

## Undead 1271

### Chapter 1271: The Power Required (1)

Skullius could hardly fathom what had possessed Theurien just now, and how Elita had known how to deal with it but he was relieved all the same. He imagined that perhaps what he had said to Theurien before bringing him here was too vague. He had wanted to surprise the man and give him hope.

Stylla was still alive, after all.

Skullius had simply wanted to show Theurien that Stylla was well, except for the fact that she didn't have a body and thus could only exist as a soul for now.

Because of the BoneTender, Stylla had been compromised and forced to travel with him as his aide. Yuyui had recounted to Skullius how she had managed to save Stylla, but stressed repeatedly that it had been a close call.

She had used her Eye of Moving – a special eye that allowed her to perform any action that remotely associated itself with the word 'move' – to traverse into Stylla's Reflection of the Soul and convince her to fight. There, Stylla had told Yuyui that she had done terrible things that she found hard to live with while under the BoneTender's control.

Skullius imagined that before Stylla and the BoneTender headed to Edagon, they had 'enjoyed' several adventures across Aigas, performing atrocious deeds. This was probably how they gathered information they wouldn't have otherwise gotten access to.

The Hybrid Warmoth had sympathised with Stylla. Thankfully, Yuyui managed to save her soul, even though her body ended up getting destroyed in the BoneTender's final gambit.

It pricked Skullius when he thought about how Stylla would react upon waking up. She hadn't been conscious since the day she was saved.

Normally, souls couldn't exist without their bodies for long, but Skullius had used the powers of the Fallen Reincarnator's Shadow, a weapon that embodied the powers of the masked man, Actuass, to delay her extinction. The weapon gave Skullius incredible skill with souls. With it, he was no different from Actuass in that particular regard.

Skullius gazed at Theurien. The man continued to weep as he pressed himself against the glass cage around Stylla's bed. A part of Skullius had felt that the man needed this – to cry as bitterly as he could. Thus, he had allowed it for several minutes.

He turned to Elita.

Wordlessly, he asked her if it was alright to interrupt Theurien now.

She nodded with a smile.

"Theurien," Skullius said.

The man flinched slightly and turned.

"Stylla's is in good hands. She exists only as a soul now, but I finally have a more permanent solution," he said.

Theurien seemed to crumble on the inside.

"Please..." he managed a murmur. "Please... if you can..."

Skullius nodded.

"Leave it to me."

He said this, but a few minutes ago, he had only been partly sure he could perform a deed that required Divine wisdom and power. Now, he knew he couldn't allow himself to fail. He simply couldn't.

Kintar's words rang in Skullius' head at this moment.

'...It's beneath you.'

Skullius shook his head.

'No, it's not.'

How could one simply start to see mortals as lesser just because they had managed – through a mix of hard work, luck and mortal assistance – to transcend to a higher state of existence. A wise being, in Skullius' opinion, would never forget his roots.

Even now, he recalled his roots.

He remembered even Bonet, Fractures, Monosocket, his friends from the bunk tombs in Somanda's domain. He wished to save them or at least allow them to final find peace in death.

Such things weren't beneath him.

Skullius had rejected this very ideal that his possessed self had been pushing forward, disregarding everything that wasn't useful for breeding a perfect future, including the past and lesser lives.

'She'll understand one day,' Skullius thought.

He grabbed Theurien's shoulder gently.

"What I'm about to do might be unsafe for you if you stay close. I'm going to have to move you out of this building to ensure your safety. When I'm done, I'll bring you back in," he said.

Theurien nodded with what sounded like a small, 'Thank you.'

Elita held his hand and escorted him out of the room. Strawlers opened the door and escorted Silrat out as well.

Now only Beyrmir remained in the room with his master.

Skullius sighed. He looked at the Apostle.

"I'm not sure even you will be safe from this," he said. "You've lost two bodies to me already. I think you should try to defend this last one too."

Indeed, it was true.

Beyrmir's first body had been destroyed when the possessed Skullius had used the Noboboyama to cut apart a portion of Aigas, including its Rules.

The second body, which Skullius, as the Soul-Burdened Warmoth had donned to weather through his possessed self's final gambit, had also been eviscerated by that menacing ray of power created when [Evil Darkness] and [Just Light] were given offensive form.

Now, Beyrmir's last Mercurian body was hidden in the Sallow Face.

The Apostle grinned.

"I have not once regretted losing my bodies for your sake, my liege. It is my purpose. I am proud that in each event, I proved to be of some use," he said, but then he looked down. "I know what you intend to do for this woman. Please, allow me to stand here and be the first to witness the most perfect version of you."

Skullius was dumbfounded at first, but then he laughed.

Since Beyrmir had access to his skills, he (Beyrmir) could also discern Skullius' Andori and their qualities. The Apostle must have understood Skullius' composition and powers so well that he gathered that to save Stylla, the powers his master needed to access were not in the Hybrid Warmoth body.

They must have been in another one that was leagues stronger.

Why else would he have Silrat and Theurien escorted out?

Skullius was pleased.

"Very well. I'll allow it."

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Elita knew she hadn't needed to move out of the room with Theurien and Silrat, but she had wanted to.

She, unlike Beyrmir didn't know exactly what Skullius intended to do, but to her, it seemed rude to simply stand and watch.

She, Silrat, Theurien and the Strawlers climbed down the mountain, the cool, rich air walloping them gingerly.

...And then it happened.

...!!!

Elita sensed IT first.

With the Voided Death Essence she had recovered, she shielded them all before IT swept past them.

Something went off high on the mountain, and then the entire thing toppled down gracelessly like a tower of stacked cards!

A great beam of bright energy exploded upward in a frightening pillar, impressing its dominance on any and all who would dare to exist in its vicinity.

Chapter 1272: The Power Required (2)

The darkness within the interior of the Brilliant Dent was defeated. The copy of the sun providing warmth and light was drowned by the light pouring from the vicious pillar. The sight would have caused most to doubt their state of existence as their eyes were forced to believe that darkness had been the greatest illusion of all.

Everything was so bright. Too bright.

...But then, the restricted space in the Mythical grade treasure known as the Brilliant Dent, vanished.

Suddenly, Deign appeared below, surrounded by the great pool of blackish-red liquid, but quickly, the island's existence was also drowned by the light from the pillar that had caused this.

Everything was highlighted by its overwhelming radiance, and its intensity coursed through everything with a form – corporeal or otherwise.

The Unlimited Stars who were preparing to move out were stunned.

Again?

What was their master doing this time?!

But their thoughts couldn't have all been so casual. Unlike the last time, when their attention was stolen by Skullius' ascension to Divinity, their bodies and souls were temporarily crippled.

Something unseen, something beyond the huge pillar of energy in the distance, pressed on them like a vast, frigid ocean, causing them to freeze.

None could understand it.

None could fathom it.

None, but Susu'k.

Skullius had not regarded him for long following their interaction. The Hybrid Warmoth had chosen to go and address his mortal subordinates instead, leaving the giant Strawler alone and embarrassed in the Second Layer of the Emyrean Hatcher.

He didn't dare seethe in rage and insult his new master for it though. Skullius had every right to treat him as he wished.

The phenomenon currently happening now was one of the reasons why Susu'k was glad he had quickly cast away his arrogance and presented himself before Skullius as a tool at his disposal.

