

Undead 401

Chapter 401: Lowway To Hell

Once more, bursts of experience flowed into Skullius as the more than a dozen Trolls died horrific deaths, their mana flowing into the atmosphere without pause.

The cold sensation of abundant mana over his body made Skullius' sockets flare wildly and he emitted a chuckle.

"Perfect..."

Hurriedly, the Penetrator absorbed the Null Life Essence from the corpses, getting a haul of 55 points for each.

After that was done, Skullius took the opportunity to use [Elevated Mana Manipulation] to scout the area some more and further explore what else he was capable of.

He made sure to 'squint' once again in order to not invite more creatures to the party and took quick steps ahead into the dark forest.

Since this was the territory of the Burdened Ice Trolls, there were many more of the beasts scattered around, with some quickly approaching his previous location where the harrowing screams had echoed.

With his superior senses, Skullius also discovered certain things about this forest. Perhaps the same principles had applied to the Tremur but he just hadn't been sense them at the time.

"Wow, just within range of my [Elevated Mana Manipulation] to a far right, the mana keeps getting thicker. Then again, I purposefully avoided going through what looked like the centre to this place in case I met powerful monsters," Skullius said as trudged on while making sure he was aware of the position of everything that breathed.

To his right, where he felt the cascading waves of mana get a tinge of spice as they turned from being pure to gaining a heavy frosty influence, the trees only grew larger, their moist trunks starting to grow what Skullius could only call ice branches.

Further away, as Skullius focused his vision, he could even see white trees that grew from the snow, on their branches... blue fruits that looked like pineapples but with a blue colour over them hanging from high branches.

'Hmm... that's right, I have things like this in my Cluster world. Maybe I should investigate them,' Skullius thought.

He quickened his pace as he descended down the slope, leaping over fallen trees and rising over small icy hills.

The Discount Human didn't want to waste any time as just like he said, he was on a time crunch. Since this was the shortest straight stretch from the cliff to the waters at the end of the area of recession, he had gladly taken it for said purpose.

Luckily, the creatures he met even after exiting the Troll territory were not that strong and he killed them all with the same trick he had used to kill the ugly mugs before.

With each time he did this, he refined his control of condensed mana, taking a few moments to feel the texture of mana in some enemies just for practise before killing them faster so that they didn't call others to the disco, gig, slaughter fest... whichever was fine.

When Skullius had crossed over half of the way...

'Hmmm... Did it just get colder?' he thought to himself.

Before him was big trough that led into an area populated by more ice rather than snow.

Within it, Skullius sensed a few presences, much of them being Tier 3 with the rest being Tier 4.

'Jeez, are there any weak creatures in this forest at all? It's ridiculous how each one is Tier 3 or above. At this point I'm half expecting a Tier 8 to just pop for the fun of it,' Skullius thought while shaking his head.

The Penetrator in his hooded cloak crossed over the trough while making sure he didn't get dragged off by gravity to tumble on as a result of the descent which grew steeper.

Twenty more some presences instantly appeared in Skullius' senses, their body shapes confusing a freak out of him.

Along with this came a weird phenomenon, one that he saw.

Snow flakes.

Not ordinary ones but ones infused with vast amounts of 'spiced' mana.

They flew overhead in clustered that curled and climbed up the atmosphere with a sense of patterned flow that would make one go, 'Aww'.

But for Skullius who had been waiting for the catch to this halfway point in his journey, this was was from enough to fool him.

Instead of powering through...

'Ferex... I have a bad feeling about this. Let's go with the emergency plan,' Skullius sent his intent to the Apostle around his neck who promptly nodded and manifested his large body covered in Unliving thread.

Over the thread, a shaggy hide of brown with glowing white marks appeared.

Ferex doubled in size before opening his maw where Skullius jumped in.

The two were using the same trick they had used to sneak back into Inhone City after the defeat of the Galemonger back then.

Ferex's presence vanished and he moved forward with his mouth slightly open for Skullius to see ahead.

After they had travelled a distance, the two were faced with a clearing made of ice, where Skullius saw the creatures he had been sensed.

'That's... weird...,' he thought.

One word.

Snowmen.

Twenty six snowmen, with three layers of balled up snow in descending order from the bottom were moving over an ice platform within a depression surrounded by snow covered trees!

Rather than simply moving, they were sliding, their wooden hands waving around with glee. On the smallest ball of snow, which was their heads, joyful faces could be seen with gouged out sockets as eyes and traced curves at the bottom to resemble smiles.

Crooked sticks were planted in the middle, acting as the nose, completing what a man looked like. Definitely.

'So stupid...' Skullius remarked as he watched the creatures have fun. 'Hmmm?'

Once more, snow flakes with unbelievable bursts of mana within them streamed above in a calm manner, but this time, there were many of them swirling above the playing snowmen!

'Ferex, stop!' Skullius commanded to which the Apostle immediately came to halt.

He had sensed something from a distance!

A massive presence that had suddenly shown up from the blue!

It was so massive that Skullius withdrew his prying mana senses to a limited range to ensure that nothing went wrong and...

FWOOOOO!

The air gushed outwards as the streaming snow flakes spun over the ice platform within the depression, a massive figure spontaneously bursting into existence as it levitated high up!

A massive snowman that was...

It had the exact same features as the smaller ones on the ground but with a six meter mass as well as... a hat?

A wooden one!

The fun came when guessing what Tier it was, and Skullius didn't even need the guidance field for it as even at a rough estimation of power, this thing had the same presence as the Galemonger!

'Tier 8... Great!' Skullius thought as he skull palmed.

Evidence that this thing was bad news came from the fact that around it, the space seemed to turn into rhombus shaped ice plates that glowed, reflecting an unseen shine for over three meters give or take. The complexity of whatever shit was going on there was just as complex as things like Spatial Lightning and Stagnant Space.

