

Undead 1401

Chapter 1401: Privileges

While it was short, the battle had been quite brilliant, in Skullius' opinion. He was the only one who truly understood just how much thought went into the moves of both the combatants just now.

Araeyn's main advantage in battle came with using the Null Remnants. Now, as the Authority of Dimensions, he had a free hold and control over almost every aspect of them. No mortal opponent could defeat him in the Null Remnants unless they had very niche set of abilities that countered Araeyn's.

If Red Rage was any other mortal opponent, he would have lost as soon as Araeyn opened the gateway into a Null Remnant around him, but he had warped successfully. With this skill of his, he was able to warp back and forth to places he had been before, nomatter where they were. It helped that he was also a creature of Null Life, hence why even a Null Remnant wasn't enough to trap him, unless Araeyn was in that Null Remnant, actively giving it the ability to lock down spatial abilities.

Where the Saint had won the battle with Araeyn, was when he had tricked the Authority of Dimensions into thinking that he was looking to confront him in close quarters. Red Rage knew about the barriers around Araeyn from the time he, Araeyn and Skullius had been merged into the Amalgam.

This move of his - a feint of close combat - had been bait. After all, Araeyn, who was also aware of Red Rage's ability to compel with speech (as Red Rage had explained to Skullius openly how it worked) had been ready to warp into a Null Remnant at any moment to void this power. In the Remnants, he could undo anything Red Rage commanded of him.

But it had to be noted, Araeyn had not thought this compelling ability was so powerful that it brooked no resistance at all even from him. He had paid the price for underestimating it.

"And Red Rage wins," Skullius said nonchalantly.

Red Rage's light had dimmed considerably. You could almost see his figure, but it remained hidden, however much of the light Araeyn's barrier had eaten.

Araeyn remained planted on the ground, a fierce look on his face. He was not at all pleased with his loss.

Red Rage released him from the effects of the command. He seemed to shine ever so bright as he floated over to the Authority of Dimensions.

"You are the strongest of us. That is why I had to be quick, keen and treacherous. You didn't really lose, Araeyn," he said.

If it was anyone at all receiving these words from Red Rage, they might have been pleased or assuaged by the effect of the Saint's powers coursing the message, but Araeyn remained unfettered. He merely grunted and walked over to Skullius' side next to Sila.

Uyuniya, Elita and the others had comments on the battle, but Skullius allowed them to express them among themselves.

Red Rage had already bowed before him again, awaiting his reward.

And to the guidance field notification still awaiting his verdict on whether or not he truly wanted Red Rage to have the First Rank, Skullius accepted.

The guidance chimed and began the work.

[Apostle 'Red Rage' is receiving the First Rank!]

[...]

[...]

[The Apostle known as 'Red Rage' receives a grand responsibility to his Nullmancer. As the first named, and the First Ranked Apostle, it is his duty to enforce your will upon the world and upon your subordinates. Where Apostle 'Red Rage' triumphs, you shall earn rewards, and when Apostle 'Red Rage' fails, you shall be punished. A heavy burden falls on the follower just as much as it does on the leader]

[.....]

[...]

[Because of the burden placed on Apostle 'Red Rage's' shoulders, several PRIVILEGES will now be granted to him]

[...]

[...]

[Apostle 'Red Rage' obtains the PRIVILEGE of knowledge about the whereabouts and state of all available Apostles]

[Apostle 'Red Rage' obtains the PRIVILEGE of access to available Apostle's Null Life Essence stores]

[Apostle 'Red Rage' obtains the PRIVILEGE of a Master Null Core]

[Apostle 'Red Rage' obtains the PRIVILEGE to decide the names and racial evolutions of newer Apostles]

[Apostle 'Red Rage' obtains the PRIVILEGE of 40,500 NULL EXP]

[Apostle 'Red Rage' obtains the PRIVILEGE to passively generate NULL EXP]

Skullius gaped at the mention of Null EXP!

It was the same kind of experience he had drawn from killing the Null Devil King, Caxellac back then.

But now... it seemed that Red Rage not only got 40,500 units of it as a gift, but he could also generate it passively?!

The Apostle burst into a storm of light right then. The radiance he produced became a pillar that pierced through the darkness of the night, ridding it from the region.

His power was growing, Skullius could tell. But why?

There was no Privilege that directly enhanced his powers, as far as Skullius had seen.

The guidance field rushed to explain what was happening.

[Apostle 'Red Rage' is using Null EXP to enhance his skills and his body]

[...]

[...]

[Apostle 'Red Rage' has enhanced the power, efficiency and potential of one of his skills to the Divine. The Supreme Skill, 'Executive Action: Brilliant Order' has been established] [Apostle 'Red Rage' has enhanced the power, efficiency and potential of one of his skills to the Divine. The Supreme Skill, 'Premium Rising' has been established]

[Apostle 'Red Rage' has enhanced the power, efficiency and potential of one of his skills to the Divine. The Supreme Skill, 'Beam of Excellence' has been established]

[Apostle 'Red Rage' ...]

Skullius gaped.

Red Rage was changing. The bright light which usually poured out of his body dimmed until it was gone. The Apostle's body was revealed, but it was already changed. It looked humanoid, but it was akin to a large, glass sculpture, crafted with a sleek suit of armour that only a fancy hero from another world would don.

All the light Red Rage had lost then started to condense in small, bright fragments from within his glass-like body. They gathered in his short, curled hair, in his thin, sharp eyes, and on his forearms, legs and chest.

The rest then cascaded down from his shoulders as a peach-gold cape that spotted trails of faint blue.

The Apostle was complete.

Everyone was in awe at his appearance. Everyone except Skullius, Sila and the Apostles.

They were more overwhelmed by the powers the Apostle now possessed.

Red Rage had touched upon the Divine without being Divine, just like his master had done before, when he fought and killed a Divine!

Chapter 1402: Executive Action

Red Rage had become more advanced than anyone could have imagined. He hardly looked like a mere Apostle at all - not that he had looked like a mere summon before to begin with. His beautiful appearance stole the admiration of many eyes and the power brewing from a core different from his mana and Null Core stole the words from Skullius, his Apostles and Sila.

Such power...

Such authority...

Again, Skullius was reminded of the disparity in strength he had felt between Uyuniya and Elita's Voided Death Essence earlier, and then the disparity between his own Null Life Essence and the kind Serenity had used while inhabiting Sila's body.

In terms of Null Life Essence quality, Red Rage outstripped him now.

The Apostle flexed his glass-like fingers and caressed his body gently.

He was pleased, overjoyed.

"It was even better than I imagined," he said. His voice took Skullius by surprise. The Apostle sounded like a handsome, blonde Prince looked.

The Hybrid Warmoth staggered, wondering just how it was that a simple rank gave Red Rage all these privileges. He wondered just how Red Rage had evolved more than just his race just now.

Indeed, Skullius knew Null EXP could be used to improve the racial qualities of a combatant, but as far as he and even Serenity knew - a powerful vessel was needed to contain the power produced by using Null EXP. While Red Rage only got 40,500 units of it, Skullius had imagined it would be pretty hard for him to use it given that he hadn't been close to reaching Divinity, like Skullius had been after becoming the Warmoth's Progeny.

Was it the Rank which helped him overcome the limitation?

And how exactly did Red Rage figure out to use Null EXP on his Skills?

Red Rage seemed to read Skullius' mind, or perhaps he had simply anticipated that his master would wonder how he had done all this.

