left two undead slots empty so that he could react to sudden difficulties like this.

Aldrich immediately casted [Create Undead] and formed a second Ghast. He had the Ghast float over to the crabs and emit a [Spirit Boundary]. The moment the boundary went up, Fler'Gan's [Flamethrower] shot out, and a cone of continuous fire washed over the smoke barrier.

"Hah! I knew you would do that!" Fler'Gan suddenly changed the course of his [Flamethrower] to Aldrich's other units, specifically the Troll Chieftain.

The Troll Chieftain roared as he took the attack, his grey and rotted flesh burning and sloughing off rapidly. Valera and Dynamite Girl were still with the crabs at this point, so there was nobody to help the Chieftain.

At this rate, the Chieftain would die in a matter of seconds as he took quadruple damage from fire due to possessing dual weaknesses from being both a Grey Troll and a Zombie.

"Geh (Get away from him!)" the Geist mini dashed forwards and landed a mighty punch against Fler'Gan's barrier, sending him flying backwards and breaking his aim with his [Flamethrower].

"Urgh! Pest! Such healing magic I have not seen the likes of! Fine, you wish to die properly, then here!" Fler'Gan's mouth tendrils swayed angrily as he pointed his lantern at the Geist.

The Geist side stepped the [Flamethrower] with another mini-dash and then went back to the Troll Chieftain, raised the troll up on its shoulders, and tossed the troll over to the other Ghast at the back of the arena.

"Such coordination! It is you! I must sever the head of this army!" Fler'Gan stared up at Aldrich and breathed into his lantern, casting [Homing Will-O-Wisp], a spell that created ten tongues of flame that homed in on a target.

When the orbs of flame reached the target, they would explode and deal significant damage.

This was Fler'Gan's strongest phase 1 spell and a guaranteed one hit kill on a level 10 player character even if they took just two or three of the orbs.

It was also a massive pain to dodge. In the worst-case scenario, a Necromancer had to sacrifice ten units just to survive this hit.

"I'm prepared for this," said Aldrich. He crashed his [Grave Reaper Bracers] together. Green ghostly sparks showered out from the impact and then thirteen Vengeful Spirits emerged.

They were glowing green skulls covered in a flickering aura of black, and this aura flowed into wispy tails as they surged forwards, pained moans of torture echoing from their fleshless mouths.

Ten Vengeful Spirits clashed with ten Will-O-Wisps, exploding on contact and neutralizing Fler'Gan's attack. This left three Vengeful Spirits to strike into Fler'Gan's barrier, reducing it now to the 60% mark.

"What!?" Fler'Gan exclaimed.

"And now you've wasted too much time." Aldrich felt rage simmer from beneath him. He felt it burning through the close bond he had between himself and Valera.

"You think you've won already? All I have to do is defeat those crabs and-," Fler'Gan turned his gaze to the crabs but instead found a massive cross-shield thrown into his barrier, crashing him back to the wall of his arena.

"YOU DARE!? YOU DARE TO EVEN TRY AND STRIKE MY MASTER!?" Valera roared as she charged, changing her combat style from Shielder to Berserker.

"[Negative Surge]" Aldrich nodded at Valera, infusing her with a burst of negative energy that reinforced her strength, durability, and speed even more.

She sprinted forwards as a veritable behemoth of speeding, hulking armor, and she was upon Fler'Gan in a second, raining down a flurry of punches.

"ORA! ORA! ORA!" Valera rained down punch after punch, and each one was loud enough to be compared to an artillery shot.

All this while, Fler'Gan shot out a [Flamethrower] against Valera. "Die! Die! Why won't you die, you brute!"

"YES! BURN ME MORE! GIVE ME EVEN MORE OF A REASON TO CRUSH YOU!" Valera kept slamming her fists into the top of Fler'Gan's barrier, gradually sinking him into a crater.

Valera took double damage from fire, and by all rights, Fler'Gan's attack should have severely injured her. But as a Berserker, she had a powerful passive known as [Berserker's Rage] that reduced incoming damage by a tremendous 50% in exchange for receiving that same damage over time.

However, the reduced damage she took over time could not be fatal, so Valera could tank the [Flamethrower] for a surprisingly long amount of time.

"Gah! Away with you!" Fler'Gan did not use fire but a more typical Mind-Reader spell in the form of [Force Blast]. His spindly fingers glowed blue before a blast of telekinetic force pushed Valera a dozen meters backwards.