Skullius didn't want a piece of that.

'Let's just wait until it leaves. I'm not taking any chances,' Skullius thought.

Thus the wait begin.

A wait of four hours!

The cold, hat wearing, white covered bastard watched the masses of snow below it endlessly perform a dance the whole time!

Skullius seethed with fury.

Unfortunately, he couldn't do anything to daddy snowman and when the thing eventually left, he waited for a few minutes just in case.

He and Ferex finally went past these creeps, with Skullius having to half a mind to kill these snowmen out of spite but no, it wasn't worth it.

The two crossed the distance while avoiding any clustered cuties as Skullius reassumed his [Elevated Mana Manipulation] to its maximum range.

It didn't take long until Skullius and Ferex finally reached the edge and looked over the waters that had hints of the fog spilling from the fall far to the right.

The water wasn't frozen but it was horrendously cold.

Fortunately, no creature from the forest wanted to dance with these temperatures, which was great for Skullius who didn't want anything more than to get on with finding what he needed right now.

On the other hand, Skullius noticed something in the water.

It was faint but it rubbed him the wrong way.

A chilling energy.

He decided to ask Sila who had grown so used to being cut off by him that he developed a habit of going quiet on his own.

"Do you remember anything else I should be aware of?" Skullius asked.

'Hmm... let me think. Hmm, that's right. You cannot enter that place in this form. Monsters are not tolerated after all, especially if they look like undead,' Sila said.

"Right..." Skullius said as immediately activated [High Cosmetic Body]. "I should probably wear my new gear for this too."

The Discount Human had begun taking out the item he referenced from his spatial storage ring, Staff in hand, when Sila suddenly recalled something else.

'Ah, there's another thing. To think I'd forget this...' Sila said.

"What?"

'This place... I'm sure it's within a powerful beast's Territory. A Majestic Territory.'

Chapter 402: Guardian (1)

"Say that again," Skullius said in response to Sila's words.

'I know you heard me, tomato flinger. Much like most of the spaces meant to hold a legacy within them, this one also has a beast of a high tier that guards it and filters who enters and who doesn't,' Sila said.

Skullius sighed as he felt within the waters.

That was the peculiar sensation he had felt with his senses before using [High Cosmetic Body] just now.

A Territory was erected somewhere within these waters and he had enter straight into it.

Fantastic!

Once again, in the spirit of accepting things as they came, Skullius swallowed his spite for the current situation and instead focused on what he was going to do.

He had interacted with a beast that guarded a legacy holding spot before but it was obvious that they would all probably be different. He couldn't help but wonder just what he was going to face.

Skullius donned a unique set of light armour that had a strange, dim bluish halo around it.

It was a sleek, perfectly silvery blue armour with small criss-crossing design groves all over it, from the thin but sturdy chest plate which traced along Skullius' body perfectly, to the pauldrons on his shoulders which were diamond shaped, the groves over these glowing lightly.

Light bracers with glowing, diamond shaped centres could be seen around his arms and whenever Skullius moved, the groves along the bracers and the entire armour flashed with a silvery blue light!

A dark layer of leather was visible underneath from between the joints of the armour, the most prominent features it had being the leather hood behind Skullius' neck which had glowing silver lines that traced all over it as well.

This was evidently the Fleeting Ghoul's Adornment which Skullius had upgraded with [Unbound]!

The effects it had attained as a result of the upgrade were rather fascinating and the Discount Human was looking forward to keeping it for a long time.

"Alright then, let's get this over with," Skullius said with a sigh. "Oh right, could the beast notice us in its Territory if we continue using your Ferex's hide?"

'Hmm... I'm not sure. I only know as much as you do on that part, tomato flinger. Perhaps the hide is strong enough to bypass the powerful awareness granted in one's Majestic Territory, or perhaps not,' Sila answered, the last bit of what he said having a hint of sarcasm.

Skullius had expected more of an answer than added speculation but oh well...

While it seemed reckless to deep dive into a Majestic Territory with all Skullius knew and had seen about them, the interaction between Benzard and his group that time in the Tremur was still fresh in his mind.

Benzard has said that the fox guarding the Labyrinth of the Yoke was merely there to evaluate those who wished to enter and not fight against them. Provided it wasn't provoked that was.

If the same rules applied to this place then...

'At most, it should just evaluate our strength, right, in the event that it does notice Ferex in his hide?' Skullius thought before deciding to cast away all worries and dive in.

They were already here anyway.

The Discount Human casually hopped into Ferex's mouth and the creature leapt into the waters.

On entering, Skullius noticed the spike in the amount of mana around. Unfortunately, much of his insight was limited but he could identify quite a bit of information.

While he didn't have the impressive sensory capabilities of an empowered [Elevated Mana Manipulation] through [Epiphany], the vibrations through the water along with the activation of the aforementioned mana manipulation skill told him a fair amount of detail.

For starters, he was immediately alerted to the fact that there were no living creatures even close to his sensory ranges, the Outer Domain of his expanded sense included.

The reason was incredibly obvious.

Whenever there was a powerful beast's Territory nearby, weaker creatures steered clear.

And as for this Territory...

The strange feeling that Skullius had felt before diving into the water grew stronger.

To him, it felt like a growing bulb of prickling heat against his skin which annoyed him as it grew from a mere sensation to a shiver inducing pressure if he paid too much attention to it.

They were drawing close.

Ferex who was swishing his legs as he descended deep into the dark waters that changed colour by virtue of the thick mana, could actually see what was ahead.

The dark blue waters, contending with light and detaining much of it, turned to a nigh indistinguishable shade of light green against the natural, mana infused colour of the sea.

The hue became more pronounced as one drew closer and closer, finally able to see that... ah...

