

Undead 241

Chapter 241: One Heck of A Sword (2)

[Demion's Dance]

-Unique-

A beautifully crafted sword given to Demion on his birthday by his lover, Irisa, to commemorate his legendary battle with Escus.

-Damage-

21,000-23,000

-Durability-

4340/80,500

-Special Effects-

- 35% increase in speed

[Skill: Epic Memory]

Regardless of the user's level of power, they are able to partially replicate the raw movements and a portion of the attack power that Demion demonstrated in his battle with Escus.

[Skill: Irisa You Whore]

The remnants of the unfaithful Irisa shower the user with healing light meant for her side lovers each time they sustain an injury, bringing them to full health. This effect only occurs once a day.

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"Hmmm.." Skullius sucked in a deep breath.

A Unique item.

The only one he could use offensively.

He finally had the sword in his hands, ready for use.

One would ask where the Baleful Gale Reaper was.

Unfortunately, that sword which had served him well had been left behind in the first Cluster that Skullius had been in.

Where he had fought Jackpot.

In that tense situation, he had only been thinking of retrieving Red Rage who had been torn to pieces and thus couldn't save the sword.

The weapon in Skullius' hands now seemed to be calling to him with what seemed like a distant voice but Skullius ignored as he read through the stats and skills it gave with rapt attention.

While he didn't remember everything completely, the Discount Human was sure that the special effects of the sword had been much higher than what it showed now.

This was exactly as HammerDown had warned.

The damage it could do was cut down by more than half.

The addition to strength that it gave was no longer there and the two skills that Skullius had wanted to keep were downgraded considerably.

[Epic Memory] now claimed to only be able to allow him to partially replicate the moves of the owner of this sword while [Irisa You Whore] could only restore him to full health not thrice but once.

Sigh.

This wasn't bad actually when he thought another it.

It was much much better than the Baleful Gale Reaper.

It was certainly better than what Skullius had been thinking it would be too.

With all these damage numbers added on top of his skills, he would truly be worth his marbles!

The vague calling that seemed to seep from the green blade of the sword kept whispering close to Skullius' ear and this time, he readily focused on it.

A wild gush of energy streamed through him the moment he opened up to the call which was akin to soft breaths that eased his mind.

As this occurred, a notification popped up in front of Skullius.

[You have partially learned the 'Swindling Death Dance' sword technique]

[To use the technique, the use of 'Demion's Dance' is required]

Skullius breathed out as he read these two messages.

'I see. I've learned the sword technique but I can't use it without this sword. I guess this is related to [Epic Memory].'

"Well? How is it?" Tulnas' voice suddenly shattered Skullius' thoughtscape where he had hidden himself.

The Discount tore himself from this space and sheathed the sword, attaching the weapon and its cover to his waist.

He turned to HammerDown and nodded.

"It's good. I'm satisfied with this," he said with a slight smile.

To Gruff, this felt perfunctory more than anything else, but coming from this guy, he didn't mind it that much.

He simply nodded back and stomped on the black, rock-like object he had thrown to the ground which immediately crumbled.

At the same time, the distortive barrier that cut off visuals and audio for those outside broke down as well.

"I'm glad it's to your liking," Gruff said.

In his heart, as a product of his own flawed philosophy, he believed that he had no right to judge those he worked for as long as they made a difference.

Seeing that Skullius was with Tulnas, he believed that at least this man would use this sword to bring some form of benefit to this city and its people whom he had decided not to abandon in the end.

'Hopefully...' he thought.

"Seems like we're all done here," Tulnas said as he nodded to Gruff. "I'll be coming with a blueprint for some new armour soon. I hope you prepare adequately for it."

Gruff scoffed with a chuckle before nodding his head.

"Anytime."

Tulnas and Skullius walked off under the gazes of the many customers, the Guild leader taking Skullius towards his residence in the city.

On the way, he turned to the Discount Human, the light in his eyes showing a hint of sympathy.

"It just occurred to me that you've been burdening yourself with a curse that keeps you lonely all this time even to the point of pushing good people away. It must've be hard, Festos," Tulnas said, the lingering smile he always had disappearing from his face.

The Discount Human turned to look back at Tulnas with a slight frown.

The man's words reminded him of the short conversation he had had with Betsy, back at the Inn he had been staying.

Loneliness.

It really had been an experience he had to deal with for so long and only now did he have people to interact with this long.

"Good people are the worst. They get themselves killed by trying to help anyone they can find. That's were socketholes come in. Since I associate with people like you now, I'm not truly alone. Sockethole or not, you're standing next to me, after all," Skullius responded.

Tulnas actually felt a dent in his soul from his words.

"I assume, I'm also a... sockethole and not a good person?" Tulnas asked with a sheepish smile.

"If you were a good person. I don't think you'd be alive right now."

"I...see," the young Guild leader dragged out his words.

This little man had his way with words.

Frankly, he hadn't intended to treat him like garbage, curse or not.

Since he hadn't seen the full extent of the curse that Skullius had, he didn't take it too seriously but...

'Maybe I've been acting for so long I've slowly started to change,' Tulnas thought.

Soon, he shook his head and sighed.

"Shut up, you dumbass," he said with a click of his tongue.

"Huh?" Skullius confusedly tilted his head.

"I'm not talking to you, man," Tulnas grumbled.

With short bouts of conversation, the two reached a large piece of land occupied by a massive building in a few minutes.

Skullius gawked at its majesty as well as the brilliance of its build.

"Welcome to the Harem's Guild Residence."

Chapter 242: Harem Guild's Residence (1)

A stellar mansion of brass coloured walls was before the Discount Human along with an expansive compound that had well-mowed grass that surrounded it from the point that led to the street to the double doors at the face of the building in a wide arc.

A paved road led from the sparsely populated streets around this part of the city to the mansion while right in the middle of this road, one could see a big fountain, within it an ancient looking stone statue of a faceless woman spreading her arms, orifices being visible in her palms from which crystal water leaked out, falling into the pool below.

Thick locks of sculpted hair could be seen on her head which churned Skullius' memory as this statue looked a lot like something he had seen before in a miniaturised form.

Right.

It looked quite a lot like a statue he had seen at the temple.

One the three erected structures outside that gave him a truly divine feel.

Listafelle.

Sigh.

"Come, let's go in," Tulnas said, urging Skullius forward.

The two walked on the paved road with Skullius looking over at everything that even tickled his attention.

Nothing much decorated the outside of the mansion which made Skullius particularly curious about what he would see inside the building ahead.

As they drew closer, Skullius finally noticed that upon the luxurious doors to the mansion, a crest was masterfully carved.

It looked like something akin to a peach with strings of thorns growing out of it.

The grooves that made this symbol were painted in gold, making the symbol all the more elaborate.

The doors to the mansion opened before Skullius and Tulnas could reach them, a singular figure appearing.

Tulnas smiled when he saw her but Skullius gaped in shock.

A very short girl it was.

She wore a long, off-shoulder blue dress that reached her ankles, brushing against her feet with each movement she made.

Her body looked well developed, her aspects looking not like that of a child's except for perhaps her face.

It was very pretty, marked with large true sapphire coloured eyes, a cute button nose and tiny cherry lips that curled up in a cute smile.

She swiped away her burgundy hair that had blocked her view because of the wind and became delight incarnate as she lifted the ends of her dress and rushed down the steps before the doors to Tulnas.

What left Skullius speechless was how he felt a strong energy surging from this woman along with a deep sense of maturity.

She was even shorter than Oliviana but his instincts told him that she was not a young in the least.

No. His instincts didn't just tell him.

They warned him.

Skullius' mind churned unconsciously as a word tried to pop in it, supposedly being a perfect fit for name for the midget.

He opened his mouth to try to pronounce it.

"Lo...lol... lolo? Lola? Lolu? Damn it!" he cursed silently.