Valera knelt down, her armor dripping melted metal. She fell down to one knee, breathing heavily as smoke puffed out from her helmet visor and other gaps in her armor.

Once Valera was done taking the damage over time from the amount she mitigated from the [Flamethrower], she would be near 5% health, maybe even lower.

She was done here.

"Geh!" The Geist once again went on rescue duty. It stuck out its prehensile tongue and wrapped it around Valera's waist before tossing her into the safety of the Ghast in the back.

Valera had bought enough time now for the crabs to refresh their [Water Guns]. Both crabs aimed at Fler'Gan again.

"You think I do not know what you are planning? That brute of a knight's sacrifice will be in vain! Any water you cast upon me, I will counter with [Combustion]!" said Fler'Gan. His three red eyes narrowed as he focused.

[Combustion] created spontaneous explosions in the air and when timed properly, could scatter projectiles and split stream type attacks like [Water Gun] down the middle.

The crabs fired their [Water Guns]. As the two spiraling streams of pressurized water sped forwards, Fler'Gan raised his lantern up high, readying his [Combustion] spell.

The Great Centipede and Skeleton Rogue at this moment emerged out of nowhere. The Great Centipede from underground where it could not be sensed and the Skeleton Rogue from stealth.

"What!?" Fler'Gan casted a double cast [Combustion], but the spell, though instant, required an unbroken line of sight with its target. With his line of sight broken from the [Water Guns], he could only hit what was in front of him.

Twin explosions erupted from the Skeleton Rogue and the Great Centipede. Both of them blew apart, destroyed, but their sacrifice gave time for the [Water Guns] to slam into Fler'Gan's barrier.

Fler'Gan's barrier flickered and sputtered before fading away. Valera's berserker assault had reduced Fler'Gan's shield from 60% to 20%, and now it was down to 0%.

"You've cast down my barrier, is it?" said Fler'Gan. He started to float in the air, fire swirling around him. "But you have merely forced me to channel more of my power!"

Aldrich shook his head. "You should have channeled that power from the start. You're done for."

"What do you mean!?" said Fler'Gan. "Your brutish knight is fallen. Your minions nurse their burned, rotted flesh. And your crabs must wait for their water spells."

"I was getting real fucking tired of waiting around," said Dynamite Girl as she stepped out of the Spirit Boundary protecting the crabs. Her entire body glowed orange, all of her veins visible as her heart beat a million miles per minute.

"Insolent little girl! You are undead, no match for my purging flames!" Fler'Gan waved his lantern at Dynamite Girl, sending a [Flame Lance] at her. A huge spear of fire slammed into her.

Dynamite Girl flipped her hair as flames roared around her harmlessly. She stared up at Fler'Gan with a lip twisted in rage and a nerve of anger popping on her forehead, contorting her pretty face into pure anger. "That it, huh? Fuckin' bastard, you think

you're the only one that gets to throw fire and explosions around, huh!? Don't steal my sh*t!"

"Completely immune to flame!? As an undead!? H-how!?" said Fler'Gan.

Dynamite Girl jumped in the air, releasing two mini explosions on her feet to give her speed and lift, and tackled Fler'Gan, pinning him into a wall with her arm.

"I will have your brain!" Fler'Gan's mouth tendrils extended forwards and opened up, revealing a buzz-saw like beak-maw.

Before the tendrils shot out, Dynamite Girl shouted: "Bunker Buster!"

In the next instant, the entire cavern turned white, and then an explosion that ruptured Aldrich's eardrums rocked the arena.

Chapter 41: Fler'Gan the Zealot

Aldrich could not hear or see until his eardrums healed and his eyes adjusted from the intense blinding light, like a flash bang had been set off right in front of him. Seemed like though undead had night vision, blinding effects still worked on them provided they still had eyes.

Nothing could tell him how the battle ended except a message from his status screen:

[Boss: Fler'Gan the Zealot defeated]

[+800 EXP]

[EXP Bar: 770/1200]1570/1200]

[Level up]

[Level 10] 11]

[EXP Bar: 370/1400]

[5 stat points available to distribute]

Aldrich breathed a sigh of relief. He was 99% sure Fler'Gan was dead, but when he saw those messages, he felt absolutely confident. He waited a good twenty or so seconds until his blinding faded and his ears healed up with his [Anti-Life Shell].

