

Undead 291

Chapter 291: Trump Card! (2)

Tulnas dashed ahead.

However, his movement wasn't as Guissepo expected. Or rather, what followed wasn't as the Evenfall cultist expected altogether!

He did not see anything else but a fist blast into his face with the force of an otherworldly locomotive!

The cultist's force ripped from the power as he felt a shuddering shock soar through his body!

The entire sand dune that he and Guissepo stood on exploded from the force that was released on contact as the Evenfall cultist went on to be launched a great distance at breakneck speed!

He crashed into another sand dune, his whole body feeling an incredible heat that tried to invade his flesh the instant he was submerged!

TSSSS!

The sand started to melt, its effort being geared towards swallowing him whole and turning him into a charred corpse surprise!

'What is this...?' Guissepo thought as he felt the sand around him coiling dangerously as it sought to subdue him!

He immediately pushed himself out of the sand with a burst of condensed mana and exposed himself back to the surface, but the moment he did, he saw Tulnas' spinning figure arch and land a kick to the back of his neck!

BOOM!

The sheer force brought him down into the sand which flew from his descent at the foot, his figure digging deep into the ground as he found himself held tight by the sand that kept pulling him inside in an attempt to bury him deep enough!

'Arghh....extravagantly annoying!' Guissepo thought as he pulled himself out, but then...

An overbearing force hammered through the sand from above, bringing with it such a devastatingly lethal amount of power that it bore a large hole from above while pushing a large amount of sand down to descend on Guissepo who continued to sink!

Tulnas had punched the heck out of the spot where Guissepo was being pulled into by the sand, the entire force caused the entire False Territory to shudder!

His raw strength was boosted to a shocking degree!

Tulnas' Territory was vastly different from the real thing.

It was, as its name stated, a False Territory, made when he worked with the third and strongest tamed beast he had in his arsenal, the Grinning Jester Fox.

In reality, it wasn't even close to 40% when it came to effectiveness and power when compared to a regular Majestic Territory, a power whose application and traits were too complex for the current level of fighters in this battle.

It only lasted for two minutes from when it finished forming, but that was usually enough for Tulnas to end a fight.

Its basic purpose was to amplify his stats to the point where he could exhibit strength, speed and endurance way beyond his current capacity to demolish any enemies he pulled within the Territory.

On top of this, the weather conditions; the extreme cold in the air and the vicious heat under the sand were supposed to give his opponents a rough experience in their two minutes worth of detention within.

As for the main purpose of this Territory... Tulnas hoped to keep that unforgiving wraps until he truly needed to use it.

That was of course, if it could be helped.

The Tamer narrowed his eyes as the sand before him emitted heat, smoke and steam from the temperatures that were rising underneath.

'After eating all my attacks, this bastard is still not bruised or even scratched. Heh, the Master Stage really is unforgiving. Though I doubt he's scaled it up even to Terian's level,' Tulnas thought.

In the next moment, something he wholly expected happened.

Bits of multi-coloured fireworks sparkled from the massive hole he had gouged from the ground with his punch!

Guissepo's figure shot out, his body being unscathed as he even had all his clothes on, his black and purple hair fluttering as he steadied himself on the surface.

"Quite the extravagantly neat tricks you have there. Unfortunately for you. I've decided it's fine if you just die here!" Guissepo said before he moved, the wind around exploding from his steps worth of action which was once again, too fast for most to see!

Tulnas' eyes immediately adopted an orange tint instead of their usual ocean blue hue, as when he was about to react, Guissepo flung an incredibly powerful palm strike at his head!

With his orange eyes gleaming, Tulnas saw the movement of Guissepo's palm strike clearly with recurring hazy images of its flow, his instincts causing him hurriedly raised his arms to guard!

He made it in time, but...

Bits of multi-coloured fireworks struck Tulnas' arm along with a horrendous force that... instantly blew his arms into a bloody pulp, the raw power emitted from the palm strike carrying over as it minced the skin of his face and exploded his head into chunks when the two touched!

Splatter!

Guissepo scoffed as he saw Tulnas' headless and bloody body sway this way and that...

"Talented heathens have extravagantly more hubris than I imagined..." Guissepo said as he waved his hands of gore.

However, in the next mini-moment, Tulnas' corpse exploded with a raucous mass of sand spilling everywhere instead of blood, this effect shocking Guissepo as this obviously wasn't what he expected!

From the sand, Tulnas' figure juttred out with a ridiculing grin as he launched himself forward at breakneck speed with his arm cocked back, veins popping up as he exerted all his current strength!

"Try again!" Tulnas yelled as his fist tunneled threw the air, its appearance looking like it was made from frost covered ice instead of flesh, a thick energy, like Aura wrapping around it!

The force of impact when the punch touched Guissepo's face was insane, as the swaths of sand parted and trembled, with Guissepo's visage twisting from the impact!

The cultist was launched over yonder, this time with a bleeding nose but Tulnas wasn't done!

He bolted ahead with quick steps, his fugue barely showing with his movement as he trailed after Guissepo on the ground!

He reached the man in flight and went on to tackle and slam him into the ground where the sand welcomed the cultist by instantly melting, several thousand degrees being reached in an instant as Guissepo started to sink into it!

The cultist didn't feel pain however, as a halo of neon light re-emerged from behind him!

"Hahahaha! How extravagantly blessed by your pagans gods you are, boy!" Guissepo cackled madly as he pulled his arms out of the lava and gripped Tulnas' neck tightly with an inescapable grip that punctured and clogged Tulnas' blood vessels!

The young Guild leader's face instantly turned pale with his eyes turning bloodshot but he remained grinning even when Guissepo went on pull him forward and give him a phenomenal head-butt that was heard all around this mini-world, the Tamer's head turning into chunks once again!

"Hit harder, you old coot!"

Once again, Tulnas' corpse ballooned and burst into shots of wild sand, a lively Tulnas emerging from within this wave with an even crazier visage of battle-loving joy as he yelled, his hands going on to grab Guissepo's head as he then planted his knee into it!

Another turbulent force blew out, pushing away the vast geographical features within this space!

As Tulnas dropped his attack on this older man, spots of multi-coloured fireworks brimmed all around Guissepo.

No!

All around the two within the entire False Territory as in the next moment, Guissepo struck his elbow into Tulnas' thigh, breaking apart the bone easily as he then went on to grab his face and plant it into the ground with a deafening noise, the Territory once again shuddering!

Around his body, an insane amount of these bits of sparkling, coloured fireworks twinkled as the cultist the went on to bark joyfully in Tulnas' face!

"You're about as crazy as I am, boy! But you lack the conviction to win in one extravagantly fell swoop! Like this!" Guissepo said with excited bursts of heavy pants!

"Extravagant Jubilee!"

BOOOOM!

The sparkling bits all shone in their respective colours with blinding intensity as they went on ignite in an unforgiving explosion!

Tulnas who was held down by Guissepo was incinerated in an instant, turbulent explosions rocking the entire False Territory in such a grand manner that cracks began forming on what was supposed to be the distant dunes and horizons!

Blazing heat and kinetic force shredded the landscape as even the frosty sun looked to quiver from the impact!

What remained on the ground was an open space with charred earth that stretched into the distance, fumes rising from it as only the figure of one man remained.

Guissepo.

He looked around, seeing the mess he had made with the heated ground all around.

Though one would normally wear a triumphant face from causing such destruction, the cultist wasn't truly convinced that he had successfully felled his enemy.

He remained vigilant but only until he saw more cracks form around him as the False Territory started to break.

'A wide area attack seems to have done the trick. I must admit that did give me some extravagant trouble though,' Guissepo said as he wiped his nose clean on the blood that leaked from it.

Yet...

BAAAAM!

An incredibly powerful impact knocked the man on the back of his head as a shockwave blew, forcing him arc forward!

Guissepo was shocked as his cleaned nose once again gushed of blood!

BAAAM!

Another ferocious impact sounded as Guissepo felt a punch lodge into his chest, a leg tripping him so that he fell backwards!

...!

"I TOLD YOU TO TRY HARDER DIDN'T I?!"

Multiple voices echoed out as two mirror images of Tulnas stood over Guissepo with one of them then gripping the cultist's head, his cheeks swelling up animatedly as he then spat out a concentrated stream of plasma-like water into the cultist's face!

Chapter 292: That's It? (1)

CRACK!

The resounding sound of something shattering echoed as in the next moment, this something shattered in its entirety.

The invisible barrier that housed the Evenfall cultists finally shattered, no longer being able to handle the tug of war with the massive sphere which was Tulnas' False Territory!

Gwendelina grit her teeth, as did the people behind her who now didn't have any protection from the outside enemies!

Unfortunately for them, their fate was sealed the instant that barrier shattered, as before they could have three more instances to breath air, a terrifying long sword swept through them in an elegant arc, a shapely lady with a blindfold having already invaded the space as she attacked without mercy!

The six who had remained, channelling the formation with Primus, were killed without resistance, as they were not combatants to begin with.

Natalika had passed by Gwendelina who had frozen up as she hadn't been prepared for an instant attack.

Natalika's speed had completely overwhelmed her and she who had been focused on salvaging the situation, was left to try and gather enough mana to defend herself when...

"My love had given you the choice to save your life, hadn't he? I wonder, should I do the same?" the voice of none other than Gertreld spoke, one of Tulnas' short swords in her hand as she nicked Gwendelina's neck with it.