"Master, I gleaned a lot more from Prisma than I revealed. I wished to keep it all under wraps until I proved that my theory was correct," he said and he stole a glance at Araeyn who wore a deep frown while looking at his new body and new power. "Plenty of powerful beings in the Null Verse utilise Null EXP. It isn't generated within weak beings. It is especially precious because it can be used to enhance racial properties. It can improve skills, both racial and Class."

Skullius was dumbfounded.

He immediately chastised himself for not using Null EXP to enhance his skills rather than his overall race back during his battle with possessed Festos.

But then he recalled that it hadn't been entirely his own decision. It was Serenity who urged him.

"As I've explained before, Skullius," Serenity said when Skullius confronted her, "this concept did not exist in the first thousand Consternals within the Null Verse, when I was still heavily involved with its development. The Null Verse is constantly changing because of Null Life Essence."

Skullius did remember that Serenity was strangely ignorant about some of the features of her treasure. She seemed to know more about the wider reality than the Null Verse, which was quite odd.

The Hybrid Warmoth could hardly continue to blame Serenity.

Thus, he turned back to Red Rage. Araeyn had drawn close to inspect him.

"So? What was this big plan of yours with the crystals? Did the Rank Bestowal work as you hoped, or did it upgrade your powers in a way contrary to your idea?"

Red Rage beamed.

"It's far better than I imagined, Master," he replied. "My Skill, [Executive Action: Brilliant Order] is what was formerly the lowly Skill I used to give commands, and confiscate aspects of my opponents. Since it is now a Divine ability, it works on higher level beings. But even better than that - as I had hoped - it now works on objects as well. I can give them commands and they will be forced to listen. However powerful the crystals are, I believe I can glean much more about their purpose with this."

Skullius nodded in understanding.

It wasn't really surprising to him that Red Rage acquired Divine-level ability without being Divine. Skullius had done the same thing when he was Replicus. He had developed an ability that transcended mortality to kill Caxellac back then, the Reverse Supreme Skill [True Nullmancer's Royal Reaper of Ugly Divinity]. The main catalyst for this skill to reach that level, Skullius knew, was Null Life Essence.

And as it appeared, Skills that transcended mortality were different from Andori. They remained with the name of Supreme Skill.

Null Life Essence, Voided Death Essence and Undeath did not rank according to the Common Reality Leagues even though they were equal and superior to things like Amras.

There was a parallel measure of Divine power, different from what AKHASHA and the other Primeval Deities designed.

The Existential Parallels and Fundamental Barter fit in this category.

Soon, Skullius frowned, however. He wasn't all that confident in Red Rage's abilities still, quite honestly.

"I don't think Boron cut corners with these crystals. Sure, your abilities are powerful, but will they really do much? I doubt these crystals are something your commanding ability, fresh as it is, can penetrate," he voiced.

"I considered that. But I'm not looking to destroy these crystals," Red Rage said confidently. "I only wanted to extract information about them. I doubt Boron cares if information about them is leaked. He's already made them so strong that they probably can't be destroyed until they fulfil their purpose, so it doesn't matter."

"Hm. You might be right about that," Skullius said. He agreed. Boron probably didn't mind anyone snooping for the crystals' information. "Alright, since that's the case, I want you to go on immediately. Go and find what you can about the crystals and report to me as soon as

possible."

Red Rage gave a bow.

"I shall, master," he said.

"Take Kintar with you," Skullius said and gave a sharp look to the diminutive Unlimited Star. "I want you active and busy. With your powers, you can restrain a majority of the Cavern in the world without killing them. While doing that, I want you to find Fulgardt's whereabouts. I can trust you with that, right?"

Kintar and Skullius locked eyes for what might have been two whole minutes.

"Sure, master," the short stack said with a creepy smile.

"Kenno will go with you."

Kenno looked affronted.

"WHAT?! WHY?!" he cried. "Boss, I'm exhausted. I was fighting a Deity for longer than you were, and I expelled my Territory more than thirty times. I've almost completely exhausted my Creeds. I need a break!"

"And you'll get one. Just not now," Skullius said and he warped Kenno to Kintar's side.

The Unlimited Star gave Kintar a disgusted look and sighed. The latter laughed and gave

Skullius a bright smile. The Hybrid Warmoth said a lot with the look he gave her in return. She seemed to understand it all.

"Let's go, friends," Red Rage said valiantly and he, Kenno and Kintar lifted off the ground and

sped away at light speed.

"Now," Skullius said with a deep, exasperated breath. "The Null Verse."

Chapter 1403: Deserved Fame

Skullius confirmed his intent with Uyuniya, Elita and Aurolio. He wanted them to decide what they wanted to do after he left for the Null Verse. He didn't expect them to wait until he came back.

"Honestly, I don't think there're any shortcuts to saving Aigas at this point, especially with the added threat of Fulgardt going after both Boron and Suzamete," Elita said. "On the other hand, what Boron wants to achieve will likely destroy Aigas quicker, even if it's likely to be a final goal. I'd thought Fulgardt's involvement might delay that, but I can't be too sure. In the end, if both will target Suzamete along the way, we'll still be doomed."

Aurolio chimed in.

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"The warriors and beasts bleeding into our time also make things harder, especially if we are getting some cultish groups who would love to see the world burn. There were lots of those in Fulgardt's time. They were products of his fucking ideology," he said. "Are we sure all of them can be handled without the intervention of Divine powers?"

"My Troops will handle them. Kintar is smart enough to alert everyone else and turn their attention away from the Cavern. We don't want them to continue strengthening Boron's crystals," said Skullius.

"As for me and Elita," said Uyuniya through the mana link, "it would be infeasible for us to leave Aigas and head home. What we intend to do back in my home world is time-consuming. I would rather leave it for later. In the meantime, I would very much like to see how your interaction with that princess goes and your plan to rope in that Deity you mentioned, Luserus."

After she had said her piece, Skullius locked eyes with the terrestrial woman.

Something bizarre went unsaid between the two. Elita recognised it while Aurolio and Sila missed it.

In the end, Uyuniya's eye twitched and she relented.

"I would very much like it if you would agree to have us tag along," she corrected herself.

Skullius smirked.

Uyuniya was used to talking down to people given her position back home. Her tone had been especially conspicuous right now, which is why Skullius had stabbed her with a look that challenged her authority. In the end, Uyuniya decided to be a bit more humble.

"I'll allow it," Skullius said. "Elita can lead you to Opungale. You will wait for me there. Be sure to put everyone there at ease. Your arrival may stir chaos. Opungale isn't exactly populated right now."

"That won't be too hard," Elita said. Skullius knew he could trust her with that.

He turned to Aurolio.

"What will you do?" he asked.

"I'd say allow me to tag along on your trip to the Null Verse, but well..." Aurolio said with a shrug. "I'll settle for joining those two ladies. I learned quite a bit from them earlier, so I will stick with them for a while."

Uyuniya didn't seem to like Aurolio.

"You're too weak to be saying something like that with so much confidence. If I were you, I would say it like it is. I'm too underpowered. I've been dawdling all my life. I am going to ask these two ladies to train me up and teach me their secrets no matter what I have to do."

Aurolio scowled.

Being looked down on by Uyuniya was a most unpleasant experience, but he couldn't afford to be abrasive and snarky with her. She was way stronger than him, and if he insulted her, he wouldn't learn more about Voided Death.