He saw Valera and Dynamite Girl standing in front of him, squabbling while the Geist looked awkwardly between them, trying to resolve the conflict but not knowing how.

"You blinded and hurt him!" said Valera as she pointed an accusing finger at Dynamite Girl.

"What? You wanted me to hold back on blastin' that squid face freak!? You think that's what the captain would have wanted, huh!?" said Dynamite Girl.

"Enough," said Aldrich. "Both of you did well. All of you, in fact."

Aldrich looked around with appreciation at his undead.

Valera was still shaky on her feet, weak from taking so much damage. Dynamite Girl's arms were both mangled with cracked bone hutting out through the skin of her arm while she bled from the mouth, her heart ruptured from exerting herself. Most of his undead suffered significant burns that they now slowly healed under Aldrich's [Anti-Life Shell].

Really only the two crabs got out of this fight untouched, and that was because they had been protected.

All in all, though, Aldrich felt that he had cleared Fler'Gan with moderate difficulty. He initially thought the fight was going to be an easy cakewalk by abusing the boss's game A.I., but he was sentient, or at the very least somewhat sentient, letting him make decisions outside of Aldrich's awareness.

"Where is he? The boss?" said Aldrich.

"Nothin' left of that freak!" said Dynamite Girl proudly as she pointed over to a massive blackened crater. It looked like a high ordinance missile had bored into the ground and exploded, gouging out a blackened crater the size of a small house at the end of the arena.

Aldrich sighed. "I wanted some part of him left to see if I could resurrect him."

Normally in Elden World, it was not possible to reanimate boss type monsters or beings. But maybe now it was different. Aldrich had wanted to find out.

"Sorry, captain," said Dynamite Girl.

"No, it's fine. You couldn't have held back anyway. We either finished him in one hit or we didn't. Good job." Aldrich walked over to the crater and spied the rewards from this boss fight.

Fler'Gan's lantern floated in the air in the deepest center of the crater. Aldrich picked it up by tapping it with his staff.

[1x Firekeeper's Lantern obtained]

There was also an item orb containing a silver ring designed in the shape of two coiling serpents. The [Ring of Avarice].

Aldrich absorbed this too.

[1x Ring of Avarice obtained]

With the [Ring of Avarice], Aldrich would receive a set amount of coins every 3 days. The amount of coins he received for this changed depending on what level he was. From levels 1 - 10, he received 100 coins.

In increments of ten levels, this coin reward increased according to these values: 150 (at level 20) - 225 (lvl 30) - 300 (lvl 40) - 500 (lvl 50) - 700 (lvl 60) - 1000 (lvl 70) - 2000 (lvl 80) - 2500 (lvl 90) - 4000 (lvl 100). Hopefully, this would give Aldrich enough coins to last as he did not start receiving coin drops from monsters in Trial Quests until the second one onwards.

But beyond this, Aldrich noticed something that Fler'Gan did not drop his Soul. Ordinarily, bosses always dropped their Soul.

What changed now?

What Fler'Gan did drop was something he never dropped in the game. The crimson red orb he held in his hand that was part of his visual design but nothing more than that.

Aldrich knelt down and picked the orb up. It was the size of baseball, not particularly large, but it was surprisingly heavy. On it were inscribed several lines of sigils glowing an eerie green. Within, he saw the faint flicker of a familiar white - the flicker of a Soul.

Fler'Gan's Soul.

That was when Aldrich noticed that he could see the bright green of a Grave Marker inside the orb as well. Fler'Gan could be resurrected using this orb.

Aldrich started to recall game lore.

Mind Eaters like Fler'Gan were obsessed with knowledge and because the pursuit of knowledge was never ending by its nature, they required immortality to continue amassing knowledge throughout Elden World and its realms.

Mind Eater immortality was thus quite simple. A large brain shaped, tendril covered super mass known as a Elder Mind spawned Mind Eaters to roam and absorb knowledge, and then Mind Eaters grew too weak or old, they returned to the Elder Mind whereupon they would get absorbed.

The Mind Eater's knowledge would transfer to the Elder Mind and then their biomass would get reused to birth another Mind Eater.

Mind Eaters ordinarily had undying loyalty to their Elder Minds via mental control, but some broke from this control.

Those that broke free still hungered for knowledge and thus still needed long lifespans for this pursuit, and so they sought other means of immortality that did not involve sacrificing themselves.