A vast, clear dome of vibrant yet subtle green nested deep within the waters while causing it to bubble as if it was boiling.

Its size made Ferex look like an ant, basically insignificant to the might of the beast who had made it.

'The amount of mana radiating from this thing is ridiculous,' Skullius thought. At this point, he had retracted his expanded senses, fearing that they could be what gave them away in the end.

While feeling the screeching power that bellowed from the sphere, Skullius gave Ferex the go ahead.

The Hound swam, heading for the bubbly green.

The moment it penetrated the sphere...

[Congratulations, you have royally screwed yourself by entering a powerful beast's Majestic Territory!]

Once again, the same notification that appeared before Skullius every time he entered a Territory popped up in front of him. Funny enough, Skullius had already gotten over the fact that he could still see the notification despite being blind.

But he could care less about it now as the surroundings had changed greatly, stealing his attention.

He couldn't tell much, but a suffocating presence that almost made him keel even while within Ferex's mouth pounded against him while the Hound came to a halt, its body quivering.

Once more, a space filled with extraordinarily thick liquid was what met Skullius and Ferex. It was so thick that Skullius didn't know if it was water or something else and the little sense he was exerting to try and make out a few things was actually nullified by... a deep set 'darkness'.

The Demon Hound saw a literal darkness that refused to reveal anything about this place however, making the situation a bit more tense.

Ferex was hard pressed on how to proceed as a swing of his leg didn't actually get him even a meter's worth of distance forward.

What was this?

Skullius took a few seconds to calm down before starting to churn out possible ways to get out of this and analysing what he could.

However...

"I see you there, Vermin! You dare casually invade my Territory, and with deceptive powers no less?!"

A thunderous voice coursed through the vibrant waters with a creepy vibration that ran through both Ferex and Skullius, etching what had been said into their very bones!

The words rang through the two over and over and over again in such an uncomfortable manner, the appearance of this voice also coming with a flood of light that illuminated the surroundings!

They had been caught!

'Is this beast hostile?!' Skullius thought as he prepared for whatever encounter was afoot. He didn't understand what the beast had said but a violent emotion that evidently came from the beast had washed through him, giving him this sentiment!

Just great!

The best way to deal with this though, as Skullius thought, was with words, as it would be more fitting to respond with affability and respect as someone snared within the Territory.

He held the staff tight, a bit apprehensive that even after so long it had barely started to recover its mana, the amount it granted him still at 4,670 points from the 2000!

This would have to do however.

As the tension increased, the view of the terrifying owner of the voice that had boomed appearing...

'Right.. I remember the bastard who owns this Territory, tomato flinger. He's—'

Before Sila could finish, the truth was revealed without his help.

"KIKIKIKI! It's a jest! Look at you getting all tense~. It's fun watching you humans cower at my flippers! Relax! Let's have a nice chat, shall we?"

...

Chapter 403: Guardian (2)

Contrary to the overbearing presence that had pressed Skullius and Ferex before, even going as far as to somehow imprint itself in their bodies for a short time, a friendly and welcoming voice that gave relief to the two gushed out.

This relief was in more than one way however...

[You have been granted free mobility within the Majestic Territory by the Grand Moon Flipper, 'Fuwin']

Skullius and Ferex felt the tension on their bodies resulting from the thick waters lessen as traversing through the water became a whole lot easier.

A whole lot, as if they barely existed at all.

Luckily for them and all other aspiring entrants, the agreement between the Grand Moon Flipper and another party dictated such.

Ferex who was able to see the figure of the owner of this space could only gawk in surprise.

It was... a dolphin!

A massive glowing dolphin with an overbearing whitish gold shine around it that made the appearance of its Territory very clear.

Much of it, or rather all around, was what looked like large, swaying green-coloured coral that made up the shell for the inner space that stretched for quite a bit of distance.

At least a mile.

Asides from this, the prominent features of the Territory itself were shiny floating clams and shells along with large rocks in the distance below where algae and sorts of matter festered over to create a rather simplistic design.

'Woow... this Territory seems large,' Skullius said while loosening up a bit, the restrictions on his senses having been lifted with the appearance of the light.

He didn't let his marvels overtake his focus on the master of the Territory though, as despite the friendly tone propounded, this could still go sideways.

'It is,' Sila chipped in. 'This beast is very friendly. He entertains company and likes to chat so indulge him. Hmmm. He should be able t—'

"KIKIKIKI! Now, show yourself to me~. I can get really mad with you if keep hiding~," the massive dolphin said, its loud voice cutting off Sila even with its friendly tone that still didn't make Skullius understand a damn thing it was saying.

Yet..

"Oh, it's been so long I've almost forgotten not to talk to myself like this~."

As the dolphin said this, Skullius felt a powerful connection hook itself into his mind, firmly anchoring onto his consciousness. A friendly voice then echoed in his mind.

"KIKIKIKI! Humans rarely visit this place anymore so I'd almost forgotten how to interact with them. You hate the sea after all, don't you? KIKIKIKI! You should be able to understand me now, right?! I hate that Known Language nonsense those humans tried to make me learn!

A chat should be close up and invasive, riiiiight~"

"Uuuuh..." Skullius didn't know what to say. The beast surely was acting friendly but the breach in boundaries had totally caught him off guard while hearing what it actually said threw him off.

"Come on! Show yourself. I can vaguely make out both of your appearances! KIKIKIKI! To think a human can actually obscure my senses in my own Territory," Fuwin said with enthusiasm.

Skullius, while taking note of Sila's words, decided to acquiesce to the request.

He could vividly understand the dolphin's intent instead of experiencing it through language, a bit like how he and his Apostles spoke, but without the voice.

Skullius came out of Ferex's mouth while the beast retracted its Pseudo Spirit Walker's Hide.