This power burning over the Ju`wte Transfiguration Pool... had no business being in the hands of a fresh Divine.

Susu'k had already thought this true for Skullius' Hybrid Warmoth form, but this...

'It took a long time for the previous Jan`ind to acquire such power! His... Broader Existence shouldn't be this vast!' the Strawler thought, both awed and frightened.

The fact that Skullius had not abused any of the resources Susu'k's old master had left behind to reach this level, astounded Susu'k terribly.

How was this possible?

The powers crackling over the pool in the distance died down abruptly.

They left a staggering silence that almost seemed too unnatural.

Oddly, the large, broken mass which had appeared over Deign suddenly, vanished, leaving the island with scars and craters.

The storage effects of the Brilliant Dent which had been temporarily overwhelmed by Skullius' power now restored themselves. They scooped back up the bits of the toppled mountain and the duplicated sun, hiding them away in a different space.

Elita, who was in that separate space with Silrat and Theurien raised her head.

Everything had finally calmed down.

She breathed out a harsh sigh and dispelled her bubble of purple Voided Death Essence.

What fierce Amras. It had caught her off guard.

She inspected Silrat and Theurien.

They were safe. None of the adverse effects that would have blasted them from Skullius' energy reached them because of the Voided Death Essence.

That was the unique quality of Voided Death Essence and Null Life Essence in particular. When cultivated at high levels, they remained relevant when matched against concepts in the Common Reality Leagues. This was why even Deities were annoyed by anomalies. Boron, for instance, had sought to kill Skullius immediately after his battle because he knew if given the chance, he would be troublesome.

Seconds later, he had been seething at Elita's unexpected arrival for the same reason.

Further evidence of the special quality of Existential Parallels was how Majestic Territories were unable to read Skullius' Null Life Essence and stop it from flowing. This happened because Null Life Essence as a concept was beyond the likes of mana and Nitros. And so was Voided Death Essence.

Elita helped Silrat and Theurien up.

"Are you alright?" she asked them.

"Y-yeah," Silrat said while swiping away the dust.

Theurien also confirmed that he was unharmed.

"What was that?" he asked, his face pale.

Elita didn't answer.

She couldn't quite understand what had happened. She had felt a plethora of sensations just now and had had a hard time distinguishing them.



She gazed at the pile of a mountain ahead. Thick dust and smoke covered most of it, obscuring the fate of the Honing Fortress.

What a pity.

Elita was a little sad to see the destruction of the mountain. She really had admired its aesthetic.

In the next instant, however, she felt the pulse of a formidable concept seep out from somewhere and layer itself over the remains of the mountain. The large uneven blocks began putting themselves back together in the same sequence they had been forced to disentangle from the singular unit that was the mountain. In a few seconds, they formed the rise once again, perfect and whole.

'He reversed time,' Elita thought, and a smile crept over her face.

Well, given Skullius' displays from earlier, she wasn't surprised. It was only natural for time itself to be an ally to Skullius now.

But time was a concept that existed in tiers. The brand of time that spanned within the boundary of worlds was leagues weaker and far less complex than that which dominated reality as a whole.

In a blink, Elita, Silrat and Theurien found themselves back in the white room.

Skullius had brought them all back.

They all looked at him. He was in his Hybrid Luman form, still emitting a crazy powerful but tame presence, different from the berserk one from moments ago. Beyrmir stood at his side, but bits of smoke could be traced along his straw cloak and flesh.

The questions about what that burst of power just now was were pressing, but not as much as the ones about Stylla. At least this was the case for Theurien. He immediately turned to the bed in the centre of the room.

It was no longer covered with the glass cage. On it, a woman with a physical form could be seen, snoring in her sleep. She turned to the side and pushed against the comfy blankets, oblivious to the fact that she was being watched or that she was restored.

She had very long, honey-coloured hair with streaks of auburn at its fringes. Her figure was slim but tall, wrapped in a long, white silk dress.

She had coin-grey skin, smooth and almost shiny. It looked inhumane, but didn't detract from her beauty and distinct features. Without a doubt, she was Stylla Bryne.

Skullius' gaze lingered over her. He seemed to look distracted, a bit fearful, even, but it hardly showed to any of the three he had invited back into the Honing Fortress.

"I'm sorry she looks like that," Skullius said to Theurien with a small smile. "I had to take some... liberties."

But Theurien saw no reason for an apology. He sat on the bed beside Stylla and took a few, deep measured breaths.

He caressed the strands of Stylla's hair gently.

"I see my daughter, and I feel her soul," he said, almost sobbing. "What more could I ask?"

Chapter 1273: The Stark-Soul Order Moves Out!

"Let's be quick now!" Pherdanta shouted.

Her Granted Star Armament seemed to emit a cold radiance, the moving stars etched onto its dark shell shimmering with every rise and fall in her emotions.

The Commander of the Stark Troops had opted to attach the plaited skirt from her previous armour onto this new one. It looked like an umbrella opened from her waist; it made it hard for her to carry her two new swords at her side, thus, she placed them on her back, stacked laterally. Her high boots, also livid with stars clapped against the pavement tracing its way from the Empyrean Hatcher.

The other Unlimited Stars were standing all around Pherdanta, some making sure the Troops they would be taking with them were all accounted for.

Grim, who was combing the mane of grizzly ebony fur around the shoulders and collar of his Granted Star Armament stood with Yuyui and the creature Bubbles. The two Unlimited Stars had paired with each other because they were deeply familiar with the others' fighting style.

Savast, a Cluster beast with a brand of Granted Star Armament that covered all the way up to the edges of his head and over it with an odd helmet that sprouted seven luminous horns, stood beside Baddan. These two also had good synergy in battle.

Kenno had been paired with a being whose presence had more than a few of the Stark Troops stiff and nervous. It was an unnaturally tall creature with pasty, pale skin and hollow sockets. His hair was pale, thin and long, reaching past his jaw. He was not adorned in the Granted Star Armament like Kenno.

Instead, he wore the same suit of armour Skullius had bestowed upon him when he was born; the chest plate burned, reflecting light from a brand on the creature's chest that spelled his name.

ARAEYN DERAGIN EXONN – He that rebels against order.

Skullius had called for the Apostle to join the troops while he was addressing how they would sweep through Aigas in the Hatcher. A simple mental command had done the trick perfectly, and the Apostle obeyed.

Ever since Skullius reached the Fourth Tier and had his 'Vehement Bone Nullmancer' Class advanced to 'Nullmancer', the Apostle's favourability towards him had risen and he listened to orders without qualms.

As Araeyn was destined to rebel against him in the end though – as was his Flaw – Skullius wasn't sure if racking more favourability points with the Apostle would continue to keep him in his service. But that was a problem for another time.

The next pair was Red Rage and Kintar. Though the Apostle wasn't familiar with Kintar at all and she unfamiliar with him, Skullius had judged that the two would work well together. Red Rage's current arsenal, in the Hybrid Warmoth's opinion, completed Kintar's. The short, oval-faced woman had had no problems with the pairing.

She was interested in seeing what Red Rage was capable of, though, she would have preferred it if Araeyn was her partner.

The only one to be storming off with a portion of the Troops on her own, was Pherdanta. With her new Hidden Class, Skullius felt she would be especially efficient on her own. [Infinite Sword God: Primordial Sword] had already begun to bud within her body.