Because of Tomin's sudden punch to her chin, she had been temporarily immobilised and bound to the centre of the formation where her struggles were proven to be futile even with her Full Body Aura which had later faded.

Gwendelina immediately gave up on resisting. She doubted she could pit her activation of a spell against Gertreld's ability to kill her.

Once more, her eyes stealthily looked up to the large sphere in the air.

Guissepo's re-emergence was her best shot.

A distance away, Skullius was looking at everything that was happening.

He wondered what this skill he was seeing was exactly as he hadn't seen anything like it before. He didn't bother to ask the person beside him, or rather the people that had been beside him as Natalika had been standing here a few seconds ago had instantly dashed forward when she saw the massive sphere exerting more force against the invisible barrier.

Quite the vivid and impactful clash it had been, only Skullius truly wished that he could see what was happening inside that barrier which had started to form cracks, strips of blinding light shooting from these.

The outcome would determine a lot.

The Discount Human then turned to Red Rage who had been silently observing.

He had once again assumed silence when his [Majestic Attire of the Omnipotent Pelvis-Hegemon] had timed out, a rather unceremonious event which was escorted by nothing but the dimming of his golden armament.

"I'm surprised you didn't run ahead to start killing these evil doers," Skullius said as he started to walk forward.

Red Rage merely shook his head.

The fact that he behaved so differently when he was this aspect, Prisma, that Skullius didn't know much about, was ridiculous.

The Discount Human had tried to peer into the situation on this aspect with his guidance field, but had been unsuccessful.

To find out more about this Prisma, Skullius made a mental note to have Red Rage summon whoever the null flesh that was through the skill, for a chat.

Suddenly, Skullius felt something poke his arm.

He turned only to realise that the person who had poked him had immediately dashed away.

The Discount Human unconsciously raised his brow when the short figure of Ginie finally gathered the courage to say her piece.

"Un, un. Thank... you. For saving my life," she said with a nervous smile.

Skullius' expression remained blank for a moment.

The incident that happened before.

It wasn't that he had forgotten about it or that he wasn't aware.

He knew full well what had happened as when Ginie had gotten fatally attacked by Guissepo, he hadn't been conscious, but just without the ability to control himself.

He had experienced it all and while it was something to address, Skullius had chosen to ignore it for the time being.

He had felt a burning emotion that drove him to rush up to Ginie back then and this... made him uncomfortable.

Such a thing was meant to be left for after a review when the battle was over.

Now however...

As Skullius looked at Ginie, he didn't know what to say. She was thanking him, a gesture he couldn't say he was used to. Even in Deadmanland, there was never anything to be thankful for.

That said, Skullius couldn't be rude.

Right?

Maybe...

"Um..." Skullius mumbled before simply nodding.

Ginie smiled and then circled around him like a plague before rushing forward where seemingly the entire situation behind what had been the invisible barrier had been resolved in its entirety.

Skullius sighed.

She didn't forget about his curse.

Even while knowing the parameters, Ginie was being extra careful, as was everyone else.

Skullius followed after the short girl for a few steps, reaching a short distance from the barrier.

He marvelled at its seemingly molten exterior as he vividly felt the enormous amount of energy it produced.

'Incredible...' he thought, wishing he had something like this in his arsenal.

As Skullius watched what was ahead, something caught his attention.

A tug at his senses.

Or rather, at his finger.

He felt something within his storage beam and emit a peculiar energy.

Skullius would never assume this but...

It was a beacon.

*

VWOOOOOSH!

Like a condensed waterfall, a mass of water poured from the Tulnas' creepily enlarged mouth without pause!

The pressured water struck Guissepo with a bright glow not usually seen from water as it beamed from his wordhole!

In truth, Tulnas wasn't aiming to do some heavy damage, but it was worth a try while trying to accomplish his overarching goal.

With the short amount of time that he had been fighting with the cultist, he had realised that it was virtually impossible to do any decisive damage with the conventional abilities of the False Territory, especially when considering the red neon light which rose from Guissepo.

Even now, Tulnas could see the water he was blasting against Guissepo's face being warded off.

'Of course,' he thought.

Guissepo's hand suddenly popped from the water that had now filled up a bit more than a two tenths of the entire Territory, its might being felt as it went on try and grab a Tulnas!

Unfortunately for it, Tulnas' double who was beside him hurried over, held back the arm, pushed it into the water and slammed it on the ground!

It took the double two of its hands to accomplish this feat and even then...

Around Guissepo's hand, bits of sparkling multi-coloured fireworks suddenly emerged and with an enormous explosion, they gleefully ignited, destroying the double and knocking away the Tulnas who had been splashing the burst of water!

Guissepo tore himself from the water with an extravagant force as he fully expected the Tulnas he had demolished with his explosion to suddenly reappear after a burst of sand.

Unfortunately, that was not what he was met with.

Instead, he found to his shock a more disturbing scene.

Four Tulnases stood in the water in a circular formation with their backs against each other, all of them then going to shoot blasts of water into the pool that was starting to form in the Territory!

The ferocity of the gushing waters which produced vapouring variants of the element was so strong that the Territory was quickly filled up with water in a matter of eight seconds, no space to breathe remaining afterwards!

...!

Guissepo was perturbed by this as he went on to hold his breath.

'My Extravagant Jubilee may just be subdued with this move. Did he already pick up on its extravagance?' Guissepo thought as he swam, his keen eyesight then zooming in on the Tulnases that burst towards in the water, their eyes gleaming with an orange glow.

'It must be that eye. How extravagant...!' Guissepo thought as he recalled to when Tulnas' eye had suddenly switched from its ocean blue colour to the orange – the moment when he first blew up Tulnas' head in their first exchange.

Guissepo's blessing, Extravagant Jubilee, allowed him to conjure explosions of different scales given a prelude of sparkling multi-coloured fireworks. The intensity and range of these fireworks, along with their colours determined how strong his explosion could be.

These wouldn't work well in water, was the cultist's sentiment.

But still... he would persevere!

'Bring it on!' he thought as the red light which rose from behind him continued to do so while the Four Tulnases suddenly changed as they neared him.

Their forms turned from being made by skin and flesh to being transparent human outlines with a blue colour, a starry design being all that could be seen over their bodies!

With this transformation, the four started to rapidly swim around Guissepo, the force of their movement generating a massive, disorienting whirlpool that turned deadly as they went round and round!

Guissepo was unable to resist the force of the pull and push, his body being spun so quickly that he could barely see around him or notice which direction was where!

As this occurred, a hoarse voice echoed inside the mind of one of the Tulnases.

'We have 10 seconds remaining. Finish it, now!'

'I know. Prepare for option three....' Tulnas responded.

Chapter 293: That's It? (2)

False Territory, Frostbourne Desert.

This was a high-end Special Skill that Tulnas devised in order to cover for all that he lacked at this current stage.

An Advanced Class.

The truth of the matter was that Advanced Classes for Energy Formers were way harder to obtain than those of other categories. This had led Tulnas to Class Branch, gaining abilities that would otherwise not be his forte as an Energy Former, like swordsmanship, stealth, close range battle instinct and hand-to-hand techniques, most of which he had exhibited in this fight.

The False Territory was not his own idea however, but one that he had been given by the Grinning Jester Fox that he had tamed.

He had met this creature when he travelled to Maqi, finding it on his venture into a massive forest called Oumior.

It was still a cub back then, being roughly six years old, but exhibiting extreme intelligence and strength above Tier 4.

The Grinning Jester Fox was not a common creature to stumble upon in any location and this young one, from seeing and appreciating its qualities through a short battle, Tulnas did his very best to try and tame it.

From its extraordinary ability to read his moves and tell various aspects of him just by observing him with its orange eye, Tulnas could see that this was a worthwhile creature to strive for.

Unfortunately, it was no small task as in the end, he only managed to win it over by besting it in combat after three days and then performing the Taming Rite.

Growing with this creature had been a hassle as it took a long time for the two to get used to each other but given the fox's intelligence, it quickly learnt how to communicate with him and became more friendly to him, opening up more about what it knew and wanted.

The two had gotten along pretty well, Tulnas helping the creature grow and treating it as a friend instead of a pet.

After some time, the fox had thought of something about Tulnas and asked the simple question, "How would you like to own a trump card, an ultimate technique that could allow you to use all your tamed beasts' abilities as your own and with greater efficiency? Excluding mine, of course."

Tulnas had found the idea absurd at first as his reply was dismissive.

"I'm trying to achieve that by learning how to obtain an advanced class, you idiot. Are you hungry or something, you can just tell me, you know?"

"No, you fool!" the fox had growled at Tulnas before sighing out its rage to more clearly express its point. "I've seen some older beasts use manifestations of hmm, what do you call it again, of space... Territories to enhance their mutations and abilities. Humans do it too, right? What if I told you that I can help you create such a thing, but as a lesser version that lasts only for a short time?"

"Oh?" Tulnas had finally paid attention as he looked at the grinning figure that protruded from his back. "That would be pretty handy. It would cover up for my offensive weakness if it could also boost my physical abilities. Interesting. What would I need?"

"Hmmm. Your Aura. All of it, at once. It possesses information about your tamed beasts and your abilities. I could temporary exhaust all my energy to create a separate space that enhances these abilities and assimilates them into you. But, it will be a one-time use with a limited duration.

My healing capabilities will have to be used to a limited effect prior to using this technique, so make sure not to die before then."