"You're back!" the girl said in a voice not befitting of her stature as she then leapt onto Tulnas' embrace with sparkling eyes.

She brushed her face against his chest before she looking up at him again.



"I was barely gone for an hour," Tulnas said with wry smile.

"Yes but... it's really getting chaotic in there. Can you come and calm the others down, they are pretty riled up right now," the girl said as she gave Tulnas the puppy eyes.

The Guild leader breathed out an exhausted breath before relenting.

"What are those idiots fighting about this time?"

"Um, you might just as well come and see for yourself."

Tulnas nodded before turning to Skullius whose eyes never left the girl's short figure, thick clouds of confusion spinning above him.

"Let's go inside. Watch where you step."

The girl who was hugging Tulnas with her powerful grip finally noticed Skullius, her face turning from the cute and innocent delight it had been into that of a stern and strict cougar.

Skullius felt all the breath he was subconsciously taking in flit away from his non-existent lungs.

"Is this the man you were talking about?" the girl asked.

"Yes," Tulnas replied, withholding a laugh from anticipating the proceedings.

The girl unravelled herself from Tulnas and sauntered up to Skullius.

She eyed him top to bottom, the Discount Human immediately suppressing his urge to rebuke this gesture which had been done to him too many times in this one day alone.

"I'm Gertreld, the Third Flower. May I know your name?"

Unexpectedly, the girl flashed a watered down version of the delighted smile she had given Tulnas and even curtsied as she greeted Skullius.

"Uh... I'm Festos Dawn," the Discount Human replied somewhat awkwardly.

"That's a very nice name," Gertreld said as she squinted her eyes. "I hope we can work together well. But... there's a detail I should stress about. One of the many rules that one has to abide by in order to live a long life in this mansion..."

Somehow Skullius started sweating as the short girl elegantly plastered her tiny hands together with the cute tilt of her head giving a false sense of innocence.

The girl's smile suddenly widened as her squinted eyes honed in on Skullius, making him feel like everything around him had turned dark, save for the girl in front of him.

"One itsy bitsy detail," she said in a voice that almost seemed modulated to sound like it came from a devil.

"DON'T. EVER. SAY. THE. WORD.....SHORT."

Gulp.

With the end of her sentence the surging aura or death that had been spilling from her vanished and she turned back into a well-mannered girl that then slipped over to Tulnas and pulled him towards the door.

Skullius remained glued to the spot for a few moments before taking a step forward.

He was getting threatened before he had even done anything.

'Right. I just have to avoid saying 'short' right? Piece of cake. Wait, what?' Skullius thought as he sweated, following after the duo.

The doors to the Guild Residence were opened and a magnificent wonder was revealed.

A well kept space with a floor that shone with such expert levels of garnish showed itself, the walls having a spotless, grainy texture that gave a standard but homely feel that was to die for.

Multiple chandeliers could be seen, arranged on the ceiling which was high up as they gave dim light in the daytime.

Skullius nodded as he moved slowly, forgetting the atrocities that had happened just a few minutes before.

This place was gorgeous.

The trio walked through a hall before they reached an open space where several comfortable couches could be seen orbiting around a circular glass table.

A beautiful housemat lay underneath the table, the tapestry design fitting the colour of the expansive room.

A woman sat down on one of the seats present.

She had dark hair that reached her chin in a bob cut. Her small but sharp eyes were hidden behind a pair of spectacles that reflected the lights as well as the cup filled with a hot, dark beverage that she sipped from.

"Welcome master," she addressed Tulnas before turning to Skullius. "Stranger..."

"Riyana. This is Festos. He is the new addition to our Guild. Please, play nice and don't be so cutthroat with your words," Tulnas said.

"I will try," the woman whose name was Riyana said with an apathetic face and voice before she set her cup down on a ceramic saucer.

"I will stipulate to him the rules and mannerisms he should follow to keep from getting himself torn apart by master's numerous lustful genital-minded intercourse mates s—"

"You could call them, lovers," Tulnas said as he gripped the bridge of his nose, cutting off Riyana.

"Lovers. I'll try to keep that in mind. If, Festos here doesn't abide by them, his death will be out of my hands," Riyana corrected herself before continuing her sentence.

'What's with all these threats?!' Skullius thought as he once again got a dangerous vibe from Riyana.

"Good enough, I suppose," Tulnas said. "Where are the others?"

"It would appea—"

BOOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Three resounding noises reverberated from the wall before, with the last explosion, the wall to the right of this space shattered, a speeding figure hurtling through the air and smashing against the wall on the other side!

...!

Thickets of dust stormed the room, because of the destruction!

"Iyaaaaaa~"

An erotic moan leaked from the other side of the room where the hurtling object had smashed into.

With a thud, it fell as the morning continued to sound, another high pitched voice blooming loudly in the room.

"Take that, you masochistic bitch!"

Chapter 243: Harem Guild's Residence (2)

As the dust settled, the figures of the two whose voices had rung out began to show.

"AHHHH~. Stop it, it hurts~," a pretty lady with ash blonde hair said with a soft smile on her face as she wriggled. She swooned after sliding off of the wall where she had been knocked to by the other lady opposite her. "It's no fair~. I did nothing wrong~."

"Hnghhh! I'm going to kill you, pffp!" the other girl who peeked in from the large hole in the wall growled as she dashed at the girl who was lying down with immense speed!

She had long, dark blue hair that covered half of her face and as a result, she had to constantly blow it up with her breath to clear her vision.

Skullius watched as this woman darted the distance to the downed lady in a heartbeat, after-images being left in her wake as she went on to ruthlessly bash her fist into her opponent's back!

The entire room trembled from the sheer force and Skullius could have sworn he saw a ripple travel through the floor on impact, though the room didn't sustain much damage!

"AHAHAHAHAHA! Stop, you're hurting me! Please Beastifina! It hurts~! AHAHAHAHAHAH~" the lady who had just been brutalised yelled at the top of her lungs with a big grin on her face while blood gushed out of her mouth.

"RRRRRRRAAAAAAAAAA!" a flurry of punches rained over the downed lady's figure as the one on top of her began radiating an orange energy around her body with her pupils turning into dark slits while her muscles bulged!

The room trembled with an even more intense vigour from the rising power of the mad lady!

CRACK! CRACK! SNAP!

The sound of broken bones resounded as the punches rained on the giggling lady who ate them whole!

"Tch! Classless clowns," Gertreld scoffed as she swished her hair to the side, her diminutive size making her look cute while doing so.

"I concur," Riyana said as she pushed up her glasses and continued to drink from her cup with an apathetic expression, her temperament and beverage completely unbothered by the chaos.

"Um. Shouldn't you do something about that?" Skullius finally asked Tulnas who stood while watching this.

"You know what? I would. But I choose not to. That's one of the ways to stay alive in this mansion. I'm an Energy Former. I don't have enough physical strength to rush up there and stop this in this state," the young man replied with a weird smile.

Skullius didn't believe him one bit.

"Then...?"

"Just leave it for now."

From the massive hole that had been made through the wall on the right side where a staircase rose in a winding pattern to the next floor, three women with different statures walked in, avoiding the rubble and dust in their steps.

"Can I not just cut them down? A feral beast-woman and a crazy pain-loving freak don't really add much to the Guild. My sword is ever ready," a woman with a rag-like blindfold over her eyes, dark, wavy hair that reached her shoulders and flawless yet pale skin said.

She dressed in a short, navy blue dress that reached her thighs, dark bandages wrapping the rest of the way to her knees.

On top of this get-up, she donned what looked like a short robe that reached her waist, a long sword resting in a shiny scabbard at her side.

"Un, un! Tulnas will be very upset. That would... um... undermine, yes, undermine what he always says. 'Every one of us has value.' Un, un.