The Stark Troops, 134 in all, were split between the pairs and Pherdanta.

"Alright. Everyone keep in mind exactly where you are going. On the journey to your positions, make sure you wipe out as many enemies as possible. If they are Carven or Cluster beasts, there's no need to hesitate. If they are experts coming in from different times in Aigas' past, restrain them first and find out if they can be reasoned with. If it's impossible, don't bother.

Go for the kill. The Starmations are at your disposal. Don't forget you have them."

"Yuyui and Grim. Make sure to be civil. Master already expressed how delicate the situation with the beasts is."

Yuyui and Grim nodded.

Their objective, other than culling the enemies, was to rendezvous with Erlton the Herald. Skullius had given Yuyui something that could help with getting his attention.

As Erlton had said that the guardian of the Tremur Forest, Karima, was going to be gathering aid from guardian beasts from other Sacred Forests, Skullius thought Yuyui and Grim might be able to help gather these allies and direct them to assist the Stark Troops in stabilising the situation in Aigas.

"Savast and Baddan?" Pherdanta said.

The two beasts nodded.

Taking advantage of Savast's overwhelming Mind Casting abilities, the pair was to enslave as many feral Cluster beasts as possible and unleash them on the Carven. Skullius had encouraged the two to look for Clusters over and under the sea. His experience beyond the Central Boundary taught him that the most dangerous Clusters appeared under the sea, unseen and undetected.

Pherdanta's eyes landed on Kintar and Red Rage.

"I knooooooooow. Be civil, diplomatic and whatnot," Kintar said with an eye roll.

Her task was also delicate. She was to go to Emeradis and help defend it. However, Skullius had also tasked her with attempting to pacify the nation. The devastation Skullius had caused to Emeradis during his battle with his alter was immense and he intended to go there a little later himself to talk to whoever governed their nation. Before that, he wanted Kintar to gain Emeradis' favour.

As for Kenno, Araeyn and Pherdanta, their tasks were rather simple.

They were to defend Pelian and rescue as many people as possible.

Additionally, while taking advantage of Araeyn's powers, they were to isolate enemies that were too strong for them to beat on their own; Divine experts in particular.

Skullius was hoping that if any team was to encounter Boron, it should be Kenno and Araeyn's team. Aside from Pherdanta's company, they had the highest chance of encountering him, should he acquire a new vessel earlier than expected. If Araeyn could trap Boron in a Null Remnant, that would be perfect.

Skullius didn't send any troops to Maqi because he didn't think they'd take kindly to any help. Besides, he was going there himself. His alter had left a mess for him to fix there.

As for Opungale, for now, it was relatively safe, judging by the possessed Skullius' memories.

Because of Maqi's invasion on Opungale more than a week ago (in Aigas' time) the High Family, Queen Embrell and her husband, had seedified every Sif on the continent for their own safety; every Sif had been turned into a seed, and it would take at least a fortnight to plant them and restore them to humanoid form.

Skullius had discovered that this was why his battle with his possessed self had never steered towards Opungale. The continent was hardly 'heavily populated'.

"Alrigh then. I doubt that I need to emphasise the severity of the consequences if we fail. We have finally been granted a name, and if our first mission as bold experts named with dignity ends in failure, well... we would have disgraced not just our Master, but his confidence in us. We are the Stark-Soul Order. Let's own that name and give it a fitting weight.

None of you are to waste either your life or your death!" Pherdanta declared.

Everyone silently agreed. The Stark Constellations on their foreheads crackled with Ju`wtte.

"Let's move out," she said.

Kintar floated forth and used the large ivory key, jabbing it into the empty space ahead. Ju`wtte sparked everywhere, creating a gateway to Aigas.

#### Chapter 1274: Guide To The Starmations

The Stark Troops and Unlimited Stars have specialised armour sets which are imbued with personalised skills and traits that improve their individual capabilities as Troop members, and common abilities that others have access to as well.

The Stark Troop armour sets are called the GRANTED ARMAMENT sets, and those of the Unlimited Stars are called the GRANTED STAR ARMAMENT sets. The former have the blue, white and silver colours, while the latter are dark, with a myriad of stars.

Because of the staggering difficulty involved with the creation of Transcendent grade armour, Skullius has only managed to fashion Mythical grade armour sets for the Troops and Mythical+ grade sets for the Stars. (This is referring to Warmoth Progeny Skullius.)

Skullius would very much like to distribute the armour sets in the Warmoth's Treasury but a majority of them have ravenous, dangerous wills of their own and require very powerful beings to tame them.

The Granted armour sets possess their own storages of mana that can be added up from the user's own reserves. The standard reserves are of the purple quality.

The armour sets also have set amounts of Null Life Essence, but these can only be used in conjunction with the Starmations. The Stark Troops and Stars are unable to add on to these quantities.

The Starmations are unique arrays imbued into the armour sets that allow for the casting of powerful Offensive, Defensive and Support type abilities.

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## OFFENSIVE

Aggrante:-

Aggrante is the signature offensive attack of the Granted armour sets. It allows the user to shoot off a concentrated, continuous blast of Null Life Essence and mana that rips, burns and corrodes the target.

Previously, Aggrante did not have variants, and was simply divided into Singlefold, Doublefold and Triplefold with each step increasing its power, but Skullius has since made some adjustments, giving it different variations on top of its standard application. Each variation can be applied with Singlefold, Doublefold and Triplefold power.

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Las Aggrante – This variant of Aggrante sends the signature stream of condensed Null Life Essence and Mana at the enemies, but instead of ripping, burning and corroding their physical bodies, it strikes at their souls. The end result is usually a shrivelled corpse that attempts to fold in on itself because of the sudden loss of its soul. This variant is the fastest version of Aggrante.

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Nos Aggrante – This variant of the Aggrante sends out single, wide range shot of condensed Null Life Essence and Mana at the enemies which detonates and disintegrates any and all lifeforms in the range of the blast. If fired with Triplefold firepower, Nos Aggrante is capable of erasing high level concepts in the area as well.

Sadly, this variant of Aggrante consumes a lot of the armour set's reserves of energy, and if used recklessly, it can leave the user without enough energy for other Starmations. It is also the slowest variant of Aggrante.

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Ko Aggrante – This variant of Aggrante is only available to the Unlimited Stars as Skullius judged that only they are strong enough to withstand the recoil. This variant of Aggrante is super condensed to the point of being nigh imperceptible.

It is more suited towards large numbers of enemies, and with each target it hits, it immediately jumps to the next, and builds up kinetic and potential energy that is only released after all the targets have been tagged.

In the end, all targets implode, leaving nothing of them behind, however, because of a Rule Skullius used to give the Ko Aggrante a special quality, the user gains five times the cumulative mana experience from each defeated target.

On the flip side, as the Aggrante connects to targets, the user has to bear part of the kinetic and potential energy built up before the eventual release.

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DEFENSIVE:

Tranquil Instance:-

Tranquil Instance is a defensive Starmation that uses mana and Null Life Essence to create a powerful outline that shields the user from most forms of attacks, especially if they are fuelled by anything that isn't genuine Divine energy.

Tranquil Instance is exceptionally effective against Territories, as designed by Skullius, and is thus extremely valuable for the Stark Troops that have yet to reach the Incandescent Stage.