She kept staring at him, as though expecting him to repeat exactly what she had told him to say.

Aurolio hesitated, but only for a little while. He had actually been about to say it when Skullius cut him off. He might have spared his dignity.

"I'll get going. Time is of the essence. I'll see you in a little while," he said and then he urged Sila, Araeyn, and Eternity's Weaver to come along while asking Serenity, "Do I just access In-Verse Glimpse through the guidance field or are there additional conditions?"

"VOW cannot grant access to the Null Verse. The In-Verse Glimpse is a mechanism that requires my direct involvement," Serenity said. "I'm not willing to do it here. Go to the Empyrean Bosom first. It will make this easier."

"The Bosom?" Skullius questioned, but he didn't contest it. "Alright."

While producing marigold Ju'wtte on his finger, he opened a gateway to the Bosom. He gave a final wave to the Void users and stepped into the Empyrean Bosom with Weaver, Araeyn and Sila. Only when they had stepped onto the pathway of gold, emerald, and glass did Skullius once again speak to Serenity.

"What now?"

Right then, Serenity sprang forth from his body, a feminine figure of bluish flame.

"It is impossible to warp directly into the Null Verse from the wider reality. This is one of the restrictions I placed on the Null Verse to make sure that no one had access to it, even those extremely accomplished in the art of formidable spatial concepts," she explained as she looked at the surroundings. "But it becomes slightly easier when warping from this place."

"What? Why?" Skullius asked.

"Because like my Null Verse, the Empyrean Bosom, the Pestilence Vault, and the Treasury are part of a Treasure of the same league as the one I used to create the Null Verse."

...!!!

The revelation hit Skullius like a storm.

"Hold on!" he cried. "Do you mean to tell me—"

"Yes. The Colossus Warmoth was a being who, on top of studying to create his own type of Levin that could act as empowered lifeblood running through him and his descendants, was able to study the workings of the Null Verse and mimic them better than even Emmae could," Serenity explained, much to Skullius horror. She couldn't help but laugh at the Hybrid Warmoth's expression. "I know. The Warmoth's fame was well-earned. I believe he even had dealings with a Nulliergrapher or perhaps several."

Skullius couldn't fathom it.

Was the Warmoth really that advanced?

If the Empyrean Bosom was really akin to the Null Verse in construction...

"So it's possible for you to warp from here to the Null Verse?" Skullius asked.

But it wasn't Serenity who answered. A certain neglected servant of the Warmoth, perhaps attracted by the glaze towards his old master's genius, chimed in.

"It is possible, but the traversal is a lot like rolling down a hill than something as smooth as warping, master," Susu'k's voice came.

Chapter 1404: Measure of Time

Susu'k was the giant Strawler that lived on the Third Layer of the Empyrean Hatcher. He was very knowledgeable about everything to do with the Warmoth and his three separate spaces. He was also quite knowledgeable about Divine things. He was the one who had explained how the Broader Existence worked to Skullius after his ascension.

In truth, the Hybrid Warmoth had almost forgotten that he existed.

"He's right," Serenity said, confirming what the disembodied voice of the Strawler had said. "It is a bumpy trip, but it takes a shorter while than the direct route I usually use. I had to make it harder even for myself to get through for security's sake."

Skullius considered this, but he found it really hard to understand. So the mechanism between the Null Verse and the Warmoth's own inventions were similar. Did that mean that Serenity had some degree of control over the Empyrean Bosom, Pestilent Vault and the Treasury?

Skullius didn't think it likely. As far as he knew, Serenity had been surprised by the Warmoth's domains, quite like him.

"Susu'k," he said. "Did the keys to the Bosom, the Vault and the Treasury exist back when your previous master was here?"

"Yes, but my master did not use them. He simply used Ju`wtte. They are meant to be used by those who can't wield the perfect merigold Ju`wtte," the Strawler replied.

'I see.'

Skullius imagined this feat as something truly profound. If the three domains of the Warmoth were something far different from mere alternate dimensions located within the Null Verse itself, then every time the Warmoth left the Null Verse for his domains or vice versa, then he was essentially exercising the same level of skill Serenity did when going back and forth between the wider reality and the Null Verse!

Skullius was sure of it.

"Shall we get going?" said Serenity.

"Yes," replied Skullius and he urged on Sila, Weaver and Araeyn. Right then, he almost felt the longing oozing from Susu'k. Unfortunately, the Strawler couldn't leave the Empyrean Hatcher. His influence was only centred around the three domains of the Warmoth.

Beyond that, Skullius wasn't used to him as a surbordinate. He was kind of glad he didn't have to let the Strawler tag along.

Serenity released a stream of thin, fickle Null Life Essence that latched onto Skullius, Sila, Weaver and Araeyn. It felt like a soft hand touching their very souls. (Though, Araeyn, and Weaver didn't have souls, of course. Sila as well.)

"Hang on. The initial effect might be rather... alarming," Serenity warned.

Almost immediately after she said it, it happened.

Skullius was indeed alarmed, as was Sila.

Suddenly, the whole world seemed to shatter into tiny fragments and then these fragments duplicated without end and pelted them at speeds none of them but Serenity could comprehend. For souls used to getting assaulted unexpectedly, like Skullius, it was almost impossible to not react defensively.

Skullius had guarded himself with Null Life Essence, expecting immense pain and hurt.

But the fragments pelting him did not cause him any harm. They simply phased through him. His entire view was filled with these odd fragments. They streaked from beyond like millions if not billions of starlights, shimmering and shining as they fell on them.

If Skullius hadn't had his fair share of experiences with existential dread, he might have been compelled to give in to despair at the infinite (?) space expanding ahead of him.

'Hmm. This is quite smooth. What did Susu'k mean by rolling down a h-'

Just as Skullius questioned it, the boundless space shook vehemently, and suddenly, Skullius was tumbling against a texture he couldn't feel or comprehend. He was spinning, he was whirling, he was rolling. The experience lasted for what could have been at least five minutes before he was once again flying through the starlights that passed through him as though he were a ghost.

"W-What was that?!" he screamed at Serenity, staggered, puzzled and dizzy. He couldn't even pinpoint where she was, or even Sila or Weaver or Araeyn for that matter.

"It won't do you much good to know that now," Serenity explained from an infinite number of directions. "There are foundations of reality itself that you are yet to familiarise yourself with. Don't bother with them."

"Alright. If you say so..." Skullius said. He felt the mortal reaction to try and puke, but his body wasn't built to accommodate such functions. Slowly, he recovered from the bumps but more soon rocked him to oblivion. By the end of the third, Skullius felt like his great Divine senses were useless. He wasn't sure if the starlights striking futilely at him were even the true form of this space they were traversing. They were probably only what he could see.

Araeyn and Sila were doing much worse than Skullius. Sila had lost consciousness multiple times. Araeyn had grown paler than he normally was. At the rate he was going, he would become a saint in colour alone.

Weaver was completely fine.

As the time passed, Skullius was compelled to fill it with questions, starting with something he'd wanted to learn for a while now.

"What are Consterns and Consternals? I've been hearing and seeing these terms often, starting with my first set of contracts, with D'JORRO. I get that they are some measure of time, but what do they mean exactly?"

Indeed, Skullius had heard these terms thrown around a lot. His new Exotic Parlous Nature even incorporated one of these metrics of time in its effects.