Tulnas had grinned after mulling this over.

It was way more than worth it to bet on this and his expression had told the fox all that it needed to know.

....

At the current moment, the four Tulnases rushed around the water creating a turbulent water vortex that spun at a crazy speed!

All their figures in addition to Guissepo's could barely be seen in this insanity and the cultist grit his teeth.

'Extravagantly Intriguing. I can't tell which way is up or down. It won't matter even if I could unless I can manage to outmanoeuvre these clones, which I guarantee will be extravagantly difficult. In

that case, I'll use all I have to blow this dimension and slaughter all these heathens! I will attract more of them eventually and start over.

Tomin's fears were not unfounded after all!' Guissepo thought before he curled around himself like a ball, gathering his energy as bits of fireworks started to appear around his body!

This time however, they all seemed to be of the same colour.

Blue!

They started to generate a mass of multiple shades of the colour while illuminating the water which started to boil immediately!

The four Tulnases sensed the surge in power and they looked amongst themselves, one of them immediately swimming towards one of the larger cracks on the Territory wall while the rest stretched out their hands in their respective positions.

Their transparent, starry bodies as well as luminous eyes quivered while Guissepo's body prepared to release the craziest explosion with a blue tint enveloping everything within the Territory!

With this glow came an incredible quivering of not only the Territory, but even the cavern as this was a prelude to a calamitous event!

The explosion created no further suspense as it came right after the glow, the water within the Territory rumbling as it was pushed back by the initial impact!

Yet...

"Now!" one of the Tulnases ordered as in the next moment right as the explosion was about to wipe out everything!

GRRRRRKCHH!

In less than a second, everything froze.

Literally.

The Tulnases, the water and Guissepo who was the very centre froze up into a large circular white block that had hints of blue originating from its centre where the dreadful explosion that Guissepo had been about to use had begun.

As this occurred, the Tulnas who had left the others, exiting through the crack, landed on the ground outside the large sphere where his starry body instantly transitioned into his flesh and blood, losing Alphat's physical traits as he was outside the Territory.

He looked around to see Skullius a few meters behind him with a quizzical expression on his face as he looked at his spatial storage ring before turning his head to look at him.

On the other side, Natalika and Gertreld were each holding down Gwendelina and Tomin who looked up from his grounded position.

'Seems like everything has been settled,' Tulnas thought.

As he was about to pay attention to his Territory, his sharp senses noticed something very odd.

Primus.

There were remnants of Primus that still leaked through the air even after the formation had vanished from its handlers dying.

However this wasn't had caught his attention as he had felt this before the fight.

What attracted his focus was that amidst the small streams that had been flowing out when the Evenfall members were still alive as they channelled Primus from a formation that Tulnas wasn't sure where it led to, one particular one stood out to him.

This remnant of the channels that had been fuelled for the past days or maybe weeks in his perception was large and dense.

Very large, almost to the point where it was as large as large river!

A massive amount of condensed Primus was being channelled somewhere.

If each channel was a potential Cluster being formed somewhere in this region, then the small ones would be white to blue-white Clusters.

But this one...

Furthermore, the direction which it extended to didn't sit well with Tulnas.

If his directional sense was correct then, it was somewhere in the direction of Inhone!

'Are these bastards mad?!' Tulnas thought before he refocused on the Territory which had passed its time limit.

Skullius noticed Tulnas' troubled expression and asked with bountiful anxiety, drawing away from the issue going on with his ring. "What's happening?"

Tulnas rendered an answer which he deemed adequate as he then proceeded with the next step.

"Unfortunately, Mr. Explosion I was up against was pretty strong. I can't kill him with any of my current abilities so..."

FWIP!

Tulnas propped up three of his fingers from his right hand as the rest remained planted to his palm, the spherical False Territory beginning to rumble with its cracked and heated mass!

"...I'll have to seal him and produce him as living evidence."

From Tulnas' back, the Grinning Jester Fox emerged, its head focused ahead.

Its appearance spooked Skullius a bit as it really looked like the insanely powerful fox he had travelled with in the Tremur.

"Complete Sand Coffin," Tulnas called, the massive sphere beginning to shrink rapidly as its exterior turned from a heated molten surface into thickets of shuffling waves of golden-brown sand that maintained the perfectly circular shape.

At the same time, thick dark chains wrapped around this figure of sand and with a loud clank whose impact vividly depicted the completion of the seal, the deed was done.

Tulnas breathed out a sigh of relief while the fox behind him began to recede back into his body.

"I'll be retiring to recover my energy. Don't disturb me," it said with a hoarse voice.

"You live in my body for Quintess' sake," Tulnas mumbled in exasperation.

He then looked around, reaffirming that he would definitely need to inform Erkus and Silrat about a potential blue Cluster or worse emerging.

He stored the floating mass of sand into his spatial storage which was quite pricey with the special effects it offered, which allowed him to store a living individual given that certain conditions were met.

Tulnas then walked up to the space where the Evenfall cultists were projecting their formation, his eyes turning to Tomin who looked to be barely alive.

His eyes were bloodshot, with thick veins roaming within as he squirmed in pain.

"He's not a threat. Whatever poison was used on him by Festos' summon is rather potent," Natalika said.

Tulnas nodded as he then turned his eyes to Gwendelina who was held firmly by Gertreld, a short sword at her neck.

She sweated as she wore a dark face with traces of immense rage leaking from the way she looked up at Tulnas with her dark eyes.

Tulnas merely smirked at her in response before speaking.

"I don't think keeping a Mage alive is ideal. I already have more than enough with Mr. Explosion."

Gwendelina's eye twitched.

Dying for a cause and dying like this were two different things.

It was so... dissatisfactory.

Behind them all, Skullius once again turned to his storage ring as the weird tug suddenly happened again.

'Seriously! What the flesh is going on?' Skullius thought as he then passed mana into the ring to see what was causing this strange thing to occur through him.

He then found that this was happening in the space within the Null Devil's Aegis of Damnation!

How could an object do something like this while trapped in a double portion of storage?

Only Red Rage could do that.

As he peered within, Skullius saw...

A small thin, hand-shaped item with a blood red hue.

This...

This was the crest he had been given by Eobald back in the Tremur Forest along with the Arcane Teleportation scroll and the Universal Gate Key!

An item that Skullius had long forgotten about what with how small it was compared to everything else stored in the storage space of the Null Devil's Aegis of Damnation!

This was the item which was causing this?!

Suddenly, the item shook and left the space within the dark armour, then it went on to leave the space within his spatial storage ring as it appeared outside, floating on its own before him.

Tulnas felt something weird going on behind him and turned to see Skullius looking with anxiousness at the floating crest.

"What's that?" Tulnas asked as he narrowed his eyes in suspicion.

"It's... uhmm..." Skullius tried to explain but couldn't find the words, yet Gwendelina and Tomin who looked at this had their eyes constrict immediately!

What was that doing on this guy?

Wasn't that..?

To add more fuel to this abrupt change in events, in a silent corner of the cavern too dark and silent for anyone to pay attention to, footsteps were heard.

Something inched its way from a space that was hidden by the darkness.

The moment it became clearer for all to see, its presence becoming abundant for all to sense, all eyes immediately shot open.

For Gwendelina and Tomin this turned to be chaotic occurrence, for when they saw the colours white and green emerge, they grit their teeth, Tomin especially!

For the rest, this new entrant's energy caused for them to turn extremely cautious.

"Haa... You're the one?" a stern and authoritative voice leaked from the hooded figure donning a cracked, dual coloured mask as he looked at none other than Skullius...!

Chapter 294: And Here We Are...

'I knew it!' Tomin thought as he gnashed his teeth. 'Was he watching all along so that he could...<cough>... swoop in and help, taking that as a favour?! I told them that keeping one of his bodies was a bad idea!'

As he had thought!

A hooded figure that looked like it had just come from an intense battle emerged, with a torn, hooded dark jacket and pants, dried and dirtied with blood and dust.

The mask it wore looked like it could shatter with a single touch, the green and white colours looking to be fading.

The fact that this figure was missing an arm brought on an eerie sense to the onlookers who were none the wiser; Tulnas' group, giving them nothing but apprehension and confusion as they wondered if this was a sudden hidden enemy to fight or something else entirely.

However, it was unmistakable.

The hazel glint from behind the mask that this individual wore as well as the heavy presence he exuded which seemingly hardened the air immediately buried everyone in tension.

This was it!

The body that Tomin and Guissepo had been instructed to keep for Actuass when the man had returned from Evic with Revia's body!

As a favour, he had asked to keep this body here, claiming that he would feel better if it was 'protected' by powerful elites as he had a nigh perfect sync with it.

This is why Tomin had been upset, flaring with frustration towards Guissepo earlier.

"...Once more... I receive no answer even when I'm standing before the evidence..." Actuass said with his gleaming eyes looking at Skullius.

The Discount Human froze for a bit.

When Actuass' presence became all but clear, he had sensed its composition clearly.

Undeath!

This was definitely Undeath energy!

A form he was not used to with thickets of perfectly weaved energy which made an immaculate horror in the air!

This was no scrub!

Was this man...

The Discount Human placed his hand on the sheath to [Demion's Dance], but he hesitated and loosened it afterwards.

Would a blade made to harness a death flinging technique work on someone who wielded undeath?

Gertreld who was at the side kicked up Tulnas' blade which was on the ground over to him, the topless Tamer quickly handling it as he got ready for another brutal fight, mana oozing from his body.