To activate the Starmation, the user simply needs to lean forward and cross their arms before their chest, and their armour sets will cycle Null Life Essence and mana in the formation of the array



built into them. Unlike like the Offensive Starmations, Tranquil Instance does not expend the armour's energy reserves.

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Stagnant Parameter:-

Stagnant Parameter is a defensive Starmation that uses Null Life Essence to create defensive, plate-like shields around the user, and mana to superimpose a gateway to Stagnant Space. Any attacks below a certain threshold are simply transported to Stagnant Space, leaving the user unharmed.

The power of Stagnant Parameter can be enhanced by connecting multiple activations of it from multiple Stark Troops and Stars.

Chapter 1275: The Real Deal

Fulina and Cyne sat in the untidy lounge, quiet as mice.

Opposite them on the couch, Rearren and his wife Milissa also sat in silence, but theirs was gloomier, darker, and heavier.

Milissa had been weeping for two days straight.

The chaos outside, the voracious blast and the splitting of Aigas into different times didn't bother her. She had clung to her husband, making sure he felt her furious blame at all times. Even now, Milissa was clawing at Rearren's thigh so terribly that blood oozed from it, but the man had too many of his own demons to worry about. Pain was a luxury train back to reality.

The two EverSwords were drifting in a void much too deep to be with limit.

Rearren had staked everything he had, everything he owned towards Actuass' dream and now, he had little to show for it. The masked man had perished, but he had left behind a relic that was to be given to Rearren's son. The boy had been chosen. Just in case Actuass fell, the relic, the book Rearren had received, was supposed to do some good that Rearren himself had not been sure of back then.

But even now, he wasn't sure what that relic had ended up doing to Rias.

One thing was clear, though.

The thing walking around in his son's skin, was not his son.

It couldn't be.

But it couldn't be Actuass either.

Fulina and Cyne could confirm.

Their gloomy sorrows arose from the fact that the presence Rias now embodied was similar to Actuass', but the man they had served was absent. Only his power was still floating around, but his soul was gone.

Perhaps he truly had perished.

Cyne had been quick to dismiss Fulina's worries that this had been the case after Rearren had come to find them days ago, but now, he joined her in the certainty they were wayward souls now with no goal.

The first thing Rias had commanded them after being exposed to the book that Actuass left behind, was to find Revia, who had escaped with Alaris and Ruhrees days before.

The two had searched, but they hadn't managed to find the girl.

They only managed to determine her destination: the Purity headquarters.

But they could not approach and attempt to retrieve her. Facing such an organisation without a plan would certainly be suicidal, even for Cyne, who had once managed to steal the bodies of Fulgardt's Chosen from Emeradis. But that had only been possible with careful planning over many years.

And thus, here they were.

Rearren's eyes turned to the balcony.

There, his son stood, looking up into the evening sky.

The young man's black and blue hair was the same, but the crushing, greenish-black presence of Undeath was new.

Rias had remained fixed on this balcony for the last hour and or so. He seemed to be seeing something that the rest couldn't.

Rearren imagined that there were more than a few sights to see. Though he hadn't much cared enough to check the state of the world, he was sure it was in fumes or worse yet, flames.

Rias took a deep breath.

He was not Actuass.

Actuass was indeed dead, but his ideals weren't, and neither were his powers.

Rias had received Actuass' Undeath Concept, and his memories, tied closely to what the masked man had believed and wished to see fulfilled.

This was why his demeanour had suddenly changed. The boy didn't care to correct his mother and father. That wasn't a pressing objective.

As for what he had been doing on the balcony. Well...

The boy had been using his advanced sight to analyse the appearances of the creatures swarming Aigas at this moment; they were dark and stone-like. They didn't expel any obvious presences of mana or any other energy. Rias watched as they assaulted people left and right, thinking...

'Even if Aigas reaches its lowest point yet, I shall not die. Not again,' he thought.

At that moment, a figure suddenly appeared beside Rias on the balcony. There was no prelude to its arrival. It was swift despite how large it was.

Rias did not flinch, but his soul trembled.

The hunk of a man standing beside him, broad-shouldered with a bold frame, was dressed in a cloak of darkness. But this darkness was too deep to be called a colour, and all around it, the image of reality seemed to unravel. The man's long, dark hair was the same. Even though no radiance came from his sharp, almond-shaped eyes, they seemed lit with something, perhaps passion or intrigue.

The man's presence only registered a moment after he landed on the balcony.

All of a sudden, everyone inside scrambled out, alarmed, but they quickly froze.

Rearren stopped. Cyne and Fulina sucked in deep breaths. This new arrival was really bad news!

The man standing beside Rias glanced at them, and they all collapsed in a heap.

Rias turned behind him to the unconscious four, and then looked back at the tall man.

"Can I help you?" he asked.

The man smirked.

He walked inside the house and grabbed the curtains. He felt the textures. He then walked back to the balcony and looked below, where Fulina's undead were still chanting an eternal chorus.

The man sniggered.

"The future does not look that impressive," he said. He then looked at the visible swarms of Cavern in the distance. "And it seems to me, it is severely lacking guard. Where are the so-called gods that everyone marches behind in my time? Did they abandon this world? Haha.

Now that would be Reality's best jest."

Rias frowned.

His instincts started kicking in, fuelled by the knowledge from Actuass' memories.

'This man...' he thought.

Undeath blazed from him calmly.

The man in the cloak waved a hand.

"Don't be so tense. If I wanted you dead, I would have ripped your head off from a distance you can't fathom. And the only reason I came here is because..."

The man raised Rias' chin.

"...you, or whoever did this to you has a mind remarkably like mine. Or at least a knack for preservation. I have been planning a similar method to extend my essence without the need to incarnate in a new person. It is fascinating that someone from the future devised a similar method, and by the looks of it, they weren't even a Divine. Haha! But no.

Such talent can't have come from Aigas, not with this abysmal mana in the air."

Rias narrowed his eyes.

His instincts had been right all along.

The man before him was...

"You are a remarkable fellow. I sense great knowledge in that mind of yours. I believe you have a lot you can tell and show me, even as a necromancer. Ah, you seem to possess something else too. A fun technique," Fulgardt said, his eyes piercing through Rias.

Rias pushed Fulgardt's hand away.

He couldn't tolerate being handled like a maiden.

"Indeed, I have much I can tell you. Much I can show. But even against you, I demand that there be some kind of bargain. I will require something in return," Rias said.

"Oh, you know who I am?" Fulgardt said with a sniffy laugh. "Good. How bold. I do like bargaining. Some would say I am a wonderful fiend when it comes to bargains. If you have wishes and hopes that run very deep, generating a hot enough fever, I will grant them.

I excel at such things. But I will only gift you that much once you've told me all I need to know."

Fulgardt looked once again at the chaos.

"I must understand what's caused the world to reach such a state, though I can already point to one of the reasons."

And indeed. For someone like Fulgardt, detecting the pulse of a Deity's signature was simple. However, he was used to being able to perceive the muted pressures of all four Deities of Aigas, but now he could only sense two, and one of them was close and boisterous.

"Very well. Let's sit and discuss. I would like to hear from which period exactly you fall from," Rias and with that, he escorted the Immoral to a table and they sat down. Soon, they were discussing casually, like old friends or perhaps similar men born in different times.

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A series of indestructible blobs had been hidden away in darkness after their extraction.