"KIKIKIKI! Good, good! I'm happy you're not so difficult! So different from this one human who kept trying to kill me~. So rude! I entertained him a few times before I had to put him down.

<Sigh>. I thought we could be friends but he just wanted to swing his weapon against me. Tragic!" Fuwin said with a mild sullenness that crept through Skullius' mind from the voice.

Skullius figured that this was his cue. He hoped this was a two-way thing though.

"Uh... I didn't come here to fight... Fuwin," Skullius said.

"KIKIKIKI! Yes, yes, that's my name! How did you know?!"

"Uhh...." Skullius froze.

He had just said it after seeing the notification from before and in the tension hurriedly stated it to try and give a false sense of familiarity.

Subconsciously.

However, since he had already made the play, he might as well finish the game.

"Uh... you see, I read about you from this book written by this one man who once came here looking for a certain hidden place. He died sometime ago but he wrote about you being a friendly beast who allowed him to find what he was looking for," Skullius weaved up a lie on the spot that also did the job of flattering and trying to see how much he could milk from throwing compliments at Fuwin.

Sila would have face palmed if he could.

This was only his second time watching Skullius perform the sacred art of bullshit after all.

"Oh! Yes, yes I am friendly! KIKIKIKI! Now that I think about it, I only shared my name with two humans. It was a very long time ago! Ah...

I wish I could see those two again but... if one of them even indirectly directed you to me, that must mean... my friendliness is being appreciated! KIKIKIKI!"

Skullius was afraid to mention how weird this while encounter was as that would be rude. Even entertaining a thought of that was unacceptable as if the creature somehow caught onto it...

"Yes that's right! I'm already feeling safe and comfortable as we speak," Skullius said.

Sila shook with irritation.

While this beast had basically not changed at all, it was shocking how simplistic its mentality was. Or at it seemed that way. Perhaps that was the side effect of being trapped by duty for thousands of years with little interaction.

His experience was different though.

"KIKIKI! Of course, I'm friendly after all. Though I guess you didn't come here just to talk to me. As depressing as that is, I know what you're here for."

Skullius gulped.

"We can still talk. I just need to see if I can find what I'm looking for first."

"Oh~? Really?" Fuwin asked with a happy voice but soon, he turned sullen. "You might die in there, though. Actually, as weak as you are, you'll die for sure."

Skullius smiled sheepishly.

"I'll be fine. I can handle myself."

The Discount Human barely believed this himself.

"No can do," Fuwin said, his massive body slowly swimming around Skullius. "My agreement with those twelve humans forbids me from being too friendly to the point of neglecting the rules and evaluations they set up. <Bubble, bubble>. I wish I could give you favours."

'Ah....there it is,' Skullius hiddenly thought. It either seemed that Grinning Jester Fox that guarded the Labyrinth of the Yoke had not been given too many instructions by Fulgardt on evaluation or was just flat out lazy.

This guy on the other hand, seemed rigid on this matter.

He was friendly, but strict.

"Alright. What kind of evaluations are we supposed to do?" Skullius asked.

"KIKIKIKI!" the water trembled as Fuwin quakes with excitement. "You're interesting! Even though you're weak, you still want to try!"

"Yes."

"Good, good! Alright, the first evaluation is a question."

Skullius tensed as he prepared. What kind of question could this possibly be?

It didn't take long for him to find out however, as Fuwin promptly asked.

"Are you male or female?"

....

Chapter 404: An Intriguing Evaluation

"Say that again," Skullius said as he was completely confused by the question. This was an evaluation?

Wasn't it obvious what he was?

"Can't you tell what I am?" Skullius asked with a strange tone that clearly spelled how he felt about this whole ordeal. It was beyond weird.

"KIKIKI! Funny story. Apparently I'm terrible at differentiating human gender. For some reason, you all look too similar to me and besides I haven't seen that many of you," Fuwin said with what Skullius could only guess was his thoughtful look.

In truth, it would be easier if Fuwin imposed his senses on his targets but he was too polite to do so, which is why he hadn't noticed Skullius' core situation and his blindness.

Skullius was halfway through gobsmacked by this.

Humans looked too similar? What kind of crap was that?!

He decided not to make a big deal out of this and simply state his gender to clear everything up.

"Alright then. I'm male," Skullius said.

'Hmph! Barely!' Sila scoffed from within, his comment making a thick vein throb on Skullius' temple.

With the Discount Human's answer, a weirdly sullen emotion flowed into him from the connection with Fuwin.

"Oh... I see. Your life must be hard then and it's about to get worse if you truly want to enter the place those twelve left behind," Fuwin said.

"What? What do you mean?" Skullius asked in a profound mix of confusion and apprehension.

"Well, your gender decides the treatment you will receive in that place, after all, the human supposed to inherit the legacy left behind must be female."

Skullius narrowed his eyes.

Really?

Well it wasn't a surprise that such was the arrangement for this place that he had yet to even glimpse at, probably because Fuwin was hiding it but... the fact that treatment was different rubbed him the wrong way.

Still, the fact that there was probably a lot of men who also journeyed here to give it a try meant that there was probably a great many things that could be salvaged other than the legacy itself.

"I understand. I still want to do it," Skullius said firmly.

Fuwin's body darted at an imperceptible speed within the waters, the motion strangely not generating horrible waves as one would expect.

"I see. At the end of the day, it really seems like humans enjoy challenging death," the large dolphin said before clapping its flippers in the waters. "Very well! KIKIKIKI! Since we have cleared up your gender, I will move on to the last evaluation."

'That question really was an evaluation then?' Skullius thought while sighing internally.

Without transition or warning, a flash of light greater than the dolphin's glow sparked before him, large objects appearing in the millisecond when the light disappeared.