Post using his Territory, his tamed beasts would all be recuperating from him having used their abilities. Furthermore, he couldn't use his Aura as it would have all been used up.

He only had himself to work with at the moment.

He saw that Actuass was keeping his eyes on Skullius and also.... perhaps the floating hand shaped object before the young man but...

Was this all?

Actuass shifted his view to the two remaining Evenfall members who were looking at him with complicated expressions.

"I suppose I could help you before I go on to reap this murderous fellow here. A good enough trade for keeping one of my proxies right?" Actuass asked, making Tomin grunt in disgust as he felt his body continuously degrade.

'Tsk. This guy is insanely strong...I think. I can't tell where he stands exactly... Our best course of action is to swarm him with attacks. A full scale wave with all we have,' Tulnas thought before his eye suddenly shifted to Ginie who was sweating, memories of what had happened earlier swirling in his mind. 'No.

It's better to take the careful approach. Let's hold off on attacking aimlessly. Hmm? What's this?'

Natalika, Gertreld, Ginie and Tulnas felt something peculiar within themselves but not the Discount Human.

Skullius was fully swimming in his anxiety as he gulped unconsciously. Memories of his exchange with Eobald raced in his mind and he recalled the message that he had initially been supposed to take to the Green Neolists as per the man's request.

'Find the Green Neolists and tell them that, They are onto us...'

As if the Discount Human would have spent his time searching for these guys when his null life was on the line.

But now, it looked like that portion of his story had caught up to him, the crest he had in his possession being used to track him somehow.

'This is pretty bad...' Skullius thought.

Actuass turned from the two captured members and back to the rest.

"Do I really have to do this again with you?" Actuass deliberated, seeing as everyone was experiencing IT already.

Everyone outside the Evenfall captives and...

"What?" Actuass narrowed his hazel eyes as he looked at Skullius.

Because of the natural ability afforded by his powers, anyone he was facing against him would start to lose their life energy aka, their lives immediately.

In Actuass' vision he could see the bodies of the three ladies and Tulnas spilling the green life energy steadily as expected but...

This was not the case for Skullius!

This man leaked nothing at all!

This... was an unexpected occurrence.

'Strange. This is the first time this has ever happened...' Actuass thought.

It seemed the people before him were waiting for him to make a move first.

Because of this new and strange phenomenon, he was happy to oblige.

He wouldn't mind losing a few shapely jugs of undeath energy if it meant he could take this seemingly more mysterious killer of Eobald before him and study him.

'And here I thought it would be an uneventful journey...' Actuass thought as he took a step that prompted everyone he was up against to grow tense as they prepared their strongest moves against this foe.

However...

A prolonged last fight against this menacing villain wasn't going to happen, as Direction seemed to have other plans.

Actuass was the first to notice it as it was something from his arsenal.

A quivering that broke free of his control and summoned itself.

A figure promptly appeared before him.

A dark green figure, skeletal in stature.

Thick bones with deep gashes and cracks could be seen as this image loomed between Tulnas' group and Actuass who stopped and uttered in confusion...

"SoSei?"

The tool he only used when things when absolutely necessary sprouted from storage on its own!

This wouldn't happen unless...

"Haaa..." the dark green skeleton opened what would be its mouth and spilled a dreadful air with a mix of terrifying energies.

As it did, bright red flames flared from its sockets, first as mere wisps that danced languidly, then as twin ferocious tongues of mad flames that rose and lit the entire cavern in a helish red hue!

As this occurred, only silence descended as all wills to fight were extinguished, because unlike Actuass' presence, this one didn't incite one to fight for survival but to simply... stand there and watch it with horror!

Ginie dropped to her knees with a pale face while shivering horribly as the immense waves of power from this skeleton warped the air around everyone!

Natalika's hand trembled as she loosened the hold over the hilt to her sword prior to launching her attack.

Gertreld merely stood frozen in place while Tulnas...

The Tamer gulped as he took in heavy breaths, unable to speak or move.

What. The. Hell!

Gwendelina sensed the enormous palpations of power from the skeleton and could only suffocate under the pressure from her advanced senses while Tomin...

Well, he had died immediately from the shock of having the raging powers slam into him which allowed the poison in his system to finish him off.

All this said and done, one person was terrified beyond everyone's wildest inference.

Skullius.

His eyes almost popped from his sockets as the horrors he imagined after seeing the green, the red and feeling this menacing energy, turned out to be true when he felt the gaze of this skeleton over him and no one else as it then went on to speak.

"And here we are.... against Direction. Against your god-like favour. We meet again, in flesh and bone, Skullius..."

Chapter 295: Scurry Away!

...

Skullius consciously took in heavy breaths as if hyperventilating.

His chest heaved up and down while water leaked profusely from him.

Words could not perfectly describe his emotions, nor could his Discount Human body.

To make it clear that what he saw was true, Skullius felt his soul tremble!

It quivered and shook as if lightning traced over it, bursts of pain and shock erupting from deep within as the fake human looked on ahead in horror.

No doubt, his soul was affirming that he was in the presence of the one who lorded over his soul!

But how was HE here?!

How?!

Why?!

"S... Somanda..." Skullius mumbled softly to which Actuass who was watching from behind tilted his head and turned to the skeleton that was addressing the very same person he was after.

'They know each other? What's going on?' the Green Neolist head couldn't wrap his mind around this sequence of events.

Tulnas stole a glance at Skullius as he figured that this young man was not as oblivious as he was to what was going on despite shaking like a leaf!

There was more to this man even after all they already knew?!

Actuass took the brief silence to inquire and inform.

"I was just about to capture this man and take him in for—"

"Leave us," Somanda ordered, interrupting Actuass with his raspy voice as he flicked his fingers at the man who was behind him without looking back, the body of the Green Neolist head bursting into a dark flame that swallowed it whole and left charred, smoking chunks that crumbled in less than a second!

...!

What..?!

Everyone blinked and just like that, someone they considered to be a powerful adversary had been eradicated!

Yet, no one spoke a word or even gasped.

This skeletal body, SoSei, was a treasure that could exhibit partial-sentience yet at the same time be used to carry a portion of Somanda the Arch-Lich's consciousness to interact with Actuass.

Unfortunately, because of certain Universal rules, it had limited usage and now, this was the last time it could function as contrary to Actuass' intent to use it at a critical moment in the future, it had spawned for personal gain unrelated to the Green Neolist objectives.

The skeletal body moved as thick flames illuminated the space in red, Somanda peering through Skullius as his teeth went to produce a sound the Discount Human hadn't heard of in a while but with a different tune.

Chachachachacha!

Laughter.

Unlike the comical one he was used to, the tough bones on this construct smacked against each other to produce a sound akin to planks clapping against each other.

Yet this sound horrified Skullius.

"How fascinating the makings of Direction can be... I am a step away from touching them, but here I stand marvelling at how our paths crossed so soon. I expected to see you much later, but who would have thought that when you ran from me, you fell into my Jurisdiction still!" Somanda's voice leaked with a twisted green identifiable within it.

Skullius subconsciously took a step back as he trembled.

'No....' he thought.

The red flames that seemed to want to devour all things focused themselves on the Discount Human and just as it had happened on that very day...

That fateful day...

Skullius was bound by a force he couldn't see!

His body firmly held in place.

The memories that rushed into his head from this experience were by no means pleasant, and the Discount Human found himself losing all his hope.

His soul continued to crackle and pop as if it was about to explode as it reacted to Somanda who took steps forward to approach Skullius.

"Look at you, donning flesh without a care when you had long forgotten what it was like. And now you forget your deathly roots instead! Don't delude yourself. Come. Let me send you back where you belong. Let me rip your soul and send it back to that little girl...

Surely, your soul yearns for it. Or better yet, I could reforge it to undeath instead and fill its void with the light of the undying... chachachachacha!"

'No...!' Skullius thought with panic.

Back to that...?

Back there when he now knew the truth?

About how his bonds with Bonet and the rest were just false friendships born from sorrow?!

No!

It couldn't be.

It can't be.

To die and be wholly trapped in that ice prison with whoever the heck that girl was?!

No!

Skullius felt his soul tremble heavily, its build twitching violently as Somanda approached, which made it actively take damage!

The pain was immense!

It was cruel!

Skullius almost buckled as he continuously felt his will dwindled, from his eye, a subconscious tear falling from the duct as it expressed his unwillingness to keel!

But this wasn't the thick of it!

[An external force assaults your soul. Doom Factor 2 takes advantage. 27%]

..!!!!

'NO!' Skullius screamed in his mind as a wave of pain acted as seconds over the torment he was already enduring.

Yet...

"Either way. Whichever you choose. This proves that even Direction knows you're MINE! Chachachachacha!" Somanda said as he started to cackle loudly while extending his hand to Skullius' face.

The Discount Human felt his will finally sink.

His silver eyes reflected the dark green bony hand of the beyond legendary treasure SoSei as in his very soul, Skullius felt helpless.

He breathed out as he felt his struggles amount to nothing after all this while.

It was over.

How could he deliver himself from this?

SWISSSHHH!

Between Somanda and Skullius, a figure suddenly appeared!

A figure donning blue and black armour.

It stood before Skullius and held Somanda's hand with both of its own, a flashing blue light flickering from behind the helm!

....!

Skullius' eyes were forced to take this in.

Red Rage!