They burned with yearning, seeking the vessel they had inhabited. Oh, how close that vessel had been from being complete. If only a few more of them had manifested, quickly patching up the tatters and holes in the tapestry, the perfect being could have been created.

But alas, their host had rejected them and stowed them in a lifeless, lightless place that forced them to spin and whirl around without a destination.

However, something suddenly changed.

The WILLS sensed the presence of their owner.

He who had made them had appeared, whole and full.

He did not call to them, but they knew it was only a matter of time.

Soon, they would be free, and the host who rejected them would be sorry.

Chapter 1276: The Dragon's Saviour

Agmold, Pelian.

The royal capital of Pelian remained standing. Fortunately, it hadn't been within the range of the blast of Skullius' final gambit ray, the bit of it that Jiggorrhax restrained, at least.

A frightening pressure was pulsing through the city. It didn't affect the citizens, who, while rattled, were perfectly fine, but it did deter a majority of the Carven that had tried to approach from reaching the city. Even their boundless zeal was frozen stiff by the presence of a formidable creature in the city.

Still, the Carven kept circling around Agmold, waiting for the stronger ones among them to arrive and lead them against the powerful enemy.

Within the King's residence, all the guards had been removed. Well, they wouldn't have stayed even if King Royan hadn't told them to leave. The throne room was plastered with a pale blue hue that covered everything from the carpets on the floor, to the chandeliers on the ceiling and the frames on the walls. The normal colours of all ornaments had been banished, and now they adopted this sickly hue.

Oddly, the hue grew more and more intense as one moved towards the throne.

King Royan had tried to reason with the bastard of a bird who had caused this. Asthon wouldn't listen. He had erected his dormant Territory here without even asking for permission; not that he ever asked King Royan for permission for anything else he did.

Within the dormant Territory, an expansive, frosty mountain scape could be seen. Hills and mountains frosted with ice covered as far as the eye could see, a wide, starless sky overhead. It was dark and gloomy. No light was expelled from it. Instead, all the frost-layered features within it – the Imaginary GeoScape – were what lit up the entire space.

At the moment though, there wasn't much light to go around.

A humongous mass was perked, packed and peeking beyond the mountains and hills. As vast as Asthon's Territory was, it barely managed to contain the charred, black, but healing body of the Herald, Jiggorrhax.

The dragon's eyes were barely open. He was conscious. The flakes of snow that constantly fell unreasonably from the empty, dark sky above collected in heaps over his burnt flesh only to melt moments later and heal portions of it. The progress was slow, but it was steady.

"How long will it take for him to regenerate his own powers? The effects of my Territory will probably take a week to heal him fully," Asthon said.

The small, dark bird was standing in the air beside a ghostly Giant, Sause. They were both looking down at Jiggorrhax's vast heard which was resting over a conical hill with extra frosty glaze. It almost looked like some freaky pillow perfect for the giant medical patient.

"I'm not sure. I didn't know Elder Jiggorrhax as well as I did Elder Jerthrax. Knowing him, he'll probably be alright by the end of the day. Hopefully," Sause said. Concern was painted over his face for all to see.

After Jiggorrhax had saved the world from the great blast, Sause had been trying to work out how to extract his Elder's body from the great, toxic pit when Asthon had arrived, offering to help. Sause had not been deceived by the bird's small stature. He had instantly been able to deduce its unfathomable powers from its soul. Asthon did the same.

The two seemed to recognise their age of the other's soul.

Both bird and Giant were fossils born and raised before the flames of the First Grand War. They had been alive for a very long time, and knew many things, many secrets. At once, they had connected. Sause had seen enough of a reason to trust Asthon, at least in a preliminary fashion.



"I didn't think mortals could temper with time to such a degree. Imagine my surprise when Aigas was ripped like a cloth," Asthon said. "But now I am not sure how exactly all this can be resolved. A Deity is trying to murder the world."

Sause sniffled.

"I wouldn't worry too much about it if I wasn't going to be participating in the fighting,ahaha," he said.

Asthon turned to him.

"Don't judge me. A relic of old like me is meant to watch and wait until the time is right. And you're one to talk. Where are you now when the world is at threat?"

"At home. Enjoying the peace and quiet. Well, I was."

"I could say the same."

A pause took hold. The blowing of the cold wind filled the gap.

"I loathe heading into conflicts when you humanoids are the ones blessed with the ability to seamlessly reach Divinity," the bird said.

Sause chortled.

"Blessed, you think?" he said. "Well, I don't particularly loathe fighting. However, I only have one fight left in me, I think. A bombastic one, outside this world. I think I'll live till then."

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Somewhere beyond Feinheath.

"Your penance will be great."

"I know that. I'm all too extravagantly fed up with the disclaimers. I wouldn't have willingly delivered myself into your hands if I didn't think so extravagantly low about my deeds."

The faceless entity cackled with a mouth that could not be seen.

Guissepo seethed, but he did not say anything else.

"What makes you think that simply admitting you're wrong automatically makes you a saint? Your actions need to echo from your mind and soul till you weep," the faceless entity said harshly. "Already millions are dead because you sought purpose in an evil god, Guissepo.

It might have already been written that Boron would ascend to Aigas one day, but it was never written that it had to be by your hands."

Guissepo frowned.

Before Boron's rise, he had contemplated and considered that he had made a huge mistake. His desire to have everyone suffer the same without the boundaries of status... He had seen how flawed it was when he saw the beings he had been siding with. The stone-like creatures that called themselves the Carven were going to slaughter humans happily, and he was going to be hailed as the sole reason why.

It struck Guissepo too late that this was wrong. But he was determined to help stop it somehow.

Thus, he had gone and found the third Herald of the three Deities of Aigas.

Unfortunately for him though, the only one he got an audience with was the Emissary, a faceless entity that represented the will of the Herald.

"Listen, Guissepo. Should this world survive what you have caused, your penance shall be even more gruelling. The punishment I am dishing now is to help curb the invasion of the spawn of Boron. However things turn out, make sure you remember this: You will pay dearly."

Chapter 1277: Fury of the Doom Factor!

Skullius, Elita, Beyrmir and Silrat exited the room. Theurien seemed to need time alone with Stylla.

"Heartwarming," Elita remarked.

"Is it?" Skullius asked, turning to her. "I wish I at least didn't have to make Stylla look like MY daughter. It feels like I'm forcing them both to remember that I'm the one to thank or something."

Elita raised a brow.

"Was there an alternative? If I had to guess, you ripped off one of your own limbs and somehow formed a whole body out of it, right?"

Skullius sighed.

"Yeah. I used the principle behind one of my skills: the one that made me look like a 'normal' human being back then. I forged a bunch of fake organs and all. They should feel real to her at least."

Elita nodded.

"Impressive. Thankfully, she doesn't look half as fake as you did back then."

Skullius smirked.

He had looked rather weird back in those days. Each upgrade that [Flesh It Like You Mean It] went through allowed him to have a more convincing Discount Human body.

The Hybrid Warmoth's mind slithered back to the subject of Stylla though.

He found the mirth disappearing from him and a sombreness setting in.

Skullius started to wonder how Theurien was going to react to the fate of Setkh. When Yuyui had slid into Stylla's Reflection of the Soul, she had been told about what Stylla had done to Setkh. Apparently, she had turned the young man into a jar and stowed within him the same curse that had been used to incapacitate their father for so long; he was the one who had caused it, after all.