That's right," a very short girl with leather black hair tied into a bun said with a childish voice.

'Another one!' Skullius thought in his mind as he looked at this figure.

The lady wore long purple robes that covered her dainty figure with a rough, brown staff that exceeded her height being gripped in her tiny hand.

"I simply don't care enough," the third woman said as she yawned, her bright golden eyes shimmering as she blinked multiple times while stretching lazily.

Her short, pixie style hair alluded to her lazy nature which detailed how much she hated to take care of it, so much so that she had cut it short.

"Quit your games, the lot of you. You can't even respect the Guildmaster's presence?" a voice boomed from the string of steps that descended from the floor above.

A lady with silver hair appeared following behind her a group of women that numbered more than fifteen.

She didn't have a particularly pretty face or a stunning body but what stood out from her was the authority she exuded, the stern and powerful air she carried as well as, above all else, bigger than all else actually...

Her expansive rack!

Twitch!

Skullius watched dazedly at the various assortments of women crammed into the crowd that then reached the floor, especially this woman.

The other ladies; the two that had been fighting and the three that had emerged from hole in the wall all turned to Tulnas whom they genuinely hadn't noticed until now!

Skullius sensed their awed gazes as they looked at Tulnas through the dissipating dust and gasped.

The woman who had been pounding her peer mercilessly suddenly stood up straight and rushed over to the centre of the room as did the three coming from the wall.

The one with the obvious masochism swiggled like a preliminary animation as the sound of broken bones resounded, and yet...

Crack, crack, snap!

In the next moment, the woman's once broken body fixed itself as she squirmed and unnaturally stood up, legs first, rushing to the others with twinkling eyes.

'THE HECK WAS THAT?!' Skullius shuddered.

The more than twenty girls stood respectfully before Tulnas, Riyana also standing from her seat.

Skullius looked to Tulnas. It was only now that he realised that this man had done something to make sure that all the ladies aside from the silver haired one, Riyana and Gertreld couldn't sense his presence, even as the dust had stained the room, obscuring the view.

All these women then greeted Tulnas in their own ways, expressing how they felt about their Guild leader.

"My love."

"Master."

"Master."

"My cockonut!"

"My genuine light, un, un!"

"My BeastKing, pffp!"

"My lone host."



...

Tulnas nodded.

"Good to see that some of you still haven't settled well with the others," Tulnas eyed the woman with the hair that draped over one of her eyes who immediately turned her head as she blushed and played with her fingers.

"Anyway. Let me introduce the newest member of our Guild. His name is Festos, an Energy Former, who, much like me likes to diversify."

Skullius didn't know what kind of face to make in front of all these women who eyed him, most with immense hostility that barrelled onto him like a wave.

Tulnas chuckled as he watched Skullius buckle under the pressure.

"And Festos. I'll give a quick introduction," he said as he addressed, with his hand pointing towards the owner of the name he pronounced.

"Renialid, First Flower. Arma User, rank B."

The silver-haired beauty.

"Castamine, Second Flower. Form User, rank C+."

The lazy, golden-eyed lady.

"Gertreld, Third Flower. Form User, rank B."

"Riyana, Fourth Flower. Arma User, rank C."

The glasses lady with the hot beverage.

"Natalika, Fifth Flower. Arma User, rank B."

The blindfolded swordswoman.

"Ginie, Sixth Flower. Form User, rank C+."

The short lady with the staff.

"Bustifina, Seventh Flower, rank...."

Skullius could barely concentrate as the names were many and the hostile gazes much too strong...

Chapter 244: Harem Guild's Residence (3)

After all the names were pronounced it finally hit Skullius why those two had been fighting. Or rather, it wasn't a realisation but an explanation that he happened to hear.

Apparently, the visibly violent woman had been taunted by the one she had bombarded with the flurry of punches.

She had been called Beastifina, an obvious play on her real name Bustifina, making fun of her feral nature as well as her Form Using technique.

She didn't take it well and started beating the hell of the woman who kept laughing her ass off from brutal ecstasy.

It seemed that the whole thing had been intentional, which was why no one really intervened when they had the chance to.

Skullius couldn't help but admire the strength of this group. Their presence pushed against him like a fiery, raging tide even when they were subduing it.

Now that he had a greater appreciation of the levels of power, he somewhat understood the power struggle between the Guilds and the level of power.

As he endured the harsh gazes, one of the ladies suddenly flashed before him in a fraction of a second, a soft breeze blowing Skullius' clothes from her brisk movement.

It was Natalika, the blindfolded lady.

Even before she said anything, Skullius could feel her enthusiasm bubbling from her mana.

"I see you have a sword and I can also sense that it's of a rather high calibre. Judging by your stance, you have some basic training in the sword and are confident in your skills," she said all this in rapid succession before pushing her face right before Skullius'.

Her voice gave both an excited feel as well as a disciplined one as she spoke.

"Spar with me. I promise I won't lop off any part of body."

'She's sharp.'

Skullius could feel from her air a cutting edge when he applied [Elevated Mana Manipulation] to sense more of her strength.

Before Skullius could render her an answer, the silver-haired lady with quite the bountiful rack spoke up as she walked forward.

"No. I don't believe you can hold yourself back from your zeal once you've started. He probably won't be enough to handle you even if you are to use one hand and fight without the aid of your sword in the bout," Renialid said.

'Jeez. Aren't you looking down on me a bit too much?' Skullius thought as a dissatisfied expression appeared on his face.

His silver eyes flashed with energy as he gazed at Renialid.

"You disagree?" Renialid asked as she narrowed her eyes.

"Yes. I disagree."

"Oh?"

Renialid flashed a toothy smile at Skullius' response before hugging her arms around her body which was encased in a white dress.

"Alright, that's enough. It seems like Festos here is stealing the show quite a bit," Tulnas said as he slid over and slung his hand around the Discount Human.

"Unfortunately, as you know, time is running out. I need to brief Festos on the details he needs to know. You can all have some time to chat with him afterwards," Tulnas said as he pulled the Discount Human away.

He travelled up the steps with him and as soon as they reached the second floor, Skullius saw an expansive space filled with what looked like small tags that gave directions!

There were so many passages that led to different rooms that had who-knew-what!

The pristine white walls and identical doors didn't make it look any less confusing but the arched ceiling above decorated with glistening hardwood and lights in the form of large glowing gems that were lined up neatly in each of the passages gave the place a more unique feel.

"Just follow me," Tulnas said to Skullius as he walked on ahead, turning into passage after passage as he led the Discount Human somewhere.

Skullius was really curious about what was behind the doors and thus decided to activate [Elevated Mana Manipulation] to gain some semblance of knowledge of what was hidden.

The first thing he noticed was a massive surge of energy coming from each door that he couldn't exactly pin to exclusively be Mana, but a strange mix.

It felt pure and impure at the same time and when he tried to extend his sensation over this mystery...

"You really enjoy prying don't you? Or are you just used to not asking for help because of your curse?" Tulnas said without turning back.

Skullius seized trying to investigate the doors and sighed.

"There are many forms of energy. Mana, Aura, Primus, Nitros and so on. The ability to sense all of them with relative ease is granted exclusively to Energy Formers. However, that doesn't mean it's impossible to get a feel of these even if you're of a different class category. Diversifying is the way that many choose to advance their strength.

It's possible to reach out to Energy Forming as an complementary art from another category or even other forms without choosing it initially. This is what many call Class Branching."

Skullius narrowed his eyes.

Appreciating energies.

This wasn't something he was privy to.

Perhaps all Energy Formers who had gone through Academies were much more advanced than he had initially thought.

"These rooms are called Adaptation facilities. You use them when you want to try and get a feel for energies outside Mana and Aura which most people can inherently perceive. Alright, that should burn out your curiosity over this for now," Tulnas said. "We're here."