"I thought you might have already figured it out," said Serenity, her figure lost among the starlights to Skullius. "Consterns refer to the life span of a living individual - a Divine individual - and Consternals are the measurement of time adopted by the wider reality. Well, time is just a fragment of Consternals, really. One Consternal is equivalent to twelve hours in terms of worldly time."

Skullius had just begun to process all this when he was bombarded by another bump. By the time it was over, he almost felt what Serenity explained to him slip from his mind.

After gathering his wits, he finally found the question he wanted to ask.

"The Consternal part is reasonable. But why is the lifespan of Divines measured? What's the point of measuring it if they are immortal?"

Serenity didn't answer immediately. This gave Skullius a feeling of foreboding. He realised as he asked that it was indeed very, very weird for there to be a measurement of time for lifespan when it came to Divines.

When Serenity finally answered him, Skullius had begun dreading getting the solution to his question.

"Because for regular Divines, a Divine life isn't infinite."

Chapter 1405: Finite Life

"What?" Skullius reeled. "What do you mean they are finite? I mean, unless their Broader Existence is destroyed, aren't all Divines immortal?"

Skullius didn't see it, but Serenity shook her head before answering his question.

"That was originally the case. The concept of Broader Existences transcends the Primeval Deities and the Existential Parallels. The Broader Existence was supposed to be a reward for bearing through mortality to reach Divinity. No aging and no dying from age," she explained. "But now, all Divines below the level of a Deity are only able to live for 40,000 Consternals, in other words, one Constern."

The unseen cause of what Skullius was beginning to call the Tumbling came right then and Skullius couldn't have cursed any more than he did then. Thankfully, he was starting to get used to it ever so slightly.

He managed to think while tumbling.

'40,000 Consternals is one Constern? That's how long a Divine can live with their Broader Existence before it... expires?'

But this was preposterous!

If there was such a thing, why didn't Serenity mention it before?

40,000 Consternals was the equivalent of 20,000 days, and on Aigas it would be less than 50 years. That amount of time to live was a trifle, especially Skullius who had lived for more than 1,000 years. It didn't make any sense. Why wasn't the Broader Existence a ticket to

immortality anymore?

When the Tumbling ended, Skullius immediately lanced Serenity with his questions.

"How did this happen? Why did it change?"

Serenity sounded a little salty.

"AKHASHA happened," she said. "As I told you before, after becoming Divine, you have to sign a contract with AKHASHA, which allows you to grow your Broader Existence. In exchange, this contract is the one which imposes upon you the Constern system. A standard term is 40,000 Consternals."

Skullius scowled.

He never thought he'd have any beef with AKHASHA. The Primeval Deity had yet to influence him directly, as the others had done with their contracts, but Skullius was already starting to hate him.

According to his understanding, AKHASHA established the Unit to Ascension Methodium which worked like cumulative mana experience on Aigas. For every Divine Skullius killed, for instance, he would earn AKH units. When he earned enough, he could advance to the next stage of his Broader Existence growth.

But, in exchange, AKHASHA reaped some reward when Divines subscribed to his Methodium. They all didn't have a choice. It was either that or they wouldn't grow their Broader Existence at all, and in the wider reality, no growth was essentially an application for death.

"So, you can either choose to stay immortal and not grow, or grow but lose immortality?" Skullius said.

"Precisely," said Serenity. "But of course, it is possible to extend your Constern. Swift growth while using the Unit to Ascension Methodium allows you to live for longer, and it becomes even easier to extend Consterns once you become a Deity."

Skullius' face twisted into a knot. It didn't really appease him much to learn this. Indeed, all wasn't doom and gloom, but that only served to make him hate AKHASHA all the more. After all, Skullius understood why the Primeval Deity added this system.

It really emphasised his ideal.

AKHASHA and several other Primeval Deities allied with him made it so that, with the Common Reality Leagues, a contest of Divines never really skewed towards Deities alone. Weaker Divines could beat Deities if they didn't rely solely on the growth of their Broader Existence - that is, using Amras and Andori.

The Unit to Ascension Methodium itself didn't reward users for besting weaker Divine enemies. Skullius hadn't earned many AKH units for killing those Cavern from earlier as they were weaker than him.

"I see," said Skullius sombrely. "So, the same applies to me?"

It was a stupid question, he felt, but he wanted to ask anyway.

Serenity didn't answer immediately... because another Tumbling followed. The more

frequent they became, the closer they were to their destination.

"That is not necessarily the case," she finally said.

Skullius was surprised. He had for sure expected the answer to be entirely grave. He quickly urged Serenity to continue.

"Effectively, any bearer of Null Life, Voided Death or Undeath is immortal. Of course, that immortality is supplied by Null Life Essence, Voided Death Essence and Undeath Essence, the three conclusions me and my sisters came to while looking for a way to skirt extinction," she explained. "As long as Null Life Essence is relevant in your body, even if you lose your Broader Existence, you will keep on existing."

"You have a Null Core in your body and it's constantly in use - for the most part. For ordinary Divines, the only source of energy they have after Amras is mana or some copy of it. After ascending, they rarely use abilities related to their previous power source and eventually, it collapses. When these Divines lose their Broader Existences, they not only lose their immortality. They lose fundamental parts of themselves."

Skullius gave a sigh relief.

So, that was the case. It made sense. Null Life was supposed to be different from the original state of life to begin with.

Nothing made this clearer than the fact that Actuass, who used an queer Undeath ability that could empower the life energy within living beings, strengthening the users of that life

energy in turn, couldn't affect Skullius with it.

Well, Actuass hadn't been able to make it work with Aurolio either, back then, which further supported the point.

Even the Deities were governed by life energy, it seemed.

No wonder they hated anomalies. They must have been jealous!

Skullius grinned.

"So, other than Existential Parallels, only the Primeval Deities are exempt from this Constern system?"

"That's right. Though, I should tell you, Skullius," Serenity said, her tone turning strict. "It is still imperative that you preserve your Broader Existence. I remember Susu'k mentioning this to you as something he learned from the Colossus Warmoth. The Broader Existence can do more than just keep someone alive for long. If utilised with great skill and ingenuity, it can allow a Divine to exist as something as vague as an idea, hidden in the corner of the universe. Do not underestimate it's worth."

Skullius remembered what she was referencing. Rather, who she was referencing.

Fulgardt.

The Immoral had died in the flesh and perhaps even the soul (in the present Aigas), but he had persisted as an idea, as the WILLS. It was hard to kill him even in such a state. Indeed, the importance of the Broader Existence couldn't be overstated. Skullius understood that. But at the mention of Fulgardt - the self-serving, conniving monster who had just become Skullius' rival - the Hybrid Warmoth was compelled to finally ask Serenity something she had apparently been ready to answer for.

"Are you willing to tell me now, what other plans you had for my existence? You made me to be a weapon against Void, didn't you?" he asked.

Chapter 1406: Welcome Home

Indeed (for the umpteenth time) Skullius knew that Serenity was hiding a lot from him. She didn't hide the fact that there was a lot she wouldn't or couldn't tell Skullius for one reason or the other.

So far, an earlier confrontation had revealed to Skullius that Serenity had wanted to flee to another reality and establish herself there. As Serenity wasn't allowed to have a bearer of her Null Life in this one, she wanted to do it in another reality, where she would have all the freedom she could ever desire.