It was truly a sad fate. Skullius was sure that discussion was going to come up sooner or later as soon as Stylla woke up. He could only imagine how Stylla was going to feel recounting all that. He couldn't even fathom how Theurien was going to feel.

A sudden pang of guilt shot up through Skullius.

He frowned.

'Not again.'

He stopped moving, but he didn't realise it.

Flashes of images from when he was constructing Stylla's body swept through his vision. Her naked body taking form, being proportioned according to how her original body looked before...

And then, it happened.

...!!!

Skullius' blank eyes bulged.

Stylla's figure started to change. Her coin-grey skin acquired a tame, ivory tone and she turned slimmer, smaller. Suddenly, her hair turned light brown and her eyes opened. Fury was livid within them, and it was all directed at Skullius.

The Hybrid Warmoth frowned.

'Shit.'

It was happening again.

IT was triggered again.

He saw Camilla before him. This was the second time in the last two minutes. Stylla's figure triggered this.

Skullius felt his soul tremble.

Doom Factor 2 was becoming livelier.

As Replicus, Skullius had not seen Camilla's image in a while, but as the possessed Festos, he had suffered a chilling, life-like experience of meeting her on a snowy peak during the Premium Age Royale a little more than a week ago.

The girl looked equally as angry as she had looked back then and once again, Skullius could not for the Null Life of him understand why.

He took a deep, shaky breath.

Looking into his adopted sister's eyes was more chilling than staring down Suzamete.

The story hidden in those eyes, could only be found in Somanda's domain.

"Skullius!"

Skullius shook.

The image before him faded like mist in the dry wind and he saw Elita looking at him with concern.

"You alright?" she asked.

Skullius took a deep breath.

"Yeah. I'm fine. I was just lost in thought," he said and continued walking.

Silrat gave him an odd look.

Even to him, that didn't look like a 'lost in thought' moment.

Skullius had simply frozen still and hadn't responded the first three times Elita had called to him.

The former Paladin Champion continued to look at Skullius with concern but she didn't press him.

Beyrmir understood what was happening though. He gave his master an appraising look.

At once, he realised that he was going to need to step in for him whenever he sensed him space out. This could be dangerous.

As for Skullius himself, he began battling with that thought as well.

'Doom Factor 2...' he thought and immediately had the guidance field project the details.

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Doom Factor 2: Existential Crisis

<Progressive Soul Confusion>

Your distinct perception and absorption of mana throughout the years has caused you to start awakening what should have been lost a long time ago. If you fail to recover and remember this in time, you will suffer a crisis of your own existence and descend into madness.

Time till DF2 : 7 days

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Only seven days remained.

Skullius had known this before he even confronted his alter, but he hadn't known about the severity of that little tag: <Progressive Soul Confusion>.

This tag had appeared the day Somanda reached Divinity. That was also the day Skullius got rid of the UNCoddled curse and split himself into two.

When Doom Factor 2 was triggered during the Premium Age Royale, if Skullius had remained sane, he probably would have realised that this would make the last stretch of days before Doom Factor 2 completely took over horrific.

The slightest thing that even remotely resembled what he knew of Camilla triggered this <Progressive Soul Confusion> and it seemed it was going to be how he turned mad.

'Thankfully I decided to make my move on my other self today. As confident as he was, I'm not sure the plans he had for getting rid of our soul were going to work as well as he thought. Best case, we'd have a heavily damaged soul that's dealing with this damned Doom Factor,' Skullius thought.

His eye twitched.

Through the memories of his alter, he discovered that the bastard had actually been getting attacked by the <Progressive Soul Confusion>, but had curbed the effects by expelling their soul out of Aigas and having it connected to him only remotely through arrays.

But Skullius couldn't do that.

'I can't banish my soul like that. That's too risky. All I have to do is make sure the crisis on Aigas is resolved quickly and head to Deadmanland straight away. Thankfully, I'm not alone. My allies can look after me when I falter,' he thought, and he looked at Silrat.

It was time to give this man a role.

#### Chapter 1278: Silrat's Role

After Skullius felt like he had recovered somewhat, he teleported everyone outside the Honing Fortress and told the Strawlers that had been here with Silrat and Theurien to bring them both Theurien and Stylla to the Empyrean Hatcher after the latter had woken up. Skullius judged it wouldn't be long before that.

Soon, he, Beyrmir, Silrat and Elita were flying over the Ju`wtte Transfiguration Pool.

"Good. The Troops have left," Skullius said.

When they landed on the pretty pathway leading to other places in the Bosom, Skullius placed his hand on Silrat's shoulder.

"I have a job for you," he said.

Silrat raised both brows in surprise.

"For me?" he said, surprised.

"When I say you, while touching your shoulder, I would think it would be clear that I'm referring to you."

Silrat would have at least sniffled in response to the joke, but he couldn't find it in him in this moment.

"What could I possibly do? I don't think I'm the right man for anything going on right now. It's all a bit too 'bigger picture' for a mere Guilds Association recruiter, don't you think? I think I've long lost my usefulness," he said sombrely.

From the day Silrat returned to Aigas, after being banished from existence by Skullius in an effort to save him from the Premium Age Royale, he had felt so detached from reality and from Skullius. Gone were the days when it was him and Skullius against adversities. Gone were the days when Skullius' goals aligned with his, at least in scale.

At some point, the two had become best friends. Skullius had made sure spend as much of his time as possible with Silrat after he removed the UNCoddled curse from his body. He relished in the ability to have a drink with a friend genuinely without having to worry about them dying. He had first enjoyed that blessing with Silrat.

But Silrat felt that that familiarity gone. The simple pleasure of being friends with a powerful, but grounded mercenary had faded.



Honestly, seeing all these new, ridiculously powerful people Skullius surrounded himself with, people that he relied on, laughed with, made Silrat feel all the more dejected.

Skullius could see it. He couldn't quite understand the depth of Silrat's emotions, but he felt he could understand them to some degree.

"You know, I never forget people who brought me to where I am. I never forgot Stylla – though that win is solely Yuyui's, I suppose. And I am not going to forget you," Skullius said encouragingly.

Elita watched him closely.

"Now, as I understand it, you were never one for the thrill of battle, were you? Your forte was allocating resources and handling everything from the background, wasn't it? I remember what you said about the thing you had with your father," Skullius said. "A dream."

A short laugh burst through Silrat's nose.

"Yes. That's right," he said, before hesitating. "I had given up on that, you know. On everything."

He remembered his conversation with Arch-Mage Wyatt who had received him after he reemerged in Aigas. The Mage was the one to have safely sent Silrat over to the Bryne Estate via teleportation.

Silrat grimaced.

"What I need you to do is bold, but you won't be alone. I'll be giving you a single, worthy unit to accomplish it," Skullius said. "I have two friends of mine that I need you to meet with on Aigas. I'm not sure what they are doing, but one of them commands a large number of Families now because of the Premium Age Royale. I'm sure they are still alive."

Silrat looked up, his eyes narrowing.

"Do you mean that Healer? Vali Kinn?" he asked.

Skullius reeled.

"Right. You were there. You know her," he said, realising. "That's right. I need you to rendezvous with her and Maxim Flatbed. If memory serves, they are in the same place.