The two appeared at a set of double doors which Tulnas pushed to open.

A rather spacious office appeared with a large desk made of red wood, pristine walls that carried various precious items, mostly taken from powerful Cluster beasts as well as picture frames.

The flooring was much like that of the rest of the mansion, a large window with a crystal clear glass being behind the large, comfortable chair with padded suede-like fittings over the fine wood behind the desk.

Tulnas sat on it before gesturing for Skullius to sit on the less attractive chair opposite him.

Once the two were seated, Tulnas finally addressed the issue that he knew Skullius was eager to know before the Discount Human could ask it.

"Well let's get straight to the reason why you're here, don't we?" he said. "I'm sure you're wondering the real reason as to why I asked you to join my Guild back then."

Skullius nodded with a serious and tense expression.

"Yes. I have been wondering about that," Skullius said.

"Hmmm," Tulnas hummed as he leaned back on the chair. "In all honesty, it wasn't my intention nor my insight that lead me to ask you to join. It was the intuition of a certain 'friend' of mine. He saw something about you that he claimed was enough for me to want you in my Guild."

Skullius grew even more tense.

What about him attracted this so-called friend's attention?

Did they know some of his deeper secrets?

Tulnas' blue eyes focused on Skullius as his disposition became rather odd.

One would even say, cold.

His voice then leaked out as he finally revealed what this interest was.

"You have a Hidden class, don't you?"

Chapter 245: What Makes Tulnas Tick?

Skullius froze.

He wasn't expecting to hear something like this.

How the heck did this guy know that he had a Hidden class?!

The unwavering intent that streamed from Tulnas' eyes made him aware that this man had already confirmed it with his reaction just now.

'Damn it!'

Mannerisms that didn't give away stuff about himself so easily were things that Skullius still struggled with.

"It seems like my 'friend' was right," Tulnas said as he withdrew his intense stare on Skullius.

"Tch! I actually wished it wasn't true for once. Maybe then you'd stop bragging all the damn time!"

"Huh?" Skullius once again questioned this line that Tulnas mumbled to himself in a begrudging tone.

"I wasn't talking to you," the young Guild leader said before he coughed awkwardly, his man bun at the back of his head swinging his head movements.

'That's... weird.'

Skullius wondered what would come next. Would he pry?

That had been the thing he had gotten used to since Damilla, and he couldn't help but assume that this was next.

'Should I reveal it? I feel like that would be extremely dangerous though. The Green Neolists were involved in this before, right? Wouldn't telling someone that I have this hidden class lead to one of them eventually finding out?' Skullius wondered while keeping his eyes on Tulnas.

He didn't believe anything could remain hidden forever anymore.

"Don't look at me like that. I was just verifying if it was true. Your value as a Mage who has started embarking on the path to Class Branching is already enough to catch my interest. This just adds a bit more spice to the mix," Tulnas said with a genuine smile.

He aimed to convince Skullius that he truly wasn't out to screw him over.

The Discount Human thought about it.

"If that's the case, then what about this method of yours to stop the Clusters? Am I really that important for it?" Skullius asked.

"Oh, that? Absolutely not. My deal with Silrat was to get you out of that sticky situation by leveraging you as an important piece when it comes to stopping the emerging Clusters. The rest after that was for me to claim you for a few days as member of the Guild because of your value. Though I should say we are not out of the woods yet."

"To completely free you from the charges, you have to ACT the part of an integral piece to dealing with the Cluster problem. Simply put, your reputation will rise if you're in the party that solved the international crisis that has everyone cowering in their homes. This should be enough to give you a bright light in the public eye and even in Erkus' eye."

Skullius slowly processed this information. It proved to be quite a slow endeavour as it took him quite a bit of time.

After a full two minutes of thinking, Skullius finally responded..

"Won't they want to know how I was important in dealing with the problem later?" he asked.

"Of course they will. I'm sure Damilla would be out to get you. She'll probably even try to divine you after the mission to see if the facts line up, haha," Tulnas chortled. "However, Silrat has a plan for that. It also acts as the contingency for if, and that's a strong if, this whole thing fails to release you from the charges on you for the incident you caused."

"I see," Skullius nodded.



For some reason, when Tulnas had mentioned that Skullius wasn't exactly relevant to this whole ordeal, he deflated.

Such was the case when one was told they weren't as important as they thought.

However, Skullius had something more to ask Tulnas.

"You say all of this like it's very normal. Don't you have a problem with what I did? I killed many people. Everyone seems to have a problem with that. Don't you?"

The Discount Human didn't ask this to find some sort of validation or to see where he stood in Tulnas' books but out of genuine curiosity.

Didn't this man see him as the monster that Erkus, Terian and Damilla seemed to?

For Silrat he could understand as the man was the very clear about valuing profit over morality, but Tulnas seemed different.

He didn't strike Skullius as the type who was motivated by only money despite the flashy arrogance.

He didn't seem like a Jac.

Tulnas looked amused by this question, even going so far as to chuckle.

He hadn't expected such a question.

"That's an interesting question. Are you questioning where my morality and ideals lie? If that's the case then..."

Tulnas seemed to drift off in thought as he spoke.

"My heart gravitates towards vulnerability and influence, I suppose. I didn't have a rough background as some would assume but I always wanted to do more than just to have enough. They call it ambition."

"I enjoy seeing the vulnerable and weak flourish under my care. I find the innate vulnerability that some women share in our society to be a source of strength. Being openly vulnerable as a woman is overlooked but as a man... it's shunned. I believe the reason is because women are made complete when they meet an ideal man. And when you complete them, they bloom with overwhelming power.

Having tens of them by my side is like infinitely fueling myself with complete beings that share their very souls with me."

Skullius listened attentively.

He didn't know the first thing about women and so didn't have much of an opinion but...

"That's not what I asked," he said with a frown.

"I know. Let me finish," Tulnas said as he raised his legs to set them on top of the desk.

"When it comes to influence, I believe it's cultivated by putting in the work. I've travelled to all three of the nations in Feinheath, finding grand things in each, as well as fighting unique opponents. It's with this that I made myself somebody despite being at the lowest wrungs when I started."

Tulnas leaned in back further on the chair, his elbows on the armrests. His blue eyes gleamed as his tone grew lower.

"I've TAMED powerful beasts and dangerous men. TAMED bestial beauties and even mana itself. Now let me answer your question with one of my own."

"Taking my entire speech into account, does it seem like I haven't put a few thousand men and women to the sword for nothing but selfish benefit?"

Gulp.

Skullius got this man's point instantly.

Why would he care for Skullius killing a few hundred when he had murdered thousands for the sake of personal gain?

The Discount Human finally got it.

He was right.

This man was different.

Skullius nodded, feeling himself getting warmer to this first class sockethole.

"Alright then. So, what is this method to get rid of the Clusters anyway?" Skullius asked.

This had been the topic of concern before their conversation drifted off the rails.

Tulnas languidly huffed.

"It's pretty simple," he said. "All we have to do, is kill the fools who are causing them. A certain group of cultists who have settled near a city under my jurisdiction. The Evenfall."

Chapter 246: The Source of The Emerging Clusters

"The Evenfall has been around for a long time. They are a group of bastards that believe in Boron, the Traitorous Deity.

They have been more of a nuisance than anything up until now to be honest, their existence mostly being the Purity's problem, just like the Green Neolists are considered a Capital problem," Tulnas explained as he saw clearly from Skullius' expression that the Discount Human didn't have strong background knowledge on the organisation.

It wasn't outlandish these days to find people who didn't have any interest in the Deities whatsoever.

Skullius seemed to know something at least.

"I've heard about this before but, why is this Boron guy called a traitor?" Skullius asked.