Once again, his Apostle stood between him and adversity!

Skullius' mind clicked!

Something sparked within him in that moment!

Hope!

This was the second time Red Rage was giving him this feeling when he was being overwhelmed, a trait of an Apostle, of a Pelvis Boar-Man!

The armoured figure bravely stood before Somanda, trying to push back his hand!

This was insane!

"Hmmm? What is this here? A puppet of your making with your newfound powers?" Somanda voiced. "A pity."

The Arch-Lich's fingers arched as they flicked at the Apostle with a seemingly lazy force!

Immediately, flames consumed the Apostle in its entirety!

...!

'NO!'

Skullius' mind was rocked to action as even when he couldn't voice his rage and pain in this moment, he expressed it through action!

A plume of darkness exploded from his body with a shocking intensity as he activated [Advanced Evil Production], expelling all the [Evil Darkness] he could with all his mana in one go!

The [Evil Darkness] which gushed out filled a great portion of the cavern as right after this occurred, Skullius immediately called out internally what he considered to be the best move in this situation!

Crude World Projection!

A dark figure rose from Skullius' restrained body!

It loomed over the sea of darkness that covered everything before willing the darkness to obey his will with its his moving hands!

All the darkness rushed to Skullius' physical body and formed a compact sphere that covered it and Red Rage!

In the next instant, the terror stricken Projected form of Skullius burst away at a shocking speed, the sphere following after him with the same velocity!

Those that remained were stunned, except Somanda who looked at Skullius' figure that was bolting away with fervent flames that raged with excitement before he followed, cackling and ridiculing.

"SCURRY AWAY, SKULLIUS! LET'S SEE TO WHICH END OF THIS WORLD YOU CAN RUN TO! TO WHICH PLANE YOU CAN ESCAPE WITH PATCHED UP RAG OF A SOUL!"

Chapter 296: The Arch-Lich!

Actuass opened his eyes and emitted a long sigh.

Thank goodness he was seated down or else the backlash of power would have made him hit a hard drop.

He clutched his mask and took a few moments to settle down.

"How was it?" Fulina who was standing by his side asked. "Did you find him?"

Actuass leaned against the backrest of the chair, relaxing his body which was sore from the massive feedback.

"I did. I did indeed. However, just like Cyne said, Direction just has a way of messing with us. This... character that Eobald spoke of is by no means simple."

Fulina couldn't help but wear confusion as a visage in response to this cryptic reply she got.

According to Eobald, the person he had given his crest was just a scrub who was at the Foundation Stage.

How could it be difficult to capture such a man even if Actuass was using a proxy that held a small portion of his powers?

"Hmm. Let's just say I was once again reminded that we're not fighting for justice or the betterment of all life on Aigas. Allying ourselves with the undead simply proves this," Actuass said before he looked up.

He thought back to Skullius and wondered.

Surely a being that could resist his abilities was special.

Special enough to be known even by an Arch-Lich it seemed.

Even individuals with Hidden Classes that he had met were not exempt from the effects of his abilities.

When they faced him, they'd all start to leak life energy.

Fulina contemplated on Actuass' words as in her head, she simply disagreed with his statement, but that didn't need to be said.

Thankfully, it seemed that everyone whom Eobald had told the plan was dead.

If the world knew...

"Is everyone in place? While we assist the Evenfall, our plans still need to pick up their pace," Actuass asked.

"Yes. It's all ready. All our members have been spread throughout the designated locations. No one has been caught so far," Fulina reported with the tremble of her brow.

"Good," said Actuass. "Now it becomes a race against who will actualize their ideal first. No that it matters much."

If Skullius could breathe in his Projected Form, he would have.

If he could sweat, he would have as well.

The tension was palpable within him as he vaguely felt it.

Death!

He sped with all the speed he could muster as he rushed through the tunnels that he and Tulnas' ladies had travelled to reach the venue for the last battle!

In this form, the speed he could now exhibit in flight was tremendous as he was merely a dark shadow that whizzed through the air while a meter from him, a dark sphere also trailed, keeping up with his movement!

His thoughts were as chaotic as his soul at this moment, confusion and utter fear colliding in a storm inside his dome of processing!

'How the flesh is he here?! Did the undead invade or something?! This is...!' Skullius failed to form the next sentence as the frustration, fury and fright swallowed him up and urged him to keep speeding forward!

He pushed through the dark, winding paths as behind him, he felt the heavy steps of Somanda as he followed, making the entire underground shake vehemently with each of his moves!

The walls would fragment and shatter, the ground exploding into heated chunks that turned into red, glowing versions of themselves with each of Somanda's movements that pushed him a great distance, the entire sequence depicting his movement to be horrifyingly fast!

"CHACHACHACHACHA! WHAT YOU HAVE YOU BEEN FILLING UP YOUR SOUL WITH SKULLIUS?! A MYRIAD OF COLOURS STAIN IT, POORLY PATCHING IT UNEVENLY! YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED HAVE YOU?!" Somanda's eyes flared with red flames as he called, his voice making Skullius' physical body in the dark space shudder violently!

Skullius gritted his non-existent teeth in this form!

He was probably still taking damage because of Doom Factor 2!

'Damn it!' he thought.

This resolve that he had only cultivated by seeing his beacon of hope, Red Rage stand up for him was also beginning to dwindle.

He couldn't escape when his pursuer was just as fast as he was!

Suddenly, Somanda who was a distance away roared with a terrifying voice that resounded within the empty space all around, Skullius turning only to see the Arch-Lich open his mouth wide and spew from it dark red flames that instantly flooded over... EVERYTHING!

Before Skullius knew it, everything was covered in a depressing red hue that quickly washed over him, all things around him melting in the very next instant!

EVERYTHING!

The intensity of this flame was so devastating that it turned all things to a piping hot sludge, the effect travelling all the way back to the large space within the cavern where Tulnas and the rest were!

In mere moments all that remained was a hellish landscape with molten rock everywhere, an evening sky being above the two speeding figures!

The entire landscape had been changed!

Skullius halted for a moment as he couldn't believe his eyes.

They had been deep underground, hadn't they?!

Only Somanda's voice tore him from his reverie as it made an analysis.

"Ah... such fine power. To be able to resist the Olden Blaze of the Putrid... How much you've grown, my little undead..." the Arch-Lich said with a raspy voice.

Skullius didn't think further and bolted upwards, creating distance through flight.

Perhaps altitude would solve his problem!

He soared for hundreds upon hundreds of meters in a few seconds, going at full speed to escape his foe!

As he continued to shoot up, seeing the figure of Somanda turn into a detailed dot below him that stood menacingly over the harshly heated lands that produced horribly dark fumes, something he hadn't expected happened.

[You have successfully completed the Tenth Task, crossing a distance of 10 miles in the Projected form]

[You have reached Level 10!]

He had finished the Tenth Task without even trying to do so!

However, at this moment, Skullius didn't care!

He only focused on rising higher into the sky!

OOOMMM!

A blast of super condensed energy crashed against Skullius and his sphere from below, sending him whirling out of control!

Surprisingly, this wasn't even an attack as the figure of Somanda had dashed a great distance and crossed the miles long lava scape, darting over a full six miles with this single movement over the ground into a different portion of the land underneath Skullius' shocked sight, beginning to exert his power over a vast area!

The moment Somanda landed, the waves of energy he emitted seemed to call onto something.

Some things!

"Ah... let's brighten up this borish world," Somanda said to himself.

The ground all round rumbled chaotically, the noise even reaching Skullius who was way up, as with raucous activity, the crust underneath exploded, shuffled and sank in as...

Hundreds of rotten corpses and bones arose from the ground and grunted as their sockets flared with a mad power!

With luminous red flames that shone with the same intensity as mini suns!

Their bodies produced shocking power from merely tasting the presence of an Arch-Lich, the effect not discriminating on whether or not they had been powerful in their lifetime!

These rose as fervently gazed at Somanda!

However, this wasn't all.

The glimmer of an Arch-Liches power wasn't so shallow.

The presence of Somanda commanded a dense authority that went on to attract the corpses of the Evenfall cultists across the distance, lying on the ground that had been part of the cavern!

The bodies rose, even as they were split in two, their sockets burning with a red flame that illuminated the surroundings like extremely bright lanterns!

Tomin also rose among them, his freshly dead body raging with power that far outclassed what he had displayed earlier!

Tulnas and the others who had been left as they were, were shocked by this phenomenon, turning to corpses as they prepared for a fight but...

The awakened corpses rose into the air, covered by swirls of harsh red light and madly flew in Somanda's direction!

However, the effect Somanda had on the dead wasn't this shallow!

Back in Central and all the towns and villages within the Harem Guilds Jurisdiction, the ground rumbled and sank as things long buried and forgotten from many varying ages rose, bones, old corpses, fresh corpses and all!

Men, beast and even... treasures long said to be broken and dead rose!

They awakened, terrifying the inhabitants of these settlements who screamed and wailed in terror at seeing powerful vestiges and lost family members rise from the ground wordlessly with extremely bright flares in their sockets that burned and blinded them permanently!

All these hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands rose from the ground, encased by a bright swirls of red light and flew in one direction!

Corpses and bones with bright red lights littered the darkening sky as they soared towards their master at a ridiculous speed that made it so that those looking from below would think that bloody stars were tracing streaks over the sky!

This scene turned even more terrifying for Skullius who saw the incoming waves from all directions, most of which darted at rapid speed towards Somanda who was on the ground below!