You will tell them I sent you – I'll give you something to prove it – and with the unit I will give you, I want you to convince them to bring all the remaining combat units on Pelian, the Families especially, under one banner."

Silrat was shocked.

"That's... that's a huge task for me alone!" he cried.

"Oh please, you were once the Head of the Guild's Association Branch in Inhone. You can handle this. Vali and Maxim will help. Besides, it's not like I want you as commander or anything, and the hard part will be convincing Vali and Maxim rather than the others," Skullius said.

"What makes you so sure we'll be able to rally so many people together?" Silrat asked skeptically.

"The bastard I am going to give you will impart gifts on the souls of the recruits. The rest won't be able to resist. Your companion is pretty much similar to me in the generosity department. Also, in this time of crisis, with that ability on your side, there won't be any problems for you. You're good at marketing stuff like that too, I think."

Silrat took a moment to think.

This was sounding pretty enticing so far.

Silrat only needed to use his mind for all this, not his severely underpowered abilities.

"Can I count on you? I'd do this myself, but I have a tight schedule, and there's no one else left for this. If it helps, because I sent some of my other forces to rescue people in Pelian, you will likely cross paths. If there's a problem, they'll help you."

Silrat considered.

Then he began to laugh.

"Damn it. And here I was, resolved to die meaninglessly. The Tie of Exchange I made with you back then is useless at this point. I was supposed to be the one helping you," he said.

"Times change," Skullius chuckled. Silrat nodded.

"Alright. I can't stay cooped up here in your luxuries like some retired general," he said. "Who is this unit I'm going with?"

Skullius smirked, and with a thought, something flew from the vague distance and landed at his side with a fierce impact.

It was an Apostle desperate for redemption.

It was Ferex.

Chapter 1279: The Unit

"Oh," Silrat said, looking at the towering figure of the creature.

Ferex was large. He stood at over three meters tall, and his figure, while lean, was menacing. One might even say it was because of his lankiness that he appeared so frightening.

Silvery blue scales covered his entire body. They effectively created a scale armour over him, with plate armour features like small pauldrons and poleyns giving it a nice, outlandish touch. There didn't seem to be a distinction between Ferex's limbs and the scale armour. The scales turned smaller as they reached his fingers and eventually thinned to form sharp, silver claws.

The uniform colour of the scales gave the Apostle a beauty difficult to describe with words.

His helmet was essentially a large, fierce wolven face with a mane of dark grey fur cascading down his shoulders. It looked life-like... because it was alive. It bared its fangs for a moment and Silrat gulped audibly. Thick blue lights beamed from the small, dark sockets on Ferex's face, and Silrat found it hard to stare into them. They were like flames begging to be unleashed on something.

A brown hide draped from Ferex's shoulder like a cape, or perhaps a cloak. If he wished, he could hide his body behind it. It reached all the way down to his feet and its shagginess almost made it look like a fuzzy blanket.

"I think you are more familiar with Red Rage, but this guy is like him in a lot of ways," Skullius said, knocking Ferex's chest with a few fingers. "He comes in a travel-friendly form too."

Ferex was an Apostle that Skullius had created back in his Inhone days. The corpse used to create him had been retrieved from a creature a Summoner from the Evenfall cult had contracted. Skullius had desired that creature quite badly.

He had selected the Limitless Body Null Demond Hound race for the Apostle, but because of the elevation of his Class to Nullmancer, Ferex had been forced to evolve, quite like the other Apostles.

Originally, Ferex was a Null Lifeform with a body that allowed him to produce all kinds of added limbs to his body and protective features like shields and armour. With his mutation (what counts for a Class among non-humanoid creatures), the Pseudo Spirit Walker's Hide, which emulated the powers of a genuine Spirit Walker, he was able to hide his presence and invade the souls of others.

Now, Ferex had become something much stronger.

Before he had been forced to become the BoneTender, he had already begun perfecting powerful soul manipulation abilities, like a Special Skill of his called [Dark Soul Bending], but now, even that looked like child's play in comparison to what he was capable of now.

Following his return from being the host of the BoneTender, Ferex had required therapy, for lack of a better word. It took him a while to forgive himself. Yuyui had played a large part in his coming around, and even then, the Apostle practically haunted Skullius, begging him to give him something to do to redeem himself.

Skullius sympathised with the request. However, when everyone was in the Timemould Mirror Box, he couldn't have given Ferex something heroic or clutch to do.

Now, however, the Apostle's time had come.

He had a mission to complete, and was paired with a man who had a similar desire to do something worthwhile.

"Nice to meet you," Silrat said nervously to the large Apostle. Unlike Red Rage who was flamboyant to a hilarious degree, not to mention very approachable, Ferex seemed serious, dangerous and intolerant to anything humorous.

"I look forward to serving with you, Silrat," Ferex said in a deep voice.

The Apostle had already possessed the ability to speak before, but now he was more fluent in his speech. He sounded more intelligent, somehow.

"I have already told Ferex what to do. He'll do as you say and complement you where he feels you're lacking," Skullius said before scanning Silrat. His attire was unfit for the mission at hand.

Ferex read his master's mind and pointed a finger at Silrat. Dark tendrils spilled from it and wrapped around the man, fashioning for him a sleek, dark scale armour that fit him like a glove.

Silrat was amazed.

He touched the armour. It was light, but it seemed to be made of something much tougher than steel and it felt more potent than any armament of the Legendary quality he knew.

"Wait," he said and sharply looked up at Skullius in horror. "We're going right now?"

Skullius raised a brow.

"No, sockethole. You'll go tomorrow, when Aigas is complete ash. Of course you're going now!" he barked.

He extended his hand before him and in the split moment that it took for Ju`wtte to spring forth and open a gateway to Aigas from the Empyrean Bosom, Skullius passed something to Ferex.

"Go," he said to the two.

Before he knew it, Silrat was grabbed by the waist, and the large Apostle dived with him through the gateway. The two quickly disappearing from view.

Skullius gave a sigh of relief as he released the gateway.

He didn't require the keys to traverse between all the Warmoth's dimensions anymore. Ever since he got his hands on the merigold Ju`wtte, he had found that some things that seemed so foreign to him before were now simple. The keys, for instance, simply allowed a lesser Warmoth variant to exercise powers that could be replicated with ease using merigold Ju`wtte. True Ju`wtte.

"Do you have anything else you want to do here?" Elita asked the Hybrid Warmoth.

Skullius looked at her. He realised she must have been getting impatient.

"As a matter of fact, I do," he said. "I was just about to go to the Treasury. There're countless treasures there, and most of them rejected me before. I was thinking of picking up something a little fitting for the occasion. While we are there, I wouldn't object to you choosing something for yourself too."

Elita's brows rose. A Treasury?

Skullius waved his hands and a gateway was formed, Ju`wtte flying around it madly.

He stepped through and Elita followed.

The familiar, vast hall appeared in view.

The calls of many powerful, berserk, calm and devastating treasures blasted through the air as the Hybrid Warmoth walked in.

#### Chapter 1280: Gearing Up (1)

The Treasury looked like some kind of cavern made with rusted, dense metal. Its size, as usual, truly looked to have been reserved for the Colossus Warmoth. Everything in this beginning portion was massive.