Twelve large objects.

They were neatly arranged in three rows of four, their forms eerily identical.

As for what they were...

"What the heck are these?" Skullius asked with a frown, his senses jabbing at the objects.

'Ah...!' Sila expressed realisation but prevented himself from speaking much as he didn't want the dolphin to pick on his presence.

Yet, he knew all too well what the test entailed.

Rather, he was more concerned about a hurdle inside the place he and Skullius sought, rather than this preliminary.

The twelve objects before Skullius... were hard clay figures in the likeness of women. Barely covered women.

Actually, naked women.

Whoever had done his work on these was incredibly obsessed with details as if there had been any distinguishing colour work, it would be difficult for most to instantly realise that this was not real!

The curves, the contours, the bust. It was all phenomenally refined!

And yes, this accounted for more than just the appearance as these twelve women-shaped clay figures also had mana cores, or at least something like that.

Above this oddity, the figures also emitted a powerful allure, a nigh irresistible charm that tingled on the skin, influencing the body in subtle or blatant ways depending on the person.

'They remind of Betsy,' Skullius thought as he felt the shapes.

"KIKIKIKI! This is the test given to all males. Apparently, and I quote, 'This is to ensure that vile filth doesn't find its way into the sacred place.' Those twelve really hated men," Fuwin said. "Now... this is the test. If you can find the figure that is different from the rest, I will allow you into the place you seek.

Oh, oh! Asides from damaging any of these, anything else goes in your attempt to find the one."

"Oh..." Skullius was intrigued.

Given how Fuwin had talked about him being weak, the Discount Human had thought that the evaluation would be more geared towards determining his strength but it seemed that that notion was wrong.

He was actually expected to display something else.

Skullius pushed himself forward towards the twelve objects.

However, the moment he advanced a few meters closer, a strange grip tingled over his skin, giving him a peculiar feeling.

'Hmm... these things are emitting some kind of pressure...' Skullius thought as he focused on re-establishing his Inner Domain, his senses and [Elevated Mana Manipulation] making up a dome of over twenty meters that included most of the figures!

Ferex protectively swam around his master as he wondered what he would do.

With the constant motion of the waters, Skullius felt his senses get enhanced as the collision of water on the clay figures made him notice a bit more about them, but...

The feeling that Skullius had gotten from these clay figures grew stronger, seemingly using his senses as a way to connect to him even more.

Soon, Skullius started to experience things that weren't actually real.

In his ears, amidst the soft sounds of water creating soothing ambience, heavy breathing started to echo in his ears, soft voices that sounded almost too weak to hear also included.

"..."

Strange.

Skullius felt his body quiver ever so slightly.

What was this weird sensation.

All of sudden, his sensitive skin felt a warm touch and soft press against him that weirdly gushed a powerful feeling into him!

Fuwin watched closely.

'He's starting to get affected. Is he just like those I had to expel from my Territory? I thought he was one of the good ones~,' the dolphin said with unveiled disappointment as it watched Skullius' blank eyes stare at the figures but his body still.

'<Sigh>. The seductive pressure distracts the target from noticing the obvious, appealing to their hidden desires that then cloud their judgement. It's truly a brutal evaluation.'

Fuwin thought back to the time when one of the aspiring entrants stripped before rushing to nail himself onto one of the clay figures.

In a way, he then understood why the twelve were very critical about who entered their sacred place.

A few more seconds passed with Skullius remaining in place and at this point, Fuwin had lost hope.

'Looks like it's another failu—'

"It's that one!" Skullius suddenly said as he pointed at a clay figure in the second row that looked just like the rest.

...!

Fuwin paused for a bit.

His massive figure tilted its head as it watched Skullius nod as he continued to point at the specific figure.

This little man was unaffected by the charm?

His eyes brimmed with determination but it wasn't directed toward the figures before him in a lustful way as most of the individuals of the same gender would.

It wasn't even a matter of resisting it seemed, he just flat out ignored the effects!

"KIKIKIKI!" Fuwin clapped his flippers with great might, causing ripples that consciously avoided Skullius and Ferex to burst through the water. "Marvellous, marvellous! I was starting to doubt you there but marvellous! You noticed the obvious without sinking into desire!"

Skullius inwardly sighed in relief.

In truth, he was shocked that this test was so simple. In the time he took, he had hypothesised that this was just an undignified test granted to men as women probably had a more... formal evaluation.

The only reason he had taken so long was because he wanted to confirm if such a mundane thing was really the whole objective behind the evaluation.

A small spark of condensed mana shaped in the form of a heart, barely the size of a finger nail was what he was to look for. It was hidden just above the strange construct that gave the impression that these figures had a mana core within them to cause just a bit of confusion but it was ultimately easy for him.

All he had experienced as a distraction was nothing more than that.

A distraction.

Skullius had not been enticed by the erotic collection one bit, perhaps annoyed but not enticed.

"Do I get to enter now?" he asked.

"Of course, of course!" Fuwin said, a large ripple coursing through the waters to dispel what could be said to be an illusion that had masked the appearance of a massive structure a distance below the two!

Chapter 405: Heed The Bias

A temple.

A rather massive temple showed itself. It had a dodecagon shape, its entirety gilded extravagantly as its aged mass almost wanted to glow amidst the cold and smooth waters.

While it had different sections on its singular build; individual structures that did well to separate themselves from the others with more than just size and jewelled aesthetic, one could appreciate that it was all melded into one magnificently.

The temple did not sit at the base of the Territory but was anchored on a white platform that looked like a sturdy pedestal, sculpted with wavy shapes that resembled water movement.

The alternating shades of gold, along with the occasional brown brought one to appreciate it all the more, especially Ferex who was able to see this.

Strangely however, the Hound couldn't help but feel a deep set apprehension.