To do this, she had employed the help of VOW to try and smuggle the Books of Alignment reserved for her future bearer, but the plan had fallen through, and in a desperate gamble, Vow made it so that Skullius became a Null Life bearer, even that ended up granting Serenity a punishment.

All this Skullius understood, but there was something Serenity had said in her explanation that had him thinking:

"...once I was gone, Emmae would have one less competitor for worlds."

Indeed, if Serenity had left this reality, Emmae would only have to compete with Void for Rich worlds. But to Skullius, it sounded more like Serenity was fleeing from this reality and leaving Void to be Emmae's problem alone.

As Skullius recalled, only Void had had such a visceral reaction to him acquiring Maximum Jaqqezjaqqz. Sure, it was only natural for Void to react as such since the Exotic Parlous Nature utilised fundamentals of her Void Death, which had never been done before by any being – even a Primeval Deity. It felt like an insult to her.

But Void hadn't just attacked Skullius. She had addressed Serenity, claiming that she had cheated. She accusing her and VOW of developing Skullius as an ace against her.

These clues established Skullius' reasoning, and he was confident in it.

"Are you willing to tell me now, what other plans you had for my existence? You made me to be a weapon against Void, didn't you?" he asked. "You weren't just trying to leave this reality. You were running from Void."

The Tumbling happened right then, but it didn't bother Skullius anymore. He could see Serenity now, and they locked sights amidst the flying starlights. They searched for resolve and truths within the other's being. Skullius was determined to make Serenity spill the beans on this one, nomatter what.

If he was right, then it really had been in Serenity's best interests to hide Skullius' purpose since the very beginning, ever since he began evolving as a Null Lifeform.

After what felt like an eternity, Serenity finally answered.

"I did make you to be a weapon, Skullius," she said. "But it wasn't so that I could defend myself from Void. Void is rather simple in nature. She couldn't hatch a scheme that could pull a curtain over my eyes on her own. She'd need help. Unfortunately, I believe she's got such help."

Skullius reeled.

"What? What kind of help?"

"We are here," Weaver suddenly cut through right then, announcing that they had arrived at their destination. Skullius looked beyond with a shocked expression. He had been so invested in his interaction with Serenity that he hadn't noticed the approaching, widening storm of blues ahead.

Every hue of blue known to living kind splashed from above and hurried to smash into their group.

Skullius didn't feel any pain, but his senses were drawn taut.

An explosion of sensations filtered through his keen sensory abilities and for a moment, he froze solid.

A sky, black but lightly brushed with a series of colours known and unknown, across its boundless body, spread to every end Skullius could currently comprehend.

But this was only the lightest of it.

An infinite number of piercing lights spread across the dark canvas, much brighter than the stars Skullius could see from the Aigas sky at night. They stung his senses, even when they were unimaginable distances away.

They were stars, planets, nebulae, flares, suns, supernovas.

An equal number of incomprehensible phenomena were swimming among these stellar bodies; it was unknown whether or not they were hostile or not. Some looked conscious - from however little Skullius of them saw. Some were elements, Skullius theorised. Some hugged worlds, some destroyed them, others moved them to different positions in the great expansive space.

Skullius couldn't utter a word.

He had never seen the wider reality printed in this form before his sight, but he couldn't imagine it looked the same.

He didn't think it spotted cracks and blemishes like a painting.

He didn't think parts of it lit up with gigantic fireworks of hot blue that flashed harder than any star Skullius could see from this position.

He didn't think the wider reality could ever... ever feel this much like home.

Skullius felt drawn in. Literally.

A sharp tug gripped him and before he knew it, he was another one of the stars he could see below, streaking down at speeds that surpassed his own prowess.

There was no hurt though.

He was cast afire, but he felt comfortable.

He felt himself get edified, accepted, loved.

He got lost in the feeling.

[You have reached the 'Null Verse: Demesne of Proud Limitless Evolvers']

[You are home]

The guidance field seemed to share Skullius' sentiment, but Skullius could hardly pay it any attention.

Deep within his body, his Null Core shone so bright, filling with so much Null Life Essence that, had he felt any pain from it, Skullius would have thought he was going to explode and become another star neatly painted on the Null Verse's canvas.

He did become a sun though.

The light from the Null Life Essence encased him in a field of pressure and light so much more vibrant than Red Rage's saintly radiance.

The Hybrid Warmoth's soul basked in this light. It was so comfortable that he could sleep.

It had been so long since he had rested his head and just given in to sleep.

When last did he enjoy such rest?

His soul remembered. Barely.

A memory of Camilla surfaced, but it wasn't triggered by Doom Factor 2.

Skullius remembered falling asleep with his adopted sister on a couch. His father had covered them both with a blanket, and while a funny cartoon played on the TV, Skullius had drifted into dreamless sleep.

Chapter 1407: At Peace

[Your Broader Existence is empowered by 750,000%]

[Your Null Life Essence reserves have been increased by 10,000,000,000%]

[You currently possess the same reserves as those of an Authority of the Null Verse]

[Your soul is temporarily shielded from the effects of Doom Factor 2]

And indeed, Skullius felt well-protected and capable of defending himself against opponents he would have otherwise found threatening. He felt so relaxed that if even an ounce of his consciousness slipped, he would give in and sleep.

The memory he had just received flew to the back of his mind, but it remained profound and vivid to some part of his being.

The overflowing Null Life Essence from his body had turned into something far beyond a mere body.

'I could...I could get used to this...' Skullius thought.

He thoroughly enjoyed the feeling. Suddenly, the agency he had felt vanished. He would have melted into greater forms of relaxation if Eternity's Weaver hadn't flown through his blazing body to reach his soul which was basking in the immense comfort.

"My liege..."

"My liege."

Two Apostles spoke at the same time.

Beyrmir was with this master as well, but as the Hybrid Warmoth body had changed form, he had been forced to change along with it.

Additionally, it wasn't only Skullius who received a boon from being in the Null Verse.

Someone else was going to end up telling him this, but the Apostles of a bearer were different from those of a Nullmancer born and bred in the Null Verse. They were wreathed in power as they entered the Null Verse. The whole reality was welcoming them, accepting them.

Thus, Eternity's Weaver, Araeyn and Beyrmir were overflowing with power. They were storms of energy with physical forms barely visible at the centre.

"My liege..." said Weaver gently. He and Beyrmir were suddenly in a contest to see who would appeal to their master better. It was clear that their master didn't have the luxury of relaxing for long, not with the fate of Aigas bleak, as well as his own with Doom Factor 2.

Eternity's Weaver gave Beyrmir a strong gaze. He seemed to expel intent through his eyes, telling Beyrmir all he needed to say succinctly. Beyrmir hesitated at first, but then he relented. "Go ahead," he said.

"I thank you, senior," said Weaver, who proceeded to swim through Skullius' vast, empowered body to reach his soul. Its small, misshapen figure was cuddling with bands of frightening power that went beyond his impressive reserves of Null Life Essence.

"My liege, take a look at that," said Weaver as he pointed below them. They were still very, very high up, such that the blanket of reality called the Null Verse was mapped up endless in miniature, gleaming shapes.

"Hmmm?" hummed Skullius softly. He could hardly hear Weaver.

Serenity descended and joined the two.

"Look down, my liege," said Weaver. "Look how the Null Verse is divided. It's beautiful. My predecessors were masterful experts. See how they divided this reality in four. There, in the north, you can see a flame of Cool Billows roaring, carving a faint arc that acts as a warning for trespassers. It's a living, sentient flame, my liege, the hottest you could ever know. Hotter than Clear Fire."