Great, elevated platforms that looked to belong in smithies, housing scorching hot materials ready to be beaten into shape could be seen on both sides of the vast partition before the hall that housed the tremendous cache of artefacts.

Skullius would have liked to increase his size so as to match the scale of the place, but he had surrendered the Warmoth's Spine to his War Body.

Despite how glad he was that he didn't have to constantly wield it anymore, it was going to take a bit of time for him to get used to the artefact's absence. After all, even his War Body didn't have the burden of constantly having it in the grip.

Skullius led an intrigued Elita past this partition. She likely restrained herself from pelting him with endless questions about this place out of politeness, but Skullius himself wouldn't have been able to answer most of them anyway.

It was annoying even for him, but he hadn't had the time to fully explore and dissect every single thing in all three of the Colossus Warmoth's dimensions; he hadn't even discovered the purpose of the Third Layer of the Empyrean Hatcher, for instance.

He imagined that the giant Strawler, Susu'k, was probably supposed to have been helping him with that from the moment he inherited the Warmoth's Legacy, but until today, the arrogant bastard hadn't given Skullius any attention at all.

Skullius scoffed.

Soon, he and Elita reached the long, clean hall with sets of artefacts on either side of the straight path to the gleaming, indescribable masterpiece of a colossal armour set.

Elita's eyes were transfixed to it at once. Skullius was amused.

He was no longer so enticed by its presence that he would drool and continue to advance towards it with unsatiable greed.

The armour set was hard to describe. It looked like it had several forms depending on how, and where you looked at it from.

This didn't mean Skullius wasn't interested in that armour anymore though.

At present, Skullius was hearing the calls of many of the items here. He could hear the sword-types especially; he had gotten accustomed to the familiarity with swords that the skill [Infinite Sword God: Primordial Sword] gave him.

But armour sets, shields, cloaks, halberds, glaives, capes, bows, helms, scrolls, and many other items screamed at him, acknowledging and begging for his attention. The sound was a little annoying. Skullius found that the calls of the Transcendent grade level treasures annoyed him instinctively.

He felt repulsed just thinking about wielding them.

On the other hand, the calls of treasures beyond that were like music to his ears.

Yes, he could only give his attention to items that qualified for the Common Reality Leagues. These were easy to spot.

All the treasures in the hall were attached to the wall in rising rows. Quite like the Second Layer of the Empyrean Hatcher, the higher an item was on the wall, the more profound it was. Skullius could see plumes of smoke rising from a lot of the items in here, like a distorted aura.

Those that had this detail, were items that qualified to be in the Common Reality Leagues.

For Wicked and Prime Treasures (artefacts, essentially), they were ranked from World, Realm, Void to Reality.

With the upgrades to the guidance field, Skullius could see the descriptions and grades of these items now.

'There is some pretty ridiculous stuff in here,' he thought, and made to approach a sick-looking glaive, while scrolling over other fearsome looking weapons, but...

"JAN`IND!"

A voice called from the end of the hall.



Elita was jolted to calling for her Broodweiler in an instant, and Voided Death Essence was already bubbling from her body.

Skullius raised a hand.

"It's alright," he said to her, and stared to the end of the hall.

The great armour seated magisterially there had dark, frothing bubbles rising from it. They looked quite a lot like soapsuds, and had a frightening texture to them. They grew and started to inch towards Skullius and Elita. It was as though the whole hall was turning into a soap bath.

"You just casually have something of this level nesting here?" Elita said to Skullius with a brow raised.

The Hybrid Warmoth smiled.

"You can recognise how powerful it is?" he said to her.

For some reason, he kept forgetting that Elita's adventures had probably taken her to strange, dangerous places in the great void where monstrous, great powers attempted to snuff her life.

Of course, she could recognise the sheer quality of Divine power exploding from the armour.

Skullius himself had only realised what the soapsuds meant by recalling the wound Elita had given Boron earlier. A substance like this had begun to come out of the wound instead of some variant of blood.

"Of course, I can," Elita said. Her eyes never left the armour and the approaching bubbles. "I've killed a Deity before, after all, though it was under some specific circumstances. Only something of that level can produce Amras this potent."

And indeed, what was coming out of the armour, was Exora Amras, but its quality was way different from what Skullius had in his Broader Existence.

"JAN`IND! SHOW ME WHAT YOU ARE HIDING, AND I MAY PLEDGE MY FEALTY!" the armour cried in a boisterous voice.

Skullius scoffed.

He understood what the armour wanted at once. It responded to his base Divine power, but it knew he was hiding greater powers behind his Default Body. It wanted him to expose the rest of his Divine might.

How daring.

How insolent.

Skullius was no longer the Progeny of the Warmoth and he had long rejected the path of becoming the echo of the Colossus Warmoth like Susu'k and this armour wanted. He wouldn't accede to the terms of a mere armour, especially when the Common Reality Leagues quite literally classified artefacts as Wicked and Prime.

"SHOW ME, JAN`IND!" the armour cried almost threateningly, and its pool of dark bubbles burst forth.

At once, Skullius responded to the call of one of the treasures hanging on the walls.

It was a large khopesh with a blood red blade tainted with stark white runes and a golden-brown hilt. On feeling the Hybrid Luman's response to its call, it was overjoyed and it rushed to him. Skullius held it in one of his hands.

Its power was staggering.

It was different from the Transcendent grade items, which he had thought to be incredibly powerful all along.

It was a World rank Prime treasure, after all!

Skullius spun the khopesh between his long fingers, using the fraction of a nanosecond before the malice of the great armour set reached them to familiarise himself with the weapon's properties. He grinned, and pushed it forward, its flat edge pointed ahead.

The galloping bubbles finally arrived, but they did not advance any further, and cause harm to Skullius or Elita.

They pooled before the khopesh... and then they were rapidly absorbed into its blood red blade. They sifted swiftly into the white runes glowing on both ends of the blade. The great armour, having a consciousness of its own, stopped expelling Amras. It knew of the insatiable thirst of the blood red khopesh, after all.

Skullius grinned.

The blade of the khopesh turned a darker shade of red, so dark it might have been black. Just for theatrics, Skullius tossed the khopesh into all four of his hands interchangeably, such that for a split of a nanosecond, it was as though a long, black string was winding around his hands, and then he flung the weapon with all his might at the suit of armour!

The khopesh flew like a comet, moving at ten times the speed of light.

In no time at all, it had reached the armour, and there was staggering impact that shook the Warmoth's Treasury.

The khopesh hadn't pierced the armour. It simply stopped several inches away from its chest.

But this wasn't the doing of the armour.

The great thing no longer moved. It was as still as the khopesh standing stationary in midair, inches away from it.

All its movement were halted.

"Such a grand design, but so simple a purpose. I actually like it," Skullius said, chuckling.

Elita was awed.

The khopesh's properties didn't seem to be simple at all.

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[Immobility Pin]

+World (Prime)+

A Prime treasure with an insatiable lust for all energies; Exora Amras and Exotic Parlous Natures are no exceptions.

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- Basic Properties-

+Is able to extend its weight to that of an average world

+Has a 15% chance of parrying any and all attacks below the Void threshold directed at the user

+Can absorb energies of all natures and ranks, but with varying limits.

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+Absolute Prime Property+

After absorbing enough of a target's essence, the Immobility Pin is able to restrict theirs (the target's) and the movements of all phenomenon related to them for a limited amount of time.