This was not only caused by the subtly overbearing energy that the massive construct expelled, but the symbol at the entrance to the temple.

A large eye with multiple irises carved with a curve that almost made it seem like it could jut out at any moment surrounded by eleven smaller others...

Ferex emitted a low growl.

Skullius couldn't see the building but he could sense the ferocious waves of power from it.

'That's some nasty energy and I can tell it's being subdued,' Skullius thought.

"KIKIKIKI! You can go now~. If you do come out of there alive, make sure to come and chat with me like you promised," Fuwin said while clapping his flippers.

'I don't remember promising though,' Skullius thought before responding with a smile. "Of course I will."

With that, the dolphin spoke no more as Skullius and Ferex found themselves standing on top of the white pedestal which outclassed the temple in size in order to sturdily hold it up.

The light within the Territory proudly sponsored by Fuwin suddenly disappeared as the massive creature's body also faded, leaving a deep set darkness over everything again... but only for a few moments.

The twelve eyes etched onto the front of the temple all started to glow, giving sufficient light for navigation.

They all had different colours and designs, the energy they emitted which the Discount Human sensed vividly, making him wonder what kind of messed up stuff he was about to see inside.

A straight path of old tiling led to an expansive set of double doors that were carved with beautiful patterns which when one took the time to analyse had several meanings, but neither Skullius nor Ferex was interested.

It was pretty intriguing to Skullius how even though there was the sensation of water on his skin, it didn't hinder any of his movements at all as if it wasn't there in the first place.

With said smoothness and ease, the Discount Human and Demon Hound reached the doors.

"Now what?" Skullius asked while curiously sensing around. He didn't know if he was supposed to push the doors and reveal what was inside or something else.

Given how the animosity seemed brutally real, he'd rather not act rashly in this place.

'I remember only a few things from this place. This is not one of them. I doubt you're expected to let yourself in though, tomato flinger,' Sila said, finally breaking his silence.

Skullius shook his head as he made careful deliberations but fortunately for him, he didn't need to act without instruction.

The largest of the twelve eyes imprinted on the wall to the temple glowed with a bright golden hue, a stream of bright gold leaking from it and flowing like a serene stream over the bumps and bulges of the building, reaching the double doors in a few seconds.

As it did so, the golden liquid formed a like-coloured blank parchment that floated before the double doors, facing Skullius and his group.

Skullius took a few steps back just in case while Ferex hurriedly darted before his master.

The two's fears turned out to be unwarranted however, as the parchment meant no harm. Instead, from its centre, a set of pink lips protruded without smile nor frown and addressed the new aspiring entrants.

"Heed me, dear child, for I speak only once. All are welcome to the Temple of Unlusted Tears but all are not equal. All may roam but not all may see the wonders set by this righteous accord. To guarantee your life in this nest of passion and justice, heed my piece of three..."

A melodious voice, much like the early chirps and song from the birds on a spring morning was heard but while Skullius could appreciate the sound, he couldn't appreciate the words, as he didn't understand them.

'Sila...' Skullius referred to his presumed freeloader.

'Let it finish first. I don't remember this, but yes I can interpret it,' Sila said, paying rapt attention.

The aged piece of soul speculated that his incomplete soul had some bits of this experience missing.

The lips on the parchment continued, as they spoke the important detail of note.

"Limit where your fingers roam, for until you find the gift we speak, nothing here is owned.

Pay respects where due and maintain the sanctity of the Ground of Communion even when you are put to the test..." the set of lips said before arching up into a ridiculing grin that made the atmosphere several degrees sombre.

"And if you are of the glorified manhood, open your eyes and bear witness to the Slurred Grounds with despair. For that is the only reason this benefit of entry is granted to you!"

Right after that was said, the parchment rolled itself up and broke apart into fragments of sparkling light.

The double doors rumbled as they opened, inviting whoever stood before them to come in.

Skullius had a really bad feeling about this. He couldn't mistake malice when he felt it.

From the parchment to the gushing waves of atrocity that spilled like a torrent of vicious flame when the doors opened, this was... all but positive.

Then again, Fuwin had said that treatment was vastly different depending on the gender. If that was the case even during the evaluation conducted by the dolphin, then it was definitely the case here.

'Well, tomato flinger. Fortunately, even though that menacing voice spoke in an ancient dialect more common in the North, I was able to figure out much of what it said. First, there are three rules...'

Sila went on to explain everything to Skullius who mulled it over.

"So the only reason men are even allowed here is to... bear witness? I have a feeling that's going to be fleshing disturbing. They really drive home what they hate with that name though," Skullius said as he took the first steps into the temple along with Ferex.

The beginnings to a mysterious experience. One last experience before the Discount Human was to head to Genhuis City was afoot.

An experience in the Temple of Unlusted Tears.

Chapter 406: Just A Tour

A dark corridor that gave no homely feel stretched before Skullius and Ferex.

From the white of the platform that held the entire temple up to the thick block tiling beyond the double doors, its grey giving no warmth as it only showed a narrower than expected prelude to its fullness, the transition was pretty much as heavy as one would expect.

Except for a dry fountain that was stationed between the tens of meters distance between the double doors and the next doorway into an even darker room, nothing else could be seen or felt but the Discount Human perceived the sting in his senses from prying magical constructs.

Arrays.

The two passed through this space and entered the next spot to their journey.

A large room.

Strangely, the term room didn't seem to suit it as when Skullius entered, he found that above, there wasn't a ceiling like he expected but several square shaped windows that actually invited a very dim light from an unknown source to illuminate what could be found below them.

And what could be found here was...

"Jeez..." Skullius said as his senses picked up on the atrocious elements within this place.

'I'm sure these are the Slurred Grounds,' Sila chipped in.