"Is... is that right? It's ... pretty..." said Skullius. His senses were barely taking in the look of the world around.

"Look there, in the east, my liege. Among monsters that are hardest to kill, and so old they are only second to the Nulliergraphers, the Meandering Ribbon Hive. It migrates from the North- Eastern Harbour to the South-Eastern Plasdmic Peninsula, but its body is always bordering the territory of the East nevertheless."

Sure enough, such a creature, the Meandering Ribbon Hive could just barely be detected. It must have been ludicrously colossal for its body to look bigger than the stars closest to Skullius from here. As the name suggested, it was akin to a ribbon. At least, the trillions of creatures that made it up made it look like a lime green ribbon with dots of sparkling light. "Woah... I wonder... I wonder....." Skullius struggled to speak. "I wonder if I could have Kintar transform into something like that. That would make her... even more powerful."

Serenity couldn't help but smile. She had never seen Skullius like this. Granted, it wasn't a bad thing by any means and she expected it - heck, even hoped for it - once Skullius reached the Null Verse for the first time, but it was still strange. His soul was delicate and young even though he was supposed to be more than a thousand years old.

She knew his whole story, and could help but feel pity. Skullius' soul yearned for this comfort, but this kind was not to be relished in for too long. It wasn't the comfort he needed.

Araeyn, on the other hand, hadn't considered his master one bit since coming here. His attention was stolen by the look of the Null Verse.

His thoughts were further derailed when Weaver mentioned the East.

The Apostle's dark eyes honed in on the great portion of the Null Verse that received that cardinal designation.

Araeyn was related to creatures of the Null Verse that inherited the East as Authorities. Indeed, he had been related to the Null Devil King, Caxellac, who had overextended his term by several million years.

Araeyn remembered how he had nearly obtained the Dominion that came with Caxellac's position. Caxellac had left the Null Verse, leaving a vacuum after all.

But the Apostle could only eye it for now.

He couldn't rebel against Skullius and go on his own adventure to try and claim that

Dominion.

His name, ARAEYN DERAGINN EXONN was branded on his chest with an artefact that ensured that, for now, he would remain a mere Apostle. Nothing more.

It still irked him though. Araeyn knew all these things because, like Red Rage, he too got

flashes from the Null Verse. He got bits of important information. And that said...

He gave Weaver a sharp look. The new Apostle was acting like a million-year-old guide, explaining every facet of the North, East, West, and South.

How could he possibly know that?

Even Serenity wondered mildly about it.

She assumed it had much to do with the reason why Weaver had seemingly brought himself into existence before Skullius could choose what kind of race he held.

'Fascinating,' Serenity thought. Her treasure was a marvel well beyond her own reasoning.

Chapter 1408: The Enemy Is...

"Oh... Seriously?" Skullius said to Weaver's explanation, sounding quite surprised. He was quite lucid now. "This wouldn't happen to be one of those things Serenity doesn't know about the Null Verse, right?"

"Of course not," Serenity said a little saltily. "It's right there." She pointed at a massive dot of deep darkness to the west. "It's been there for at least a million years."

"I see. Weaver explained it more clearly. He knows a lot more than he should," said Skullius. "How do you know so much, Weaver?"

The Apostle smiled.

"I just do, my liege," he said. "I have no better answer than that."

Skullius sighed.

Somehow - and even Serenity didn't know how - Weaver had managed to restore Skullius' lucidity simply by expositing to him the wonders of the Null Verse. Perhaps it was because of the smoothness of his voice, or perhaps the way he pointed and described with gestures. It was hard to tell.

Talking was the only thing Weaver had done in the last five minutes, and yet Skullius had returned to normal. His body was no longer a great flare of power. He had reverted to normal, but the sensations from before, announced by the guidance field remained.

He still had a staggering value of Null Life Essence in his core and his Broader Existence was empowered by 750,000%. It was only now, when Skullius regained his ability to think and feel anything other than comfort, that he analysed this effect. It was similar to the sensation he got from his new Immortal Void Physique.

His Amras capacity didn't increase, but it was already two-thirds full, and subtly - very subtly - Skullius could feel something forming inside his Broader Existence.

A little puzzled, he inquired from Serenity about what this empowerment to his Broader Existence meant.

"Well, there are no Andori, Physiques or Treasures in the Null Verse. There is no Common Reality League. That was the work of the Primeval Deities after all. The only thing that the Null Verse and wider reality has in common for Divines is the Broader Existence," she explained.

"No Treasures, huh?" skullius said. A part of him thought about the Warmoth's Treasury and all its Treasures. Something about the Warmoth seemed to click right then, but he didn't say

it.

For the most part, all Serenity said added up.

Skullius remembered that Caxellac, in their battle had not implemented any of the things he knew to belong to Divines at all. He only used Null Life Essence and skills from his Class; he did not even employ mana.

This context made it even clearer to Skullius why Caxellac even lost to him in the first place. With his Dominion unavailable as he was in the wider reality, his Null Life Essence reserves staggered to a horrible degree, he couldn't have defended himself against the Divine attack Skullius threw.

Skullius felt the absurd energy reserves in his Null Core.

'The guidance field said that I have reserves comparable to those of an Authority of the Null Verse. If Caxellac had such an amount of Null Life Essence in that fight, and of a higher quality than mine to boot, I wouldn't have stood a chance. That's not to even mention that he wanted the honour of being bested by the Warmoth, and thus gave me chances to fight him properly during our battle,' Skullius thought.

It wasn't at all a bitter pill to swallow. Skullius was actually intrigued.

'It's possible for a Divine bearer of an Existential Parallel to shed their Broader Existence and remain extremely powerful. Using Null Life Essence for defense and...' He froze a little before realising. 'Ah! You can use Runes for offense!'

He remembered the treacherous power of the Elder Sages of Penetration. Their GRAND,

MYTH and ETERNAL Runes that could even work on Deities.

With Null Life, one could break away from the Common Reality Leagues entirely!

But Skullius wasn't willing to get rid of his Broader Existence... yet.

He chuckled.

He remembered what his possessed self had said during their battle, when he gambled to destroy his soul, claiming that he could live without it.

"IF I SAY A SOUL IS WORTHLESS, YOU BEST BELIEVE IT IS, AND THAT I CAN LIVE WITHOUT IT!"

Skullius wondered.

'Do I have the guts to try that in the future?' He paused. 'Would Fulgardt think that... with his Broader Existence, or with that?'

He frowned suddenly. But then he recalled where he was and what they were here for.

"So, the Nullmancer we have to find..."

"Let's get going if we intend to find him," said Serenity.

The

group was off, flying in a torrent after Serenity who facilitated their descent.

On the way, Skullius remembered that he and Serenity had not finished their conversation from earlier. He was determined to get the full answers he wanted.

"You didn't get to say," he said. "Who was the person you think is helping Void against you?"

Again, Serenity didn't answer immediately.

When she did, she sounded quite stern.

"If I tell you, you have to vow to me that no matter what happens, even if you don't become loyal to me, you will not collude with this individual against me."

Skullius frowned.

"What?"

"You heard me. There are a lot of delightful prospects for a Divine like you in the wider reality and this individual could easily grant them to you...if you weaken your defences and let them lie to you. Vow to me that you will not help them against me."