...!

The awakened beings of different shapes and sizes that blocked his view on all sides except down, all formed what looked like a casing, a halo of light that used their bodies as anchors, this phenomenon looking to be capable of resisting Skullius' further escape!

What happened next rattled Skullius even more as it only took a brief moment!

The awakened corpses and bones that had flashed to Somanda flooded together, mashing their bodies in a somewhat orderly sequence!

As they did, they formed a sturdy-looking platform that remained began to float, powered by the hundreds of heads and skulls underneath that constantly spat out red flames to give it adjustable flight!

Over the platform, halberds, spears, swords, falchions, yuans, shields and all manner of weapons and treasures formed a grand throne that was saturated with DEATH and abundant MANA, a seat for the Arch-Lich!

Somanda boarded this platform which then zoomed towards Skullius at a speed unbecoming of its size!

Somanda's makeshift aircraft rose up to Skullius' altitude, the green skeleton appearing in the Projected Discount Human's line of sight while seated over the large throne of ancient weaponry, his socket flames steadily danced with amusement.

"CHACHACHACHA! Ah... it seems this is my limit in this state... Very well. I thought I might leave an impression since it's been too long. A valid thought, is it not, Skullius?" Somanda said with malice.

Chapter 297: Trampled Under A Red Flame, Yet...

Skullius could only keep his eyes peeled, issuing no response to the Arch-Lich who inhabited the above legendary treasure, SoSei.

At this point, his anxiety had peaked. He couldn't express anymore shock.

Unlike most people, he knew what would happen to him if he died as even now, he continued to take damage as his soul was near Somanda.

He was slowly edging towards 40% with Doom Factor 2 and he had a feeling that Somanda was aware of this.

But...

Why was Somanda taking his time?

If he truly wanted to kill him, he could have done so already.

Skullius highly doubted that his sphere of darkness would hinder this monster if he truly wanted him, as even if it had safely guarded his body against that dark red flame, that definitely wasn't the entirety of Somanda's arsenal.

That much he was sure.

Then why...?

Somanda remained silent for a moment, as did Skullius who knew that running was impossible now.

"Hmmm. Even with flesh over your soul, I can tell what you're thinking. Why haven't I killed you yet. Chacha!" Somanda said as he sat over the floating mass of the dead.

"Seeing as you have tangled with my subjects in this world, I'm sure you have connected some of the glaring dots. It would be a shame to simply kill you and have you reunite with the rest of your soul. Why go through that when you can choose a third option?"

Skullius trembled.

"Serve under me once more. I will give you a recollection of your past on a silver platter and even label you as my Right Hand to the Eminence of Undeath himself."

...!

What?!

Serve Somanda again?!

Skullius felt rage built up like blocks within him and finally opened his mouth to speak.

"Serve..? Didn't you say you could just rip out my soul and fill it with undeath?" he spoke, his Projected form quivering as the Discount Human was actually shocked he spat back a reply.

Growth. That's what it was.

Somanda's sockets flared wildly.

"That is indeed true, Skullius. But you see, you have inherited quite the interesting set of powers. From Lifelessness, to this legacy that I dare say is envied by the OTHER Deities and Arch-Liches. I did not expect you to have it. I would lose it if you fell by my hands and furthermore, infecting you with undeath would drive away the power of Lifelessness.

There is simply no merit in killing you," the Arch-Lich said.

Skullius processed this, however, he didn't give himself the time to think much of it over as with the more he entertained Somanda, the more he accrued damage.

"I know you are in quite a bit of trouble. Your soul which is broken can sense its roots from me it seems. It wills to restore itself and being in my presence presents a challenge, is that not true? Come now, Skullius..."

The Discount Human wore a hard Projected face as he looked at Somanda.

The bastard was genuinely enjoying himself!

The flames said it all.

Skullius surmised that this sockethole may be lying about not willing to let Lifelessness and the Insurgent Magnus powers slip from him by killing Skullius.

Or maybe it was actually true but Somanda was having fun by having Skullius think he actually had a choice!

He could just capture Skullius anyway, but... it indeed was fairly debatable whether or not he could take the powers from him.

Perhaps that was truly why he was asking for Skullius' cooperation.

The Discount Human grounded his teeth.

He looked at the unfamiliar yet familiar face of Somanda as he raged within.

If this was the end...

If this was how he would die... tossed either between eternal bondage in frost or eternal slavery by the one he hated the most, then he would rather give this whole thing one last shot.

Red Rage had showed courage for his sake!

Why not him, that golden sockethole's master?!

He could have a last shot at fighting this bastard and deciding his fate even if he died!

Heck, dying could be the best part!

"What say you, my little undead?" Somanda's flames danced playfully as he sat on his throne.

"..."

Skullius pulled on the sphere that carried his main body and Red Rage.

He had packed all the mana he had into producing a super mass of darkness that he compacted into this sphere.

This was all he had left.

The Discount Human opened his Projected mouth to utter what could possibly be some of his final words!

"Flesh you... Somanda. I'm not your little undead. And I'LL NEVER BE YOUR UNDEAD AGAIN!" Skullius roared as his Projected Form then went on to clasp its hands together, the [Evil Darkness] that made up the orb exploding to engulf him and the Arch-Lich who didn't move a bone!

A perfect cube of darkness was formed, trapping only Somanda and his flying platform!

Cocoons of darkness appeared behind Skullius, housing his body and Red Rage's protectively as he floated before them and glared at his enemy.

Said enemy, the Arch-Lich, appeared in the total darkness that seemed to want to devour him whole and rewrite his entire existence!

It was oppressive, but not to him, as he remained relaxed while watching what was happening all around, his socket flames being able to perfectly peer through the darkness!

...!

Skullius felt the red gaze of Somanda over him and he was immensely perturbed.

Yet, he didn't give up just like that!

He still needed to fight!

He raised his hands, the darkness around him following his mental will to turn into dozens of small orbs that began to spin at a rapid velocity!

These orbs then burst at a blinding speed that would have produced irritating whistles in the outside world towards Somanda who scoffed, clearly unimpressed!

The Arch-Lich breathed out what seemed like a dark red mass, a thick substance with a disgusting viscosity!

The substance rapidly formed a wall that received the speeding orbs and eagerly devoured them within its shifting whole that continued to wriggle nastily!

Skullius could only crease his Projected brow.

Seriously?!

These orbs were faster than the [Beads of Malevolence]!

"Is this all you can do with all this power? Have you still not replaced those thousand years of stagnancy with something worthwhile? If you intend to fight me, then DO SO properly!" Somanda called!

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Skullius suddenly heard explosions outside the [Perfect Night Domain]!

No!

It wasn't explosions!

It was the thousands of undead outside throwing themselves at the Domain, trying to break into it!

The reverberation that sounded as the many creatures sought to enter crushed Skullius' will!

The noise!

Even in his Domain where he was supposed to control all sounds and sensations, this rumble that made the Domain tremble still peered through without consequence!

This noise!

Skullius' Projected form looked this way and that, his mind spinning as he felt... trapped.

Soon, the heads and bodies of the undead started piercing through the Domain their burning eyes lighting up with heavily subdued saturation the interior of the Domain that began to look like the inside of some treasure, with thousands of red spots in every direction!

'Haa...'

Skullius emitted a sigh of exasperation even in his thoughts.

He had spent all his mana earlier to conjure darkness and then ended up using it for this dense Domain.

Yet, it was all for naught.

He was outmatched and outclassed.

With his Projected Form, all he could do was manipulate darkness that already existed and this, was the extent of his capabilities.

'This is as far as I go...!' Skullius thought as he looked ahead where Somanda sat on his throne.

He could think of no other whom he hated the beyond this Arch-Lich.

This being that seemed to want to take everything from him!

All he worked for and gained.

All he didn't even remember.

Skullius turned behind him where the figures of his body and Red Rage were encased in dark cocoons.

'At least let me die by my terms!' Skullius thought as he unwrapped the cocoon to his main body, using the darkness to unsheathe [Demion's Dance]!

If he was to lose anyway, he might as well die by his own hand and go to where he could finally reunite with the rest of himself!

With that girl who constantly appeared in his mind!

It was far better than this.

Skullius flung the sword at his body with all his speed and might, his mind aching with pain!

"Ah... Intriguing..."

...!

"What...?"

Skullius suddenly found himself and his body before Somanda's throne over the flying platform!

The Projected Discount Human gritted his teeth as he looked with hatred towards Somanda!

Somehow, the Arch-Lich had stolen him from his position dozens of meters away and stopped his suicide mission!

"I can read you like a book, Skullius. There's nothing you can think of that escapes my sight. Trying to kill yourself so that you can re-join with your lost self? How brave..."

Somanda motioned with his index bone finger to draw the two bodies towards him, his hand going over to Skullius' flesh body and sinking into it as if it was ethereal!

The green skeleton's hand squirmed within Skullius eerily, making the Projected Discount Human gnash his teeth!

The Arch-Lich didn't touch Skullius' body, but his soul!

Skullius' soul trembled and shuddered as if struck by lightning, its exterior rippling as if it would fall apart anytime!

"There it is... Just as I remember," Somanda said as he looked at Skullius' Projected form with malice that only one who had been an undead before could detect.