Rows upon rows of human corpses were tied to the walls, their hands bound by thickly woven rope which hung from the ceiling!

All of them were stripped of their clothing and mutilated in an unsightly manner, gashes and the bloody work of sharp tools evidently carved into them.

Not a single part of them was untouched and at some point, Skullius began to think that this wasn't exactly torture without purpose.

Two common features shared by the corpses was how their crotches were devoid of any genitalia whatsoever, what remained there being either a charred patch or carved out hollow and the fact that a large slit could be seen over their abdomens.

The dried blood on the ground and walls discoloured the floor to an unsightly colouration that would have nauseated a normal human being to a mind-numbing degree but... this wasn't all there was in this place.

Large goblets with a bronze hue could be seen every four meters down the extensive room where multiple rows of these 'decorations' were hung, within them blood that barely looked like blood.

"Is this really still just to send a message? To me it seems like these women were doing something else here," Skullius said.

"That is the case, tomato flinger. Of course this was more purposeful than what this order did outside.<Sigh>. I would have wept as I did ages ago from just knowing that some of my friends and acquaintances met such a cruel fate for such an unholy cause,' Sila said with a distant voice.

"Your friends?"

'Yes. Apparently my memory still recalls where each of those I remember are hung even now, though I couldn't even remember the name of this place. Pathetic. At least they left this life behind in the end. For that, I shall weep no more tears.'

Quite the dark line.

Skullius couldn't help but wonder if his statement for drawing Sila would start losing value if more of his friends' corpses were strung up in places they visited.

Probably... if that played out exactly as such as.

"So what was the purpose behind cutting them up like this?" Skullius questioned as he continued moving, his [Elevated Mana Manipulation] noticing bits of mana clinging onto meaningful groves between the goblets and behind the corpses on the wall.

'My assumption is that it was to extract the information from their bodies. Information about their techniques. Everyone on this wall was special in some way back in the day,' Sila replied.

"Body information? So you mean... skills and techniques are found within the body? I thought they were stored in the soul?"

'When you learn a technique, it is imprinted on your body. The move set, the degree of physical application required, both are carved into the flesh so that they interact with the mana coming from the core. The soul merely replicates this information with time, as it does with everything one does, making it easier for one to perform anything they learned with greater levels of accuracy,' Sila said.

'Do well to remember that detail when you face stronger opponents. I won't hear any excuses when we're lying in a ditch somewhere because you forgot.'

A little hostility was postulated with the last thing that Sila said, making Skullius scoff as he walked past this illuminated space, his Hound in tow.

They soon exited and came to a branch that led in two separate paths.

Skullius chose one at random, as Sila claimed to not be sure which was the right one.

Following the path which wound and turned, the decor on the walls of unlit torches and wilted bouquets that had housed special flowers which had produced a calming scent in the past were all Skullius could sense along with arrays impeded within the walls.

After a full twenty minute stretch, Skullius came to find small room along the path with an open door.

Shelves of books could be peeked from the outside.

Skullius inched his way closer to them when...

'Don't,' Sila warned. 'Keep moving.'

Skullius narrowed his eyes before backing away and walking past this room.

He hadn't sensed anything wrong but he speculated that perhaps a hidden array too advanced for his senses was there. Sila hadn't elaborated further as with his occasional bouts of silence, one could infer he was trying to recall every detail he could.

Another stretch strung Skullius and Ferex along until they by another extensive space foreshadowed by a single, but not nearly as large as the Slurred Grounds as what was accommodated wasn't that 'extravagant'.

It was merely a fine dining space with a large table made of now rotting wood with the twelve chairs that surrounded it experiencing the same fate.

Strangely, the table which held fine cutlery and other dining ware was split into two.

From the walls, a large and crooked gash disfigured the room which was littered with little luxuries that made a dining experience more enjoyable; a fireplace, what seemed like souvenir plates placed around the room on shelves along with a beautiful wallpaper that was now old and torn.

The gash from the wall seemed to have been from a ridiculous force that had carried itself over from the outside to crash against the table.

'We must be getting close. I don't recall seeing this before but it is undoubtedly linked to the incident that caused the end of the Order of the Trodden Rose,' Sila said. 'Keep moving.'

Skullius withdrew from the room and walked on in the wide corridor. This was nothing like the Labyrinth of the Yoke. It was more like sightseeing but the Discount could feel that whatever Sila said was approaching, was going to be a pain in the pelvis.

"Close to what?" he asked.

Sila didn't reply immediately as he seemed to be piecing together the fragmented story in his mind.

'I believe I found this out in one of my numerous visits here. What ultimately led to the fall of this Order was a feud. Or rather a doubly profound betrayal between the woman hailed as the founder of the Order and the rest of the members,' Sila said. 'This links back to what we have to face in the end. The twelve guardians to the legacy of the Trodden Rose.'

"Twelve?!" Skullius gaped.

'They were, but not anymore. Only a few should remain. Besides, that is not even relevant.'

Skullius frowned.

His only template for what a space holding a legacy was like seemed vastly different from this.

Where he had come looking forward to an arduous fight from the beginning, he was met with a tour and now, there were guardians that he was supposed to fight?

The way Sila said it didn't exactly tickle his jewels.

'For that eventual battle, I advise you to give me control of your body. I can utilise your powers more efficiently. Bes—'

"Forget it, Sila!" Skullius didn't even entertain the suggestion.

'I will relinquish control after I defeat the guardians! This is not the time to be stubborn. We could perish here, tomato flinger!'

This bastard!

"You really think I will just hand over my body after what you pulled last time?! Was this your intention all along?!"

'Believe me, tomato flinger. If it wasn't so hard to make an external Creed, I could have scrounged up enough strength to make one with you here guaranteeing that I return your body but I—'

"I said forget it, bro!" Skullius said firmly before clicking his tongue.