The path to becoming a lich was one of the more common ones among these Mind Eaters.

Fler'Gan was one such Mind Eater that sought to become a lich. Hence, his backstory was that he had locked himself in this underground study for decades, growing mad trying to become not only a lich, but one also utterly immune to fire to become an invincible undead.

Then, Aldrich thought as he stared at the orb in his hand, this was a Phylactery.

An object, often an orb, that a mortal being imbued their souls in to take the first steps to turning into a Lich.

Their flesh bodies rotted away to skeletal forms upon casting their souls away, but in exchange, these skeletal bodies became highly attuned to magic, death, curses, and, most importantly, were disposable, capable of reforming so long as the Phylactery holding the main soul remained intact.

In Elden World, the player character Necromancer came from a line of mortal Necromancers that reviled becoming a Lich and actively hunted them. Becoming a Lich meant abandoning one's humanity and binding themselves to the original Lich known as the Death Lord, one of the evil gods of Elden World that allied with the Howling Dark to destroy all life.

The Death Lord's end goal was to destroy life so that all souls entered into his own Realm of Death where he would rule over all creation infinitely. Typical big bad evil god stuff.

As a result, the player character's Necromancer and other mortal Necromancers fought against the Death Lord as where the Death Lord believed all creation should die and

serve him, mortal Necromancers believed the boundary between life and death should be respected and maintained.

It was said that part of the ritual to become a Lich involved not only forging a Phylactery, but also communing with the Death Lord to take a shard of his power. This shard would then fuel the ritual and make the Phylactery complete, finalizing the steps to become a Lich.

Those that were too weak-willed who faced the Death Lord lost their minds to him and became his lich slaves. Those that were strong enough, however, took the Death Lord's shard of power for themselves and became independent and mighty liches.

This was all Aldrich knew of the process to become a Lich. How to craft a Phylactery and all the steps in between making one and communing with the Death Lord were not explained in the game as player characters could not become undead.

But...what if Aldrich could find someone that knew all of this? Someone that would serve him and guide him through the process.

And that someone was right here in the palm of Aldrich's hand.

Aldrich put down the orb and chanted, "Serve."

He felt an immense strain on his body as his magical energy roared around him in a raging green aura. He felt life and magic leave him, draining him rapidly. All of this sacrificed life and mana flowed into the Phylactery in twin strands of green and crimson.

"Master, you are taking too much damage!" said Valera.

"I'm fine," said Aldrich as mana and life continued to drain from him. This was far, far more than the 10% maximum health cost he sacrificed for raising monsters that were much higher leveled than him.

This was the cost of raising a boss type monster, it seemed. A continuous mana and health sacrifice.

A type of being that Aldrich had never been able to raise in the game. He was thankful he had saved his mana and health so conservatively throughout the fight, but as he felt himself getting drained second by second, he wondered if he had enough.

Eventually, Aldrich reached 10% of his maximum health and mana, and at that point, his spell stopped draining his health and mana. He breathed heavily as sweat trickled from his forehead.

He looked down at the Phylactery.

A green aura enveloped the crimson orb before it rapidly shook and oscillated. All of a sudden, a burst of energy blasted outwards in a shockwave, knocking Aldrich back, Valera caught him and kept him on his feet.

Green and red particles swirled in front of the Phylactery, forming into Fler'Gan's form.

Aldrich waited tensely, wondering if Fler'Gan was hostile, especially with his mental insanity, and was ready to take away his individuality or, if needed, dispel him at a moment's notice.

But Fler'Gan did not fight. Instead, he knelt down and closed his three red eyes in reverence. "Your wish is my command, O Elder. I thank you for granting me the eternity I have always searched for."

What happened?

Chapter 42: Becoming a Lich

Aldrich did not respond immediately to Fler'Gan, still wary about whether he had the potential to be aggressive. He felt out the mental connection he had between master and undead familiar, and as he did so, he saw status messages appear in his vision.

[Trial Quest: The Search completed]

[+500 EXP]

[+500 Coins]

[Learned passive: Corpse Barrier]

[Learned passive: Death Sense]

[Learned class spell: Grave Consumption]

[Obtained: Tome of Enhancement]

[Obtained 1x Sign Stone]

[Obtained 3x Restorative Flask charges]

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[EXP Bar: 370/1400] 870/1400]

Aldrich breathed in deeply, feeling power flow into him. Bit by bit, he was getting back to the power of his original player character. [Death Sense] allowed Aldrich to sense the presences of any units under 10% of their

maximum health which was particularly useful considering that this was generally the max health range for most instant death type spells to work as executes.