Every time Serenity spoke like this, it sounded as though the whole of reality was allying against her. But perhaps it was.

The Null Verse, now that Skullius saw it from the inside, was indeed a covet-worthy treasure.

"Tell me the name first. I don't really have any plans to work against you with anyone," Skullius said.

"I know," said Serenity, "but at times, these choices brook little choice when they come. I want your assurance."

"Fine. You have it. Unless I'm being compelled, I won't work with anyone to harm you."

Serenity neither nodded nor acknowledged Skullius' declaration with words.

"You've slowly been convincing me to divulge things I shouldn't, but since we're this deep, and your decisions keep going in ways I don't expect, I shall oblige," she said.

Skullius frowned.

"Who is it? You make it sound as though I know this individual."

Serenity allowed a dramatic pause.

"It's TITEMIUS."

Chapter 1409: Complexities

Skullius sighed.

He should have expected it, in all honesty.

He was so stumped that he simply released one exasperated breath.

Well, to be fair, the fact that TITEMIUS was antagonistic to VOW and Serenity was no secret, but to hear that Serenity had actually been running from Void and TITEMIUS at that point was definitely a surprise.

Void was an entity that encompassed the entire reality. To think she would require aid where intelligence, no, rather, cunning and wit was required, was rather strange.

Skullius massaged his temple.

So TITEMIUS was smart?

So smart that, according to VOW, he had been imprisoned in some corner of reality by the other Primeval Deities.

"What is up with this guy?" Skullius thought.

To Serenity though, he said "TITEMIUS, huh? You allowed me to sign a contract with him while bearing all this? Wait. Doesn't that mean you already trust me enough to know I won't work against you?"

"In a way. But as I said, more assurance isn't a bad thing. The wider reality is nothing like Aigas. Everything is constantly changing very rapidly," said Serenity.

Skullius nodded.

"What's the deal with TITEMIUS then? Why is he helping Void in attacking you? I don't understand. Heck, why is Void after you anyway? Maybe I can understand why Void would be after you now, since I learned something that I shouldn't have, but what about back then? Why would she be interesting in destroying you when you hadn't even breached the restriction against having your own bearer yet? I know there are some things you won't share, but can you at least fit these pieces to the puzzle for me?"

Serenity's answer came at once.

"Just because she is my sister doesn't mean she only bears good intent towards me," she said. "Our story about triumphing over extinction was a sound, pretty tale before, but it quickly darkened, Skullius. I can't share those intimate details."

Skullius seethed.

"Fine, fine. Then tell me about why and how you made me to be a weapon against Void. Were you waiting for me to awaken something that would counter Void's powers all this time? What is the Greater Cosmic Law that Maximum Jaqqezjaqqz is aiming for?"

At this point, the Hybrid Warmoth didn't care if he overwhelmed Serenity with questions. He was sick of the secrets.

Sila watched on, curious. He had been silent all along, but not because he had nothing to say. Being a part of the Hybrid Luman and then a part of Hybrid Warmoth had helped him appreciate the entity known as Skullius a lot.

He had witnessed it when Skullius was driven to the breaking point by Elita and Kintar. His fury represented an evolution, and the same was happening now. With his frustration at Serenity, Sila waited to see how else Skullius would grow - what conclusions he would come

to.

"As you know, Null Life and Voided Death are extremely different. Even the Essences embody opposite traits. Null Life Essence is serene, silent, calm, but Voided Death Essence is violent, unruly and lively. Under normal circumstances, it is impossible for me to relate to Voided Death and for Void to relate to what Null Life Essence. Even the ways we implemented our strengths and set restrictions for ourselves is terribly different, Skullius," she said.

"Void expanded her body into the wider reality and I shrunk mine and my potential to the point where technically, it doesn't exist. Don't let my previous comments make you think that Void is stupid. In terms of bookish brilliance, she was the smartest of us all. I think that was why she opted to smother the whole of reality when she ascended. She wanted to know it all. To be it all. I couldn't relate. I tried to study how she developed Voided Death a while ago, but found that it was difficult. I was eager, and that forced an enmity to spark between me and Void. What is happening now is a product of that mistake I made. In the end, with Void after me, I had to devise a means to counter her, as you said."

Skullius cursed.

Just how many layers were there to this story?

When he imagined what, or rather, who he thought Serenity to be when he first met her, he could only mock his past self.

She was not that at all.

She was someone who wanted to flee from this reality.

She was a greedy sister who messed things up with her siblings.

She was someone with an enemy in a Primeval Deity.

She was someone with great ambitions that could inconvenience others.

But she was also someone who wanted peace.

"Damn it, Serenity! Where do you place exactly? The parts missing from this story of yours are what's causing all this confusion in me," Skullius said. And indeed, he was deeply confused.

"Perhaps that's for the best. Just as mortals get extra layers of existence when they ascend to Divinity, they become more complex, Skullius. You shouldn't try to understand me. Not yet," the Existential Parallel said. "You shouldn't try to understand the Greater Cosmic Law yet either. It's not something you can comprehend. I will only say, I did intend for it to happen, but I was prepared to wait for a very long time, even with the threat of my punishment for creating you. I can't decipher what Void is, but you can. You did. Through [Entropy's Harmonising Nimbus], you managed to do what I couldn't. That's what the Null Verse is supposed to be - Endless Evolution."

Skullius frowned.

"You had it all planned out, huh?"

"Loosely," she said, and she suddenly turned solemn. "I grew a bit impatient along the way. If not you, I had hoped that the Canon Men would do it. I watched as they hatched plans and abilities to escape the Null Verse. I had hoped... But that wasn't needed after all."

Skullius reeled.

The Canon Men?

They were the only Null Lifeforms to escape the Null Verse (barring the potential truth in the fact that the Warmoth could have done that also). They were apparently beings corrupted by a Null Terror like the Full Deck Bone Tender, and their powers, which essentially warped reality, had allowed them to escape.

They had been countered before they could cause chaos in the wider reality though, according to the guidance field.

"You let them leave?" Skullius asked, but there was no judgment in his voice. He sensed the desperation in this act of Serenity's even though it was from many Consternals ago. "I see." Skullius said nothing more as they drifted off. Again, he thought to the Warmoth.

If Treasures didn't exist in the Null Verse, did the ones in the Warmoth's Treasury come from the wider reality or did the Warmoth obtain inspiration from the wider reality to create his own Prime and Wicked Treasures?

Eiher, this meant that Warmoth must have interacted with the wider reality, did it not?

But Skullius couldn't be too sure.

It was a long trip to wherever the Nullmancer Serenity knew lived. Skullius had lost the appetite to ask about him. He had deeper things to digest for the time being.

No one spoke in the group even as some of the most interesting sights blasted them in the

face, literally. A sea floating in the vacuum of space, migrating from east to west didn't manage to get a peep out of anyone. It changed its state when it met the group, becoming billions of fragments of ice that avoided each of them. It was only when the group had passed that the ice turned back to liquid.

The next super bizarre thing to confront the group also went unentertained.

It was like a spinning hurricane of light, titanic in size and frozen in place. It spun endlessly, mightily, but despite that, the strength of its pull was rather dismal. It was no wonder that nothing could be seen trapped within it or around its impressive range.

Weaver would have explained what it was, but the atmosphere seemed to call for silence still.

He respected that.