This slimy bastard was really shameless.

He would never make a mistake like that again, even if Sila was genuinely appealing for this!

Once was enough.

He was only able to tolerate the aged piece of soul right now because his little charade had given Skullius incredible boons but now....

'Hmph! Pathetic! Nomatter! You'll soon be begging for my help when you witness the strength of those things! We'll see if your resolve to live is as fickle as you let on!'

Skullius didn't render a reply.

This guy was mad!

Honestly, he was beginning to wonder if Sila had been acting all along to which he had to give props but...

'I won't lose. Nomatter what it is.'

Ferex beside him grew determined as he felt the fire from his master's will.

This same will continued to burn incessantly when Skullius soon saw a long stretch leading to what he instinctively knew wasn't a random place but THE place where an atrocious obstacle was waiting.

Chapter 407: Ground of Communion

Indeed, the Temple of Unlusted Tears did not seem as menacing as one would expect when one entered as a gold digger, searching for things to loot or to honourably challenge for the legacy.

However, this was because most of the important spaces were shut off from any entrants that weren't part of the twelve, with the more insignificant spaces left for everyone to explore.

This didn't mean that one couldn't die from them as some were generally protected even while they didn't have much in the way of secrets but more of bits of sentimental value.

This temple truly was a simple temple, where a determined group practised their belief.

Asides from the Slurred Grounds, Skullius had noted that this was more of an immaculately arranged living quarters than anything else.

Yet now, contrary to that belief, the Discount Human couldn't help but force up his guard as he looked to the far end of a corridor that held rows of small, multi-coloured obscure glass windows that also administered light into the space between where a carpet with intricate weavings much like a tapestry of gold and red was laid.

The cold grey remained the same on both the walls and floor but an aged, arched ceiling curved overhead, webs and dust sprinkling from it.

At the end, another set of double doors could be seen, with a rocky texture that gave a feeling of ancientness – always a bad prelude.

Skullius continued to hold the staff firmly.

He was wondering if he should use his must-be-played-early trump card right now, or wait till he arrived behind those doors. The risk of the latter option was obvious as he might not get a chance to use it but if he used it now...

'You know, don't you?' Sila's voice sounded with a ridiculing tone. 'Even I didn't use it against that Spirit Warden because I knew your body would likely not be able to handle it for a long time and afterwards, certain side effects would most definitely follow. The fact that you're considering this is a reflection of how much you can't even see beyo—'

"I won't be losing this one," Skullius said.

The brimming of the mana core slowly forming in his body gave him hope and determination. If anything, this core that he was crafting on his own, to him symbolised the start of a streak of growth and wins!

Something that represented an upsurge and a turn in the tide.

The hardwork he had injected for this thing to come into existence, the labour in body and thought, was real.

This truly felt like something he was earning rightfully.

No one would take it away from him!

The confidence from having technically beaten an existence he thought was far beyond his level was still palpable in his body.

This and his policy for gambling for the better benefit gave Skullius a rush that he had never gotten before, asides from running for his life over the course of his life in Aigas so far.

Well, no more.

Insurgency.

Null Life.

He would comprehend it all and topple everything for his yet to fully be realised goal.

For now, all he needed was growth, as Serenity said.

'Hmph! Spout all the prettiest ideals you can, Skullius,' Sila said before growing silent.

Skullius didn't put him away. He had a feeling that the bastard would continue to taunt him into relinquishing control of his body but in the process continue to divulge important details.

It didn't take long for Skullius to reach the doors.

As he did, they uncomfortably scratched against the floor while opening wide on their own, fully revealing a space triple the size of the Slurred Grounds in width, length and height.

Unlike everywhere else Skullius had been, there was abundant light here that lit every crevice and corner without being too overbearing.

Fuuuu...

Skullius took a breath as he felt with his expanded senses that didn't reach the ends of this place, his body moving through the doors which promptly closed behind him.

Ferex could see it all however.

In the chilling silence, twelve large statues could be seen imbedded into the walls seamlessly all around, each one having the basic design of a woman in specific clothing that represented the individual depicted more than the facial details and overall figure shape.

Bulky armour, leather armour, lengthy robes with collars and sashes – different variations of these were the clothing styles carved over the white marble that made the statues.

The floor was less rough here. At least it must have been originally as now, an atrocious amount of gouges and holes littered it, defacing its sanctity.

In fact, splinters and broken wooden chunks evidenced that there was supposed to be a very religious set up that was probably destroyed by the violence that took place here.

The walls were also cracked, with some of these cracks extending to the statues, breaking apart certain sections of them.

'There are groves here too like in the Slurred Grounds, but unlike before, they are still burning with mana,' Skullius noted as he moved to familiarise himself with the place.

Ferex growled, alerting Skullius of the danger he sensed.

Immense danger.

"What is it?" Skullius asked.

The response he got was a vague layout of the space along with being notified that there were... strange objects at the base of the large statues.

Indeed there were.

There were hollow spaces dug into the bottom of the statues where certain shapely objects were imbedded in, perfectly matching the shape of the hollow.

All of them were stone figures cracked beyond belief and their parts clearly torn apart were jointed without substance and fitted into the hollows.

Someone had damaged them to this degree.

Someone had fitted them back and respectfully laid them back into the hollows.

'Are they guardians?'

Basing off of Ferex's information stream, Skullius thought that these could potentially be the guardians but...

Did all of them wear out from battling outsiders or did something else happen?

The cracks that stretched through the floor where he could sense were another mystery.

Something else must have happened here.

'My [Elevated Mana Manipulation] isn't picking up much. Are they dead or something?' Skullius thought. 'They don't seem human at all.'

CHKK! CHKK!