[Grave Consumption] allowed Aldrich to take a Grave Marker and consume it, healing 5% of his maximum health. It could also be used on resurrected undead, destroying the undead and absorbing its negative energy to restore 10% of maximum health.

[Corpse Barrier] was particularly useful. It gave Aldrich a bonus shield that consisted of 30% of his maximum health, and the neat thing was that this barrier could regenerate very quickly by adding corpses into it.

Of course, if Aldrich used a corpse to pad his barrier, he could not raise it to become an undead.

The [Tome of Enhancement] would also grant Aldrich access to upgraded versions of his current spells. Overall, this was a massive boost in power.

"Is something amiss, O Elder?" said Fler'Gan.

Aldrich looked at Fler'Gan and the thought immediately struck him: he could get even stronger.

"Nothing," said Aldrich as he made sure he felt no hostility from Fler'Gan. "Tell me, you seemed to have been sentient. What do you remember about this place? About what happened to you in the past few decades?"

Valera perked up, highly curious for the same reason that Aldrich was: they wanted to know what exactly happened to the game universe of Elden World.

"Everything...ended for me," said Fler'Gan. "I had holed myself in my study for my pursuit to achieve eternal life. It was many years I threw myself into this search, but at one point, I do not know when, I felt as if I was in a haze. Walking in a dream from which there was no waking.

During that time, I was conscious and not conscious. I acted only in my search for immortality. But I did not feel as if I was in my own body. I simply...was."

"Like you were sleepwalking," said Aldrich. He turned to Valera. "This sounds exactly like what you went through. He also went into a sort of eternal sleep."

"Indeed, my master," said Valera.

"And you remember nothing else?" Aldrich turned back to Fler'Gan.

Fler'Gan shook his mouth tendrils. "No."

"I see," said Aldrich. "I notice you do not seem nearly as, well, committed to your search for immortality."

"You mean he's not fuckin' batsh*t insane anymore," said Dynamite Girl bluntly.

"Yes, I was trying to be polite here," said Aldrich.

"I tell you, master, whelps these days have no sense of decorum or manners," said Valera as she shook her head.

"Huh? I'm young, is that it? Doesn't that mean you're some sorta old hag?" said Dynamite Girl.

Valera immediately stood up, her armor clanking, and she strode up to Dynamite Girl and stared her down, towering over the hero.

"What was that?" said Valera.

"Just sayin' what you admitted," said Dynamite Girl.

"Gehgeh (What a pointless argument)" said the Geist.

"What did you say!?" Valera and Dynamite Girl shouted in complete union, synchronizing angry head turns to the Geist.

"Geh! (Nothing!)" The Geist raised its muscular arms in the air in surrender.

"Calm down, all of you. No point in arguing among ourselves. And you, Valera, you should be thankful for the Geist. It saved you," said Aldrich.

"I suppose," grumbled Valera. She bowed her head slightly to the Geist. "I thank you for your service, good creature." She paused awkwardly. "And I apologize for thinking of you as a foul abomination of nature."

"Geheh." The Geist rubbed its head and nodded, taking the apology gratefully.

"Hey now, ain't we all just freaks of nature at this point?" said Dynamite Girl.

"No, we are perfect beings now," said Valera. "We may not fit into the normal cycle of life and death anymore, but that is precisely why we are ascendant."

"Guess that's a good way of lookin' at this whole undead thing," said Dynamite Girl.

"She speaks truly," said Fler'Gan. "For decades, I sought undeath for it was the purest form of transcending the limits of the body. Mindless undead are little more than aberrations, but higher undead such as ourselves with our minds still intact are truly transcendent."

Fler'Gan nodded to Valera. "And as for your question, O Elder. My madness was cast upon me not only from my quest for immortality, but also from the sleep from which I fell into. That sleep kept my drive, my madness, strong.

But now that I have been freed from that sleep and also granted immortal undeath, there is nothing that clouds my judgment any longer."

"Good," said Aldrich. "If you were even just a little bit unstable, I would have kept you a mindless slave."

"To you who has granted me the gift of undeath, I serve gratefully," said Fler'Gan.