"Well, it's a long tale with many conjectures but the prevailing theory seems to be that Boron wanted to create his own world. You see, the idea is that the four Deities were bound by their own self imposed will to create life. To produce something of not with their grand power."

Boron however, had a grand idea for a utopia of his own that he claimed would be the ultimate shelter for himself and the other Deities. However, the other Deities refused and sought to make a singular world where they created living beings with their own creativity as they believed they were meant to."

"Unfortunately, Boron didn't like their idea very much and sought to take their power from them forcefully, to create this haven for himself to enjoy. This selfishness to not want anything to do with the greater goal of creating a whole world and attacking the others instead was what gave Boron the moniker of Traitor. Of course, the rest of the story is as you can probably recall.

He was barred from creating anything here and is bound to the lower verges of Aigas. The Under."

Skullius nodded.

With all the data he had absorbed, it had skipped his mind to ask about this piece of the puzzle that had been missing for so long.

Until now that is.

"An informant that I placed in one of the cities under my care notified me about strange activity that had been going on for the past weeks. I sent one of my ladies to check it out and she has been tracking the lead with the informant. I made a trip there to check for myself and discovered subtle signs of the Evenfall's activity."

"It wasn't that hard to detect wisps of dark energy in the air. These wisps caused ailments, anxiety and rage in the minds of the people and it took a while to solve this. It took even longer to narrow down the search to where the source of the energy was coming from and that's where we are now."

Ailments, anxiety and rage?

Where these the traits that were caused by the Evenfall members or by their Deity?

Wasn't he sealed away?

Skullius couldn't wrap his mind around it and Tulnas didn't plan on lecturing him of all the details right now.

Still though, the Discount Human was curious.

"How are you so sure it's this Evenfall group that's causing this?" he asked.

"The Adaptation rooms have bolstered my senses towards energies to a considerable degree. I can identify types of energy higher than Mana and Aura easily, above what I could already do, of course. I've been in contact with these people before during some of journeys so I know what the energy signature feels like."

Oh. That made sense.

What kind of energy was this then? Higher than Mana and Aura?

Skullius' mind churned and he also thought of other energy forms that could be higher.

Null Life Essence and Undeath energy.

Where did they fit it in, he wondered

"We can't waste more time. I have to stress that this will be quite the dangerous mission and while it's safer to have other Guilds come along, it can produce the opposite result. Also, like I said before, I don't want anyone else's blood on my hands if there's a chance that I miscalculated something. I can handle casualties related my Guild, no one else."

"Alright then."

"Good. Put on your gear and let's get going."

"Wait now?"

"What part of 'we can't waste any more time' don't you understand?" Tulnas said with a sigh.

Skullius nodded and was about to put on his new armour when he recalled something.

"Right, there's something I need to show you.."

\*\*\*

"Pfftp! I said I'm good now! I'm not angry anymore, alright?!" Bustifina said as she blew her hair away.

"Un, un. You don't seem very calm to me. You should really talk a walk and cool off," Ginie said as she played with her staff in her seat.

A burst of dark orange energy shot from the lady as she sat down on one of the many chairs, her expression turning fierce with the pupils in her eyes transforming into slits!

She held a cup of tea with a small plate at the side on which a few biscuits were placed but this seemingly peaceful picture didn't fit with her expression.

Throbbing veins popped out of her face as she turned to Ginie, her teeth grating against each other in imminent violence.

"Does this look like.... I'm still angry to you?!" Bustifina growled.

Ginie's face remained blank for a moment before she pushed her plate up to Bustifina.

"Biscuit?" she asked in a cute voice.

"Knock it off, already," Renialid who sat with a cultured posture as she sipped on her tea said with a calm voice.

"Instead of bickering, you should be thinking about who Tulnas will choose to go on this expedition with him."

"What? He's not taking all of us?" Castamine who lazed on her seat with her curvaceous body laying lateral across it said in a concerned tone.

"Of course not. It's only logical that some of us will only be deadweight that will serve no further purpose than to hinder our master's strength on such a perilous mission," Riyana said as she sipped her tea with an apathetic face.

Her words stung.

There was silence for a time.

Every one of the ladies knew that they were not weak by any stretch, but there were those that were more dependable than others.

"You're right, sister," Natalika said. Even though she had a blindfold on, one couldn't help but feel like her eyes radiated an intense stabbing illusion when her senses focused on them.

"While we all have our strengths, this mission requires strength at a calibre a notch above the rest."

Another bout of silence persisted.

Riyana's eye twitched a bit from hearing Natalika, her twin sister's words.

She thought they had grown past this phase already.

"Relax, ladies. Nomatter who is chosen, all of us are important to Tulnas. For some of us, our strength is our mind, for some it's our raw physicality. But in the end, we're what makes up this Guild," Renialid said with a gentle expression.

The sound of footsteps came from the stretch of stairs to the right, causing the ladies to fidget and turn their heads.

Not two figures came walking down but three, all decked in armour and all looking quite powerful in their own ways...

#### Chapter 247: Everyone, Meet Red Rage

The bevy's collective eyes first honed in on Tulnas who led the other two behind him.

He donned his black and green armour that traced his figure while being bulky on the pauldrons.

The green hue was mostly from detachable sections of the breastplate that were painted in this colour as well as the upper parts of his greaves and several portions of his gauntlets.

Two shortswords rested on either of his sides in dark, smooth scabbards, giving him the look of some kind of Berserker-Assassin hybrid.

The ladies' hearts throbbed as they saw their man gracefully descend from the stairs with an aura of power, his ocean blue eyes gleaming with untamed regality.

Behind Tulnas was Skullius who donned the armour that Silrat had gotten for him.

It must be stressed that Skullius did NOT remove the clothes he had worn before. He had just worn the armour over them.

A mix of very hard, light brown leather and shiny, dark grey steel made up the armour, allowing it to be a tight fit for Skullius whom Silrat considered to be more dependent on speed than he was on strength.

Half-plate armour was the professional term.

On the parts that featured steel, glowing runes could be seen over, and on Skullius' hands, light gauntlets were made with more leather than steel in the palms to encourage grip while the metallic sheen pervaded over the hands to protect the fingers.

A large hood could be seen behind his neck, making his whole look akin to that of an assassin as well.

The Discount Human suspected that Oliviana's input was involved in choosing this armour.



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[Fleeting Ghoul's Adornment]

- Rare+ -

An armour made by a group of wandering nomads who hail from the dessert, Jay Sanul.

-Defense-

4950

-Durability-

6540/6540

-Special Effects-

- +30% movement speed
- +15% reaction speed
- 10% attack speed

[Skill: Bolt through]

Move at rapid speeds to phase through any physical matter; attack or mass, in a five meter radius.
Usable only five times a day.

-Caution-

Does not work worth with energy-type constructs.