"Instead of letting you ride your own Direction. I'll forge one for you again. That favour that follows you... it will lead you to other fruitful paths that I can reap with time, as it did with Lifelessness. As it did with that marvellous art of chaotic power. Until then, I'll wipe your slate clean and watch you start all over again with your fellow bottom-of-the barrel-undead!

CHACHACHACHACHA!" Somanda cackled as his eyes flared with excitement.

...!

What?

Starring all over again?!

Back in Deadmanland?!

With all that he knew now?!

'Again...' Skullius thought.

CHOICE.

He was barely afforded it!

It was afforded for him!

Why?!

Why him?!

The Projected Discount bellowed with rage as he tried to struggle!

This was eerily similar to back then...

Back then when his CHOICE was challenged in that depth, by THAT individual!

"Not back there again!" he yelled in frustration!

He had escaped for a reason!

He had started to recollect details of the past for a reason!

"CHACHACHACHACHA! Gnash your teeth well, Skullius!" Somanda called, utterly gleeful from seeing Skullius' expression.

The Discount Human felt once more, his soul taking damage while Somanda went on to grip it and begin to pull it out!

His Projected Form shuddered as it started to glitch.

"NO!" Skullius roared in pain as he glared at Somanda.

Somanda merely cackled.

This couldn't be!

In the next moment... Skullius' soul started inch out of his body!

A rather short glowing white figure appeared, its distinct appearance shocking Skullius himself as it looked nothing like what he expected his soul to look like!

Not like Discount Human form or any other!

It looked heavily crackled like glass, some parts of it missing with spots of gold and large patches of purple that seemed to cover it from crumbling visible all over!

"COME!" Somanda called!

'NO...' Skullius called in his mind, his strength to struggle fleeing.

Why wouldn't this bastard just him alone?!

Skullius felt his Projected Form rush towards his body as his soul almost wholly protruded from his body!

No...

He uttered words of extreme sorrow and hate as he looked at Somanda who cackled without a care.

"Why... won't you just...." he said with a broken voice, his Discount Human body opening its mouth as a tear leaked from it with a rage-filled and sorrow-ridden face.

As did his glowing soul...

"| LEAVE ME ALONE |"

Chapter 298: Raucous Laughter In The Wind!

...!

This was...!

No one could afford to doubt!

The speech that came from Skullius' three mouths; the Projected body, the Discount Human body and the soul echoed out with a terrifying echo that resounded within the domain of darkness!

Somanda's sockets flames ignited with shock as he felt it!

"What in the....?!"

The undulations of a power different from a mere skill activation rocked throughout the space within and outside the darkness with an intensity unbecoming of the young man whose soul he had been about to take!

Then...

All the darkness that made up the entire domain trembled and then rushed over to Skullius' mouth, with a sky shattering vigour, the perfect cube space vanishing in an instant as all the darkness was swallowed up into the Discount Human's mouth, his soul and Projected form sinking into him!

"| LEAVE ME ALONE |"

These words resounded once again as the darkness that had rushed into Skullius' mouth went to carry these words and actualize them into reality!

As this occurred, Somanda felt the massive amounts of mana in the treasures that made up his throne get sucked in with an incredibly powerful draw, like a hungry vacuum!

The darkness sought after mana as it aimed to actualize the absolutely hateful words that Skullius had told his enemy, seeking not to harm him, but to push him away!

To free himself!

As the darkness continuously gushed out, Skullius looked like he was puking the words with all he had, his mouth hanging open in an unnatural manner while his eyes rolled back!

The wave of [Evil Darkness] shot outwards, blasting Somanda who had raised his hand to deflect but he was struck by unrelenting force nevertheless as he found that against this darkness, none of his defences did anything at all!

"Impossible!" he growled in shock as his red flames flared!

This was not possible!

Powers like these... on such a weak Discount Human being?!

VWUUP! BOOM!

Somanda found the blast wave of this darkness to utterly break apart his flying platform made of undead, the scantily crafted piece exploding as the thousands of parts sprang away from Skullius at top speed, leaving the Arch-Lich on his own!

The darkness, as it spread in an arc, went on to smash against the tens of thousands of undead that had been floating in the sky, creating a trap for Skullius who had been on the run!

Their bodies were flung with an otherworldly speed a distance away while the weaker ones were obliterated, smashed into miserable pieces!

Somanda's dark green body started to break with sparks of red flame popping all around it as something seemed to tear his hold over SoSei away!

The Arch-Lich's socket flame started to dim, with flickers of its luminance blipping here and there to represent Somanda trying to retain his firm control!

Unfortunately... it was all for naught!

SoSei's chest exploded while its other parts started to break apart, the skull cracking as it began to leak out an immensely bright red light that released space rending power!

"This power...IT CAN'T BE YOURS...!" Somanda said with rage that couldn't be traced on this face but on the next which couldn't be identified from this plane.

Impossible!

In a matter of what? Weeks?

This creature that had been under him for a thousand years could now wield a power capable of smashing away a portion of him?!

No!

Somanda watched as Skullius' body started to shrivel up like a raisin while the Discount Human remained with his mouth agape, releasing the remains of the shocking power as his figure then began to fall from the height along with a dark cocoon that began to unravel behind him!

His skin started to turn dry as if all the moisture was sucked from it, his flesh losing its muscle mass as he fell.

"I had you.... in MY HANDS...!" the last of Somanda's words leaked out as his consciousness departed and left the partially broken and shattered SoSei which began to fall as well.

What ridiculous Direction was this?!

He had this little man that he had considered insignificant for a long time, keeping him in his collection to see what would become of him in bondage but now....

It was all lost.

For now.

Skullius continued to fall without any hope of him suddenly gaining the ability to hold himself up through any means!

His eyes returned to normal as he opened them to see the scene happening before him.

"Dear Quintess..." Tulnas muttered as he felt the reverberations in the air from the massive shockwave that had just resounded, pushing away all the numerous undead that he had just seen flooding the sky miles away!

The impact had been so ridiculous that even from the height where even he and the rest couldn't see anything clearly, whatever happened there was felt!

Furthermore, the cover of the many undead that were crowded around Somanda and Skullius, had obstructed his view.

However he was sure something grand had happened considering that there was a mass summoning of undead, or perhaps it was creation?

He wasn't sure, but in his mind, Tulnas had begun to wonder about the damage to his Guild's Jurisdiction.

It was just a passing thought though.

Tulnas looked ahead at the boiling and flowing molten rock that covered a colossal distance as well as the crumbs that kept falling from the sky.

"Whatever happened... how on earth was Festos involved in it?" the Tamer mumbled to himself, his body shuddering and almost kneeling when he thought back to Somanda's presence, but he held himself up.

"I... couldn't read that far. The massive power surge from...whatever that thing was, temporarily 'blinded' me and limited my range even after I recovered..." Natalika said with a depressed sigh.

Gertreld who was back to her normal diminutive height had still not fully recovered from the shock.

The same was true for Gwendelina who merely knelt down pitifully, taking deep breaths as she was more sensitive to the energies here more than anyone else.

"Let's get going. We'll scour the remains for Festos and then head over to Central to see the extent of the damage. Tsk!" Tulnas said as he grumbled with subdued rage. "Just when everything had been settled..."

"What should we do about her?" Natalika asked, referring to Gwendelina.

Tulnas gazed at the woman as she slowly raised her head with a pale expression, awaiting the man's verdict with a pitiful expression that seemed to plead for mercy.

SWISH!

Tulnas swung his blade in a clean arc, decapitating the woman.

"No more surprises..." he said as he spread away the blood from his blade.

[Author's Note]

Hey guys.

This concludes this arc of the story. It was long, it had flaws but I had it all setup.

Please, please, please, leave your COMMENTS on what you thought about this. What you liked what you hated or some other things you'd like to say.

Your comments help me and brighten my day and I'm starved of some feedback as of now.

I'd really appreciate your input.

Chapter 299: Unquenched Rage, The Next Moves

Deadmanland.

A vicious red flame flared with a hot and bright intensity, as it soared from the sockets of an ancient existence donning a hooded robe.

The dark green figure of Somanda roared in mad rage as the Arch-Lich seethed with fury, the sides of his skull cracking from the sheer might of the force of his socket flame!

"RAAAAAAAAAAR!"

His rageful bellow echoed all around the room, as he stood from his seat where he had been performing his 'operation'.

The Arch-Lich's body warped with fumes of rend space and death energy that saturated the entirety of this world which lacked much in the way of mana.

"What is this?! How can one's state change so constantly?!" the undead spoke as his flames settled somewhat, his cracked skull starting to repair itself.

He lay his bony hand on his chin as he looked at a relatively familiar construct a few meters behind him in the expansive room.

A magic circle.

It was quite wide with an encirclement of hundreds of mana gems powering it.

This was the exact same magic circle that Skullius had escaped through, into Aigas.

One would wonder if these small gems around it were even capable of powering up a construct meant to travel between worlds.

The truth was one of these mana gems held more mana than Somanda's total mana capacity.

The thousands of gems harvested each day would be combined and condensed into singular gems holding a massive amount of mana over time and used for different functions such as these.

The magic circle glowed with a green hue and Somanda couldn't help but shake his head as he was forced to remember the reality of that day when that little bugger had escaped through this.

"It still remains unstable. Even if I use all my strength, I'll still be transported in a random location within the world's already under my Jurisdiction. But Welva, Aigas, Rimiris, the world's I'm in the process of claiming with my chosen are still outside my reach..." Somanda mumbled to himself in frustration.