"Let's keep it that way. Now then, this-," Aldrich picked up Fler'Gan's phylactery. "Explain this. Can this still be used?"

"Certainly. And it is yours. I have no use for it," said Fler'Gan. "If, indeed, you wish to ascend even further from risen undead into a proper lich."

"Then how does this work?" said Aldrich. "The process of becoming a lich, that is."

Aldrich had no hesitations about turning into a lich. It would massively enhance his power, and this was not an understatement. In Elden World lore, mortal Necromancers had to band up with parties of warriors and mages and priests and whatnot just to beat a single lich.

Any lich, even a lower leveled one, was a boss type monster.

A lich was simply far more attuned to death and magic than a mortal. They could control more dead, raise more dead, cast stronger curses, stronger death magic, possess higher mana pools, and so on and so forth.

Mortals could only dip their toes into the well of power that was Necromancy. Liches could dive into the dark arts full body and harness the class's power infinitely better.

All Aldrich needed was the knowledge to become one. And here was Fler'Gan who had devoted literal decades into turning into one.

"There are three major steps to completing the ritual," said Fler'Gan. "The phylactery is simply the first step. It is a construct of the rarest magic-capable ores and enchantments. Crystal of Orichalcum, dust of fairy wing, dragon tooth powder, flame demon fire-,"

"Yes, and you've assembled all of that into this." Aldrich nodded at the phylactery. "And you said it was still usable. Usable for me?"

"Certainly," said Fler'Gan.

"Then the other two steps?"

"The second is to excise any mortal chains you have," said Fler'Gan.

"Mortal chains? Fuck is that? Stop speaking in goddamn riddles," said Dynamite Girl.

"Must I tone down my diction to match the understanding of an addlebrained simpleton such as this?" Fler'Gan waved his lengthy purple fingers dismissively at Dynamite Girl.

"Huh!?" Dynamite Girl started to get aggressive, and Aldrich raised a hand.

"Stop. I will be the only one to talk to Fler'Gan. You keep quiet," said Aldrich as he leered at Dynamite Girl.

"Got it, captain," said Dynamite Girl.

"Now then, mortal chains. What does this entail?" said Aldrich.

"Personal bonds. Emotional attachments. These things bind your soul to the physical plane. It makes it difficult to sever your soul from your mortal shell and place it within the phylactery," said Fler'Gan.

"I see," said Aldrich. This step, he was good on. As far as he knew, he had no emotional attachments anymore. His parents were dead, and Adam and Elaine were only zombies now, their souls forever gone. "Then the third step?"

"To obtain an Obelisk from the Death Lord," said Fler'Gan, his voice deathly serious.

"I see. I know about this one. You challenge the Death Lord and take a shard of his power from him. And this shard is called the Obelisk."

"Yes."

"And let me guess, you stopped at this stage," said Aldrich. "You have a completed phylactery and you could move your soul into it, meaning you had no strong personal attachments to anyone.

And yet, you aren't a lich yet. This means you couldn't challenge the Death Lord."

"No. I tried, but the trial she forced upon me was far too difficult to overcome," said Fler'Gan. "I barely escaped with my free will, and all these years, I studied for a means to overcome the Death Lord's trial with new power to no avail."

"And what was the nature of this trial?" said Aldrich.

"THAT, YOU WILL FIND OUT."

Aldrich widened his eyes as he heard a deep, rumbling voice emanate from the phylactery in his hand. The phylactery glowed brightly, and smoke started to ripple from Aldrich's hand as the orb burned him.

"Master, drop that accursed object!" Valera trudged forwards, but a shockwave blasted out from the phylactery that knocked everyone except Aldrich backwards.

"THIS 'TRIAL QUEST'...YOU CALL THIS A TRIAL? PATHETIC. YOU HAVE OVERCOME IT SO VERY EASILY.

I CAN SENSE YOUR DESIRE.

YOU ARE SO EASILY WILLING TO CAST AWAY YOUR HUMANITY TO BECOME A LICH.

BUT DO YOU THINK THIS MAKES YOU SPECIAL? UNIQUE?

YOU ARE JUST ONE OF MANY, MANY MORTALS WHO WERE DESPERATE ENOUGH TO CAST AWAY THEIR HUMANITY.

HUMANITY MEANS NOTHING. IT IS WORTHLESS.

NO, I WILL JUDGE YOUR WORTH MYSELF.

WITH A TRIAL OF MY OWN."