Serenity was the first to break the silence when they were approaching some kind of cluster of

stars. The stars turned out to not be the stars one would assume they were. They were colossal, blinking lights - products of intense elements. They swam in the pretty stardust, sometimes revolving around giant pagodas standing still, rooted in space at great intervals

within the cluster.

"This is the Spellwelt Pseudo Cluster. It's one of the most dangerous places in the Null Verse. At least it was when I was last here," Serenity said.

Skullius made to respond to her by asking what the padogas were, but he spotted something far, far in the distance, larger than anything in sight.

It was like a massive piece of cloth as big as a world, partly obscured by the giants of light and colourful stardusts.

Skullius could see where it began, far above, but not where it ended below. There were things written across it, but he couldn't see, and he presumed that it was too far to appraise with his guidance field.

"What's that?" he asked Serenity as they flew over beside another one of the great padogas. It spotted metal locks to its multiple doors.

"Oh, said Serenity, "That's the Universal Purge Banner. I'm sure you're acquainted with it."

...!!!

Skullius was bewildered.

The Universal Purge Banner.

'It's an actual, physical thing?!' he exclaimed inwardly.

He hadn't thought it was a literal banner floating through the Null Verse. Apparently - according to what he had read from the guidance field - the Universal Purge Banner was a list of the most dangerous creatures in the Null Verse.

"This is one of the reasons why the Spellwelt Cluster is especially dangerous. Every so often, one of the creatures listed on the Banner will come and try to erase its name from it. The

creatures that live in those padogas are responsible for the Banner. They update it when

needed and manage dealings with the bounty hunters who come to collect rewards for

knocking off a name from the Banner."

Skullius turned pale.

"Hey, hey, wait. It's not just names found on that Banner. Aren't there entire races listed there

as well?" he asked.

He remembered some of the races of creatures he had received as evolutionary options last time, such as the Adamantite Beetle.

"Yes," said Serenity. "There are hunters who eliminate whole races here. It's common."

Skullius felt a chill crawl up his spine.

That was crazy!But then it hit him.

He turned to Serenity.

"The individual we are here to see..." he began.

"He was a hunter who retired to become a manager of the Banner," Serenity answered. "He

has quite the reputation. I'm not sure if he is still alive though."

Chapter 1410 Guissepo's Atonement

1410 Guissepo's Atonement

They were beating the living daylights out of Guissepo.

Maxim was rather harsh with her kicks. She wanted to hear Guissepo's ribs cracking, but he was doing his best to use Perfect Aura to defend. Unfortunately, between the strength of both Maxim and Silrat, his defenses soon wore down and it was his flesh receiving the beating of a lifetime.

"Have you any idea how much we suffered because of you? You nearly killed me with that stupid game of yours! I can't get my hands on that masked necromancer, but I'm make do with you, you stupid son of a bitch!" Maxim screamed and she lifted Guissepo only to crash him into the ground with a suplex.

Guissepo groaned and spat blood.

Silrat crashed a mana-coated fist into his face, and then another, and another, and another. Unlike Maxim, he gave a silent ass-whooping. He had a lot of rage to spill, but none of the decency to spell out why he was dishing it out.

Theurien and Skullius had suffered terribly because of this man.

Silrat wasn't the strongest or the smartest. He couldn't help either Theurien or Skullius with his strength, but he could avenge what was done to them this way.

Guissepo's body was broken by the time Maxim and Silrat decided to take a breather.

Pherdanta watched with a complicated expression. She didn't know if she should condone this. She wasn't comfortable watching.

She had forbidden Maxim and Silrat from doing it in front of the civilians she had rescued. It wouldn't do to show the children such a sight.

Thus, after the two had reacted so viscerally to Guissepo showing up, she had teleported with them elsewhere with Granted Warp.

While Silrat and Maxim were panting, blood splashes across their faces, Pherdanta decided it was time to stop them. Guissepo was barely breathing and he couldn't move. His spine had been shattered by Maxim.

"I think that's enough—" Pherdanta began when Vali, who was standing behind her whipped out a hand to stop her.

"No. Leave them," she said with a placid look. She almost seemed indifferent to the brutality she had just witnessed.

Vali wasn't as invested in beating up Guissepo as Maxim and Silrat, but she did enjoy seeing him get hurt. Like Maxim, she had almost died during the Premium Age Royale as well, if it hadn't been for Skullius' Supreme healing potion.

Of course, that wasn't the reason she stopped Pherdanta from intervening. She had noticed something.

Guissepo had made no real effort to defend himself. He had erected his Perfect Aura, yes, but if he had really wanted to prevent himself getting beaten to this extent, he had several options. Silrat was only an Advancement Stager. He could have killed him with a single attack before dealing with Maxim.

Well, he could have tried. Pherdanta wouldn't allow him to kill Silrat, and Maxim was no easy opponent for him. He would lose in a one-on-one.

As far as Vali could see, it almost seemed like Guissepo came here expecting to get wrecked.

"Why are you here?" she asked Guissepo before Silrat and Maxim found the strength to continue pummeling him. "You came to this exact location with a purpose, right? I don't think you came here not knowing who exactly you were going to run into. Spill it before those two kill you. What's your purpose?"

Guissepo could hardly talk. When he tried to, only blood squirted out of his mouth.

Maxim scowled at Vali. The latter shook her head and tossed her a common Special Healing potion. Its healing capabilities were severely limited, some margin above a common one, but that was the intent.

Maxim opened it with a click of the tongue and poured the contents in Guissepo's mouth.

The portion was hard-pressed. It couldn't have healed much of Guissepo, but it did enough. It allowed the former leader of the Evenfall cultists to turn on his side, and regain the ability to see, breathe and speak.

He gave Vali a sharp look.

"This is my purpose," he said to her in a thick voice.

Maxim considered him.

Guissepo's arm suddenly went flying. The skin on Vali's shoulder had extended and hardened into a blade that flew towards the Evenfall cultist and lopped off his limb.

"I hate men who try to be cryptic. Spill it as it is. Why are you here?" she said as Guissepo gritted his teeth.

Guissepo regarded her with another sharp look. This time, he did as she bid.

The Commander of the Stark Troops was taken aback.

"A Herald?"

While her mind raced, Maxim's scowl grew nastier.

"What is that supposed to mean?" she barked.

Vali was looking at Pherdanta, wondering the same thing.

The Infinite Sword God gave a sigh.

"It means that a Herald of Aigas thinks he will be being useful in the battle against Boron," she said. "That isn't too hard a thing to believe. I'm assuming the Herald who told you to come here is the same Herald who ordered my master and the Severed Union to go after the masked man beyond the Central Boundary." Pherdanta stepped forth and crouched before Guissepo. "You brought about the

end of the world. Why did you decide to help change it? I can see it in your eyes. You aren't being forced to do this, are you?"

Maxim seemed to dread hearing some sappy story from Guissepo about how he had seen the light in the end. Thankfully for her, it never came.

What Guissepo said was almost funny to her.

"My resolve to burn everything away – my humanity, my morality – in exchange for a greater, personal goal," he said without a shred of self-pity, "was weaker than that of the masked man. That is all. At the end of the day, I am still human."

Pherdanta continued to stare at the man. There were no lies in those eyes.

She wondered how her master would react to seeing and hearing what this man had to say.

Right then, quicker than Pherdanta could react, a short, illusory figure with a wide face and creepy, ovular eyes appeared.

It was Kintar, smiling.

"Hey there. I have a speeeecial message for you," she said.