-Caution-

If target is coated by energy stronger than the armour's limit, effect will be nullified.

~~~

Skullius had been pleased with this offering when he looked over it with the guidance field and he had made up his mind.

He would definitely be using [Unbound] on this after the mission.

The last figure who trailed behind both Tulnas and Skullius was of course...Red Rage.

After the party-up with Stylla and her group, Skullius had gone hunting with Red Rage, amassing enough Null Life Essence points to upgrade all the gear he had bought for Red Rage from Frock.

This full plate armour that Red Rage was rather incredible and a perfect fit for the Apostle with some questions about its effects here and there, but mostly great.

It had a mix of dark blue and black, with a regal looking helmet that had slanted eyeholes instead of the traditional visor where the wearer would look through.

It had a slightly bulky build, with its metallic material refusing to reflect any light.

The pauldrons and poleyns were shaped like protruding swirls that one could easily get lost in while on the chest plate, an engraving of a sun-like feature could be seen, with the rays showing as swirls in a dark blue hue.

.....

Ten minutes ago.

Tulnas had a more than surprised expression as he looked at Red Rage who had been pulled out, seemingly out of nowhere by Skullius.

Skullius smirked.

The spatial ring was still hidden by Null Life Essence and he could tell that Tulnas was oblivious to where the Apostle had spawned from.

"This is one my specialities," he said simply to Tulnas.

The Guild leader remained staring at the armoured creature for a few seconds, and then turned to Skullius.

"This is a summon?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Is it related to your Hidden class?"

"...Yes," Skullius said before turning to Red Rage. "Greet the man, will you?"

Red Rage walked forward towards Tulnas who had stood from his chair behind the desk and...extended his hand.

Tulnas dumbly shook the Apostle's hand while in a daze.

It was... very strange.

He couldn't even sense anything from his summon!

Not the connection of mana from it to Skullius.

Not its own strength.

Nothing.

'This is... ridiculous,' he thought with bubbling excitement.

He had already subdued his zeal over the fact that Skullius had a Hidden class, not letting it show how much he valued the Discount Human but with this...

'Watch out, Silrat. I might just take this man for myself.'

"I thought showing him to you first would be better than pulling him out in front of the... ladies," Skullius said with immense difficulty.

"How considerate," Tulnas said with a grin. "You made a good choice."

Skullius smiled sheepishly. He was pretty apprehensive about sharing this but well, since this guy knew he had a Hidden class, he could lie about many things related to his secrets, pinning them all on this fact.

He could also limit the prying of other parties this way as well.

This was just the first step.

Hopefully, it wasn't a wrong one.

"You've got me fired up, Festos," Tulnas said with his ridiculous bursts of energy leaking out in enthusiasm.

....

"Who is that?" Gertreld asked curiously as she gazed at Red Rage who stood beside Skullius as the three men reached the floor.

Tulnas held back a chuckle as he decided to get it over with.

He turned to Skullius who sighed and nodded.

"As you all know, this man, Festos, is an Energy Former. He is appears to be really talented in some other facets of power, including summoning," said Tulnas with a subdued smile.

He hadn't told the ladies that Skullius had a Hidden class as that wasn't necessary.

"Everyone, meet Festos' summon, Red Rage."

Chatter immediately flooded the cleaned the room where all the ladies were situated.

Renialid was really surprised, cocking her head back as she hugged her chest.

Summoning?

Wasn't Festos a Mage?

Summoning was another class entirely.

Red Rage scanned the masses from behind the helmet and when he saw the attention, his arms started to rise up as they headed for his waist to perform his signature pose but...

"Don't you even dare!" Skullius whispered.

The Pelvis Boar-Man became a bit dispirited.

Many of the ladies walked up to Red Rage analysed him, poking his armour while the Apostle remained still.

Skullius tried to make sure they wouldn't take off his helmet as best as he could.

"Alright, enough of that," said Tulnas as he clapped assisting Skullius somewhat. "As you might have guessed, I'm not taking every single one of you. I have already chosen the candidates I will going with based on necessity and utility."

The atmosphere suddenly grew tense.

"For this mission, I will be taking with me Ginie, Natalika and... Gertreld."

Many of the women sighed while Gertreld wore a cheerful grin.

Natalika rushed up to Tulnas' side with an almost imperceptible speed while Ginie looked incredibly shy as she sluggishly walked up to the Guild leader.

Renialid nodded with a straight face.

In truth, she had expected to be considered for such a mission as she was the strongest out of all the others, but unlike many of the other ladies, she never doubted Tulnas.

She had too many reasons not to.

The Guild leader looked her way and smiled, which made her blush.

"As for the rest of you, I have very important mission for you. You can call it a supplementary mission to this one and I expect the best results possible," Tulnas said.

Skullius already knew what it was and he couldn't help but envy these ladies.

Even Red Rage looked to flare in jealousy as the details of this mission had been mentioned in his presence.

## Chapter 248: One Exchange

"Since the disappearance of the Ideal Ark, the power struggle has been intense but we are still at the top, ranked second in the entire region. That said, I think it's time for us to increase our prestige. Perilous times bring the best opportunities for growth," Tulnas said with a zealous smile.

"Renia, I want you to lead everyone in clearing as many Clusters as you can inside and outside of our jurisdiction. I don't care if the smaller Guilds start to complain, just kick as much Cluster beast ass as you can."

Renialid gave a radiant smile as she nodded to Tulnas.

"You can count on us," she said.

The zeal and energy that instantly covered the room was so intense that one could get lost in it.

The ladies were elated that they were given a big mission to complete and it was by no means easy. Tulnas' trust in them had not waned and one might even say this was his strategy to eliminate the grains of dissatisfaction he had sown by choosing the three he had.

In the Guilds Association, large Guilds were given portions of the region to partially own and oversee, thus having the privilege of automatically owning anything that they brought from them.

It was the Association's policy to claim a portion of the items that the Guilds acquired in Clusters as remuneration for the services they rendered.

Naturally, it was common for Guilds to want to swindle the Association by keeping everything and it was certainly possible as the branch in Inhone lacked the means to stop most Guilds.

However, a simple system to encourage this policy was the Contribution Point system.

The more a Guild contributed the higher the chance that they would be given Contribution Points which essentially raised the grade and quantity of items that Guilds could borrow from the Association.

To smaller Guilds, this was more of an option if they could afford it and they did their best to afford it as more of these meant more growth.

To large Guilds, this was a right.

All Guilds aimed to reach this stage.

The drop on these charges for every haul that a Guild made was what Silrat had used to bargain with the mercenaries during the chaos a few days.

Given such a thing along with the multitude of Clusters appearing every day, if Renialid and the other ladies were to rush around stealing Clusters from lesser Guilds...

One could easily imagine what would happen.

"Let me go and wear and my battle dress! Oh, how long I've waited to don it on such a dangerous excursion!" Gertreld rushed away with excited lady steps.

Ginie and Natalika also rushed away to wear their complete combat gear.

'I wish I could party up with these strong females and clear high-level Clusters,' Skullius thought, his mind creating a fantasy where he strolled through the chaotic fights in a Cluster while harvesting Enriching gems.

Red Rage could already see it too, collecting massive amounts of Null Life Essence to use for his own heroic deeds.

"While we wait for those three..." Renialid said as she walked forward, her gaze locked onto Skullius. "I would like to see how capable you are as a Mage. Chances are, where you're going you'll be meeting foes with strength similar to mine or higher. We can't have our Guild leader constantly trying to get you out of harm's way or worse... dying while trying to do so from your curse.

That could easily happen right?"

Skullius gazed deep into Renialid's eyes.

Sure.

That was possible.



However, during the time he had spent with Tulnas, even when he asked questions and got replies, the man never turned into a pile of soup.

He had offered help, but he did not die.

This was the sole reason why Skullius didn't fully trust Tulnas and called him a first-class sockethole.

The man truly wasn't a charitable saint despite his helpful actions.

"That's true," Skullius said.

Tulnas by the side smirked.

"Earlier, you claimed that you could survive an exchange with Natalika even if she were to use a single arm in combat without her sword. Are you still confident that you can do such a thing?" Renialid asked.

"You bet," Skullius said determinedly.

Renialid flashed a toothy smile.

She hated seeing weak men.