He couldn't travel to Aigas before his messengers, his chosen, actualized the plan for his descent!

Such a thing could not be worked around even with this special formula magic circle that he had been sure would work on that day, ridding his need for those... Green Neolists and now, he still needed him.

"Hmmm. I could have claimed that one for myself and made the process faster. I could have tried extracting and planting those unique powers into a different vessel! I could have.... Ah... it matters not..." Somanda's socket flame reduced to being a mere dot as he looked up.

"Keep him for now. The Eminence of Undeath will strike you down, as will we all, Voices of the Numerous Worlds," Somanda directed his voice towards the Emissaries of a power that rivalled his master's own.

Inhone City.

Guilds Association building.

"Damn those beautiful, sexy, gorgeous, voluptuous—"

"Get to the point, you idiot!"

"...Right. I mean those ladies have been taking all the requests and clearing the board of any jobs for us! What are we low level Guilds to do if they take away even the white Clusters?!"

"Well... because of the rise in Cluster activity, shouldn't you be celebrating that a big Guild like the Harem's Guild is doing something to help? Don't you have a family that lives away from Inhone City now that I think about it, you jerk?!"

"...."

Silence from immense shame.

"What was that, Yonka? I'll be right there..."

"Don't dodge me you idiot!"

The Association building was bustling with activity as some mercenaries rushed up to the board which had actually been thinned out of requests because of the fervent desire of these abundant heroes from Guilds to-

Actually nope.

While there were dozens of mercenaries in the building right now with one to many Conqueror's Halos around them, no one could dispute the fact that in a single day, no, half a day, a single Guild had cleared at least half of the requests that had come in!

To understand how insane this feat was, one needed to first account for the fact that those responsible had only started raiding the Clusters close to noon, and now, with the descent of the sun behind the horizon of the same day, much of the work had been covered!

Another thing to account for was the fact that a Guild or a mercenary was only allowed to collect another request from the board only after they had cleared the one they took before.

This was true even for the large Guilds like the EdgeKings and the Ravenclad Guild except of course when they were dealing with issues in their designated Jurisdictions within the region.

As these culprits had been encroaching on territories they did not have rights over, these being what the smaller Guilds and mercenaries lived on, they had to follow the procedure, but still...

They cleared so many Clusters that it was insane, using particularly speedy figures among them to carry the evidence of the cleared Cluster, rush to Inhone to collect another request and so on.

Thus, this cycle had gone on.

One would also notice that it was about to happen again in this instance.

"Oh crap! It's them again! Why don't they just go away!"

"Yeah, they're literally stealing from us! This is unfair!"

"I could just...I could just... violate them right here!"

"..."

The clamour within the Guilds Association turned louder as three figures entered.

They were ladies, all from the Harem's Guild with each carrying twelve halos that stacked over their bodies, giving them a radiant appearance.

If these were anything like solar flares, it would have been particularly hard to move within the city like this.

The halos didn't outshine the terrifying waves of energy that these ladies emitted though, as in the lead, a fearsome lady with a cold expression moved with impactful steps, her silver hair looking to be washed with mana as it danced up and down.

Her armour was covered in blood of different colours and her appearance made most turn away especially when she looked their way.

She was Renialid, the First Flower, a title given to honour her as the first to join the Harem Guild and pledge herself to Tulnas and his ideals.

She was known as the strongest under Tulnas in the Guild and no one doubted it one bit within the Guild or outside.

The three ladies reached the reception where a sheepishly smiling woman spoke to them with respect.

"Welcome back. I didn't think you'd be coming instead of that.. uhm..<cough> messenger girl to take on the next request. Haha..."

"We decided to switch. She'll be hunting now instead," Renialid said without the slightest change in her expression, her spatial storage ring spitting out a sacked beast's head that was as large as her entire body.

The receptionist gulped.

"You still won't take the reward for your cleared Clusters?" she asked.

"No. We'll be fine," the silver-haired lady turned as she went on to the board to take another request, the crowd parting for her as no one said anything to deny the ladies' entry.

Quite the sight it was.

At the same time, quite an interesting meeting was occurring between a man and a woman within this same building, deciding the flow of future events...

Chapter 300: The Establishment of Powers

"You're asking of me quite the hefty request," Silrat said as he scratched his hair, his eyes gazing at the woman who sat before him.

She looked rather different from how she normally looked, her temperament and posture looking more refined than her wild adventurer self.

Even her speech was more formal as she was representing something bigger than herself.

"I understand that. I'm prepared to compensate you heavily for it," the lady said as she sat straight.

Silrat sighed as he tapped his desk.

This setup of this room was for formal requests to the Guilds Association, different from the lavish lounge that he had entertained the City Lord before.

"I don't think you do, my dear. You're getting me and several parties who are contractually bound to my every move, one more than the others, in danger. This move by House EverSword is calling forth Families from different regions to contend.

Surely, you can't expect me to believe that you can compensate me after half-stealing my client and exposing them to dangerous opponents in this death game," Silrat said, openly concerned with this arrangement.

The woman before him shifted as she gathered her words.

"Death game is an exaggeration. I can understand your concerns however. I acknowledge the risk of death and I have considered it when accounting for the compensation. As for the issue of joining the Bryne Family, that won't constitute having any duties at all and he can request as much as he wants from it provided that we manage to win a spot.

All the participating Families have signed contracts with many other outsiders with the same parameters. It's all specified in the clause," the woman calmly explained.

Silrat once again looked at the papers which were in his hands.

They documented the entirety of the Bryne Family's proposal, no doubt complied and written by this woman herself as she was desperate to keep the Family alive, given the future concerns.

It was a very good deal all things considered and it lined up with all his own plans.

However, what made him anxious was the fact that some of the most powerful Families would be participating with their monstrous prodigies.

Worse yet, a House would be overlooking the entire event.

What was a House and what was a Family?

The creation and distinction of these two entities stemmed from the end of the First Grand War, the period between and into the Second Grand War.

This time was known as the Age of Patkmas Yujgi, which meant 'Emergence of the Pillars.'

As the First Grand War was known for it being a war between everyone and the Giants, it indeed was hailed as the largest scale war in history.

However, the Second Grand War was considered the most brutal, because personal stakes were involved.

This stemmed from the time humans developed and Advanced and Hidden Classes to fight the Giants, spilling into the next years.

During this period, the knowledge that the Giants had imparted onto humanity was not forgotten but embraced.

First, was the notion of Forests.

Sacred Forests, to be exact.

Humans had cut down large forests indiscriminately in their past, slaying the young beasts that grew within and plundering the nature wantonly.

However, the Giants had informed the humans that all forests were not equal. Some were called Sacred Forests, places cultivated by a high form of energy which spawned spontaneous creation.

From this, large Forests would bloom, blessed with heavy amounts of mana that partitioned and created a vast array of powerful beasts and grew massive shoots of vegetation that kept the vast areas around them.

It was because of these places that the space which would sometimes be made unstable and corrupt by the collision of the Deities' powers, would be made stable, keeping away phenomenon like Clusters.

Such places like the Tremur kept the regions around Eofel Cluster free, the temperatures remaining moderate.

This detail had been taken to heart by the humans barring a few, as they decided to leave Sacred Forests alone as it was easy to tell them apart once they began following the paths of mana.

However, many aspiring to become powerful experts to safeguard their families chose to venture into the Sacred Forests to learn different methods to achieve unique ways of manipulating mana and to augment themselves.

Some mimicked the animals.

Some mimicked the plants.

Some delved into mana rich spaces to meditate.

Others took in different herbs and poisons to experiment on their bodies.

Many died in the process but after many years of cultivating different strengths, monsters were born.

Unique humans with peculiar bloodline traits.

Powerful men with terrifying techniques.

Feared families that held the secrets to manipulating aspects of reality but their grew to have conditions that restricted their use.

All these spilled into the time before and after the First Grand War and fuelled the whole premise of the following war.

As for the distinction between Houses and Families, many still mixed up the two if they lived in lesser areas away from major establishments but those from large cities knew the difference.

Families were entities that remained in a certain place because of the long lines of ownership established in the old times due to conflicts over the resource.

Naturally, the use of their strengths was used to establish their dominance.

They held powerful techniques and bloodline traits that could turn anyone into a C rank combatant or higher using the Guilds Association's grading system.

They often owned portions of land that were designated as theirs with even the Royal Family being unable to refute their ownership.

Houses on the other hand, were larger scale entities established in old times purely because of the potency of their technique, bloodline or both being extremely dangerous.

Families could be born in the new age and acknowledged, but Houses were established during the Age of Patkmas and none had ever been accepted to become the next since as they simply couldn't compare.

Till this day from then, only six Houses could be counted in Pelian and the House EverSword was one of them.

All these Houses, had contributed majorly in the Age of Patkmas Yujgi hence earning further distinction from mere Families as their strengths even to this day, were nothing short of profound.

"<Sigh>..." Silrat breathed out.

Taking all of this into account, he couldn't decide whether or not to agree.

The thing was, he had to take into account Festos' curse. Thus, for this to work, he needed to make sure he was the point of contact as he was under a mutually beneficial Tie of Exchange.

Also...

"Festos will be back soon. You and your uncle can try to convince him. If he agrees, then I'll have my answer as well," Silrat said.

An elegant smile formed on the young woman's lips as her red hair moved with her cultured nod.

Unbeknownst to these two, the following day would bring about some worrying news.