Perhaps this was a side effect of having the ever confident Tulnas as a Guild leader and as a lover that influenced this.

"You're really thinking of having a fight now?" Tulnas asked as he sat down on one of the seats, grabbed Bustifina who was near him and sat her on his lap.

The girl yelped from this sudden action before easing up.

"One exchange. No. One attack," Renialid said as she faced Tulnas who was stroking Bustifina's cheek with her smile. She then turned back to Skullius. "If you can stand one of my attacks, I'll consider you to have passed. Whether you dodge, block or counter doesn't matter to me."

Skullius raised his brow.

He didn't have a habit of underestimating opponents but being looked down like this, perhaps rightfully so was something he wasn't used to especially after introducing himself as a Mage.

He had been showered with praise and high regard and while this didn't get to his head, he thought he would ride this wave out for a while.

"Alright then. Let's do it," Skullius said.

The ladies drew back to give Skullius and Renialid some space.

Most of them didn't think Skullius was in any capable of reaching to an attack from Renia as that was the thing that the First Flower wanted to test.

A fighter was useless if they couldn't react to an incoming attack, regardless of their arsenal and while all the ladies could agree that the Discount Human looked appealing, they just couldn't give him the benefit of the doubt with his Foundation Stage strength and white mana core.

Renialid and Skullius drew back, the Discount Human turning to Red Rage who didn't move away like the others.

"It's alright, bro. I can take care of myself," Skullius said with a smile.

The Apostle conveyed that he wanted to help Skullius and show some of the progress he had made over the past days but the Discount Human denied him the chance.

There would be plenty of time to show what he could do later but the Discount Human wanted to show his individual prowess.

The Apostle nodded and drew back.

Tulnas was interested in seeing how Skullius could handle this. Regardless of the result of this little show, he was still going to bring Skullius with him but a win for Skullius would increase Skullius' value in his eyes.

More of a reason to want to break off his engagement with Silrat..

The Guilder gripped Bustifina's waist tightly in excitement.

"Hmm~" the girl squirmed under the powerful grip.

"Here I come," Renialid said as she lowered her stance, her white dress rising a little from the soft breeze that whistled from this one movement.

Skullius' silver eyes took in everything ahead as his [Elevated Mana Manipulation] made sure he could sense every subtle detail about Renialid and Renialid alone.

'Here we go,' the Discount Human thought as right at this moment, he activated all of them simultaneously even before he saw Renialid move.

All of them!

In the same instance, as his eyes never left everything in front of him, something started to overshadow his vision!

A hand.

A hand magnified in his vision as shockingly, Renialid had covered the eight meter distance between them before he even realised it!

...!

On top of this speed, Skullius felt from this hand that was merely inches from his body, a force that sought to draw him closer to Renialid's figure!

'Perhaps he still has some ways to go before his Class Branching becomes anything of note...'  
Tulnas' thoughts rang out as he watched all this quite vividly.

It was as if time slowed to a halt as this happened, but the Discount Human didn't panic.

He had expected something ridiculous like this.

In fact, he had expected something more as if it was only this much...

WAAA!

A radiant light shone over the entire room with gorgeous aesthetic, a ripple of tangled and chaotic energy shooting Skullius!

...!

Tulnas and all the ladies in the room were taken by surprise by this sudden occurrence!

In fractions of a second, Renialid's movement that everyone was sure would catch Skullius off guard, was...

FFSSSH!

The brilliant light that had replaced Skullius' figure zipped away from view, escaping Renialid's hand at a tremendous speed!

Another shock slapped everyone in the face as in the next moment, the brilliant light didn't move away but bolted behind Renialid, seemingly about to attack!

WHUUUUUU!

A sound like a air being sucked for something grand rang out as a thunderous noise blew out, most certainly from the collision of whatever the brilliant light had shot to Renialid's figure!

## Chapter 249: This Discount Human Is Impressive!

BOOOM!

A crisp explosion of force shook the entire room, a powerful breeze blowing over all the ladies and tustling with their hair!

Tulnas who sat with an intrigued look on his face was visibly pleasantly rattled, having noy expected this!

The floor exploded, digging deeper into the ground where the collision had occurred, dust rising high with an obscuring effect!

From the dust, where the radiant light could still be spotted amid the chaos, a chuckle was heard, followed by the dying of this fast light.

Skullius' figure was revealed when the light vanished, the Discount Human appearing to have his fist extended to Renialid who was chuckling in both surprise and excitement.

She clasped his fist tight which had been going for her head and in the next moment, Skullius drew back hurriedly and stood a distance from her.

Renialid swiped her hand, a powerful force inducing the dust to clear as she stepped out of the depression.

"I'm honestly surprised. To not only be able to dodge my attack but to counter from behind me right after. I admit, you're much stronger than I thought," Renialid said as she patted away her dress of dust and nodded at Skullius.

'Hmm. I didn't expect to hear her say that. Especially after she clearly held back. Then again, I didn't give it my all either. And I didn't need to...' Skullius thought.

He nodded back and walked to Red Rage who was excitedly showering his master with praise through their link.

'Yeah, yeah. You already knew what I'm capable of because of your spying with Null Life Essence anyway.'

This technique was still lost to the Discount Human as when he had asked Red Rage to teach him how to use Null Life Essence to do the stuff he could do, the Apostle proved to be the worst teacher her could possibly ask for.

'It's like Zhhhr... then Fwoosh and Kaaaa' was Red Rage's explanation through their mental link.

Clap! Clap! Clap!

"Incredible! Now this is what I call priceless talent!" Tulnas said as he stood up clapping after gently placing Bustifina who had been seated on his lap to the side.

"It seems you've advanced quite well in Class Branching. For a Mage to demonstrate this kind of awareness and battle instinct with hand-to-hand combat is rare. I feel safer already."

All the ladies around couldn't help but also look at Skullius a bit more favourably.

"What was that? A spell?"

"Such speed! And to even attack Renia after barely dodging her strike, he's got some balls. Not bigger than master's though."

"He's decent, I guess...."

Skullius raised his brow from the complements he overhead.

It was an interesting experience contrary to his expectations.

Renialid walked to Tulnas who slowly paced over to Skullius.

"I must say, I wouldn't be opposed to him being an asset under you," she whispered in Tulnas' eyes.

"He already is. I'm just yet to decide on the duration," the Guild leader replied, making Renialid's eyes flash with excitement.

She loved it when Tulnas showed dominance.

She and the others were already made known the deal between Silrat and Tulnas and she could already read along the lines of what her Guild leader sought to do.

"It's all going according to plan so far and I'll make sure it continues to go that way," Tulnas said before he quickly drew Renialid closer to his armoured body and promptly planted a kiss on her lips.

The woman was taken by surprise and before she could full savour the moment, Tulnas drew back and side glanced at the other women who looked at Renialid with envy.

He spoke in a voice just enough for all their advanced ears to hear, the contents of his message building up adrenaline and... something else.

"If I come back alive, I'll spoil everyone of you to my, and your heart's content."

The blue eyed man suddenly slung his arm around Skullius' neck afterwards.

The Discount Human had watched the kiss with wonder just moments before but he didn't have the time to think more about it as Tulnas' boisterous voice echoed in his ear.

"This whole thing just got a bit more exciting than I thought it would be. Let's go kick some ass."

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Somewhere East of Inhone City.

A dark space lit by an orange flame could be seen with men donning gold and black robes seated around a complex formation that was akin to a jagged edged circle with meaningful symbols within it that burned with an orange light.

The flame that lit the space raged at the very centre, illuminating the twelve figures that sat silently while bursts of dark purple energy spewed from their bodies, fueling this formation.

The air shuddered as far from these men who sat in such an arrangement, a burst of wind blew outwards in fierce, visible waves that would have torn anyone close enough and unable to guard against them.

From this phenomenon, two men appeared, walking with sturdy steps towards the formation.

An Arcane Teleportation Scroll had been used.

Of the two men, one was older with a more mature look, his large eyes exuding a honey coloured hue.

His unkempt hair which was a chaotic mix of purple and black draped over his forehead giving him a reserved and reckless vibe.

The other looked young, his looks being nothing that would stick in one's memory for long.

"Pretty handy stuff. I didn't think our partnering with those necromancers would give room to such... extravagant opportunities. Travel feels better now. Extravagantly better," the older man said with a look that contradicted his verbal enthusiasm.

"I think the boss made a mistake. While we need their ability to harness large numbers with undeath, I still think giving them our help is a bad idea. They have their own agenda after all. They will backstab us eventually," the young man said.

"Extravagantly so. However, the boss already knows. I'm sure even that Actuass guy knows that we know. It's just a matter of using each other. The one with the faster play wins... extravagantly," the dark and purple haired man said.

"You say the word extravagant way too much, senior," the younger of the two said with hidden indignation.

"Extravagantly so."



The young man slapped his forehead.

"Well, regardless of what you said though, isn't it a bit much for us to be keeping that thing of his despite how broken it is. Will he even use it? I mean, we're busy with something else here and even lacking the numbers of our mission as it is."

"Cooperation requires extravagant levels of patience. Besides, word is that Actuass has many of these extravagantly hidden all around the three nations."

"But why would he choose to keep this one he recently used in the retrieval here?"

"Hmmm. Probably because he wants to use it soon and needed it to be guarded extravagantly. This region has many wanderers after all."

"Stop worrying about these things. We have the first piece to our plan after so many years with the necromancers' extravagant help. A show of extravagant goodwill isn't a bad thing at all," the older man said as his honey coloured eye peaked at a hidden space where something lay in the dark, immobile...

Chapter 250: They Are Gone: The Trail They Blaze

Inhone City.

"He's already left with the Mage, has he?" Erkus said as he took in a deep breath.

This had happened too fast.

It was almost as if his movements were being traced and this plan executed with impeccable timing using them as a basis.

"To think Silrat would do this. No. It's actually more in tune with his character, now that I think about it. He sure takes action fast and I would give the same praise to Tulnas."

Terian sighed in exasperation.

Even he hadn't seen this coming.

Tulnas had immediately left for this mission with Skullius merely an hour and half after they had left the Guilds Association.

At this time, Erkus had been quite busy processing the remaining issue with the feuds that were happening and an upcoming event that would be launched, involving the great families from both this region and outside in one of the large cities.

This particular matter had been blasting at his mind and he had had talks with Silrat about this just a few days ago, venting about how he was unable to take even the shortest of breaks because of it.

To think that the bastard would use this to his advantage...

"No matter," Erkus said as he massaged his temples. "We shouldn't be worrying about this. Tulnas is faithful to the City and unlike Eobald and his group, he at least remains a permanent force in the region. He wouldn't abandon all that prestige over such. He either truly has need of this Festos character or wants to achieve another one of his goals. Either way, we will find out when he comes back."

Damilla who was seated beside Terian silent gripped her robe in rage.

"Terian was right. This man truly has Tulnas in his good books. Such blind trust. What exactly has he done to make his image so clear and trustworthy in everyone's minds?" she thought.

"Very well. If you are sure on that aspect, then I will not argue any further. However what I'm more concerned about is the potential repercussions if Tulnas' proclaimed method of stopping the Clusters is not successful or is outright false. Our collective image will drop not only in the eyes of Pelian but also Maqi and Emeradis.

Tulnas said it himself that he was not fully confident in this method," Terian said with apprehension in his eyes.

Erkus scratched his chin as he heard this, his experienced mind churning in thought.

"That is true," he said. "But what if it wasn't true. Who else is more considerate of the strength of his influence than Tulnas? Would he risk it all just like that? He has much to lose and I can't imagine him gambling it all away."

"In my opinion, he got you two with a clever lie designed for you to focus more on his failure than his success."

...!

Terian frowned.

Could that be...?

Erkus leaned back in his chair.

"I expect that he must have high prospects for this mission of his. The returns he plans to attain must be so great, he wants to shove them in your faces."

Damilla's turned red as she couldn't contain her agitation while Terian got even more tense.

All he could think of right now, was that confident and arrogant smile.

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Four thick horses galloped ahead, drawing behind them a fortified carriage that was built with sturdiness and lightness in mind more than flashy appeal.

Within it, six figures sat down, three one side and three on the other.

The interior was cushioned with soft and comfortable seats that would alleviate the hassle of constantly jerking back on hard surfaces as the carriage travelled.

Skullius, Red Rage and Natalika sat on one side, while Tulnas, Ginie and Gertreld were seated on the other.

Skullius felt it so strange that he was casually sitting with Red Rage while being out in the open like it was normal.

The Apostle also seemed...pleased to be out after all that time in the ring.

Before they had left, he had taken the ring he had been given by Silrat, which contained the clothes and armour, filled it with the Apostle's weaponry and returned it to him.

Now he wouldn't have to carry it all and pass it up one by one to Red Rage in a fight.

His own spatial ring remained hidden with Red Rage supplying it with Null Life Essence that only he and the Apostle could see.

Apparently, the amount needed to keep up this trick was miniscule but Skullius couldn't be sure with Red Rage anymore.

Perhaps he had mastered a powerful technique that he humbly told to be a simple application, what with his newfound subservience to Skullius because of the over 100 favourability.

The sockethole!

Gertreld was clinging onto Tulnas' arm as she looked out the window with a smile, her tender face that faked youth beaming with happiness.

She donned armour that Skullius considered, strange.

It was a long red dress made with a material akin to chain mail, but with a less crude appearance and a shiny lustre.

On the shoulders, grey coloured armour plates could be seen forming a path to her neck where they created a well decorated collar.

Gold and grey steel gauntlets could be seen over her hands with a similarly coloured chest plate over her chest.

"Ha~. Such a beautiful day. I hope it ends the very same way. Don't you think?" Gertreld said as she turned to Tulnas who looked to have been lost in thought.

"That's right. I hope it ends the same way. After a thrilling battle that is," the Guild leader replied with a light smile.

Gertreld smiled wildly in response.

Tulnas then turned to his side where the extremely short and shy figure of Ginie was and wrapped his arm around her shoulder.

She wore long blue robes that had a red fringe with a set of light armour underneath that peeked from the neck of her hooded robes.

With Tulnas holding her shoulder, she shook, gripping her staff tightly as she shrank.

She was fairly young. Younger than the other ladies of the Guild at least.

She didn't share a romantic relationship with Tulnas like the others and had joined the Guild earlier this year along with Bustifina.

She was still very glittery around Tulnas whom she would usually called her Genuine light or big brother, both these titles relating to previous events.

"I'll be counting on your Mage-Form Mimicking Art on this one. Use this time to relax, alright? We'll all be backing you up, so don't be afraid," Tulnas said as he stroked her hair softly, calming her down a bit.

"Un, un. I'll do my best!" Ginie said determinedly.

Skullius watched this with cold eyes, as he then turned to Red Rage as he expressed his intent through their mental link.

'If you get yourself blown up again with all I've done for you, you can...kiss getting resurrected goodbye! Wait, wait... ah forget it!'

Red Rage merely nodded, this not dampening his spirits in the least.

Natalika who was beside Skullius shifted as her sharp senses were being utilised to constantly check for anything amiss around them.

Her blindfold wasn't only for show as she truly was blind but had honed her other senses to a terrifying degree, earning her the respect she deserved from her family as she had mastered a powerful technique even with her disability.

She was from one of the smaller families that owned a small portion of land outside this region along with her twin sister, Riyana.

She donned pretty much the same type of get-up she had on earlier, but with different material and colours; a short dark purple dress that reached her thighs with bandages going the rest of the way to her knees, a short but tough lilac robe over the dress with a sword on her lap.

Tulnas turned to Skullius and flung a spatial ring that the Discount Human immediately caught and checked.

Within it, Skullius saw...

...!

"Might as well boost your physicality while we're on the way. None of us will be helping you out if you get yourself in a tough spot, right? Superficially, at least. While I'm inclined to not take your curse too seriously because your value, I'm not going to risk it all on a whim either," Tulnas said.

Skullius beamed with joy.

150 red gems were his to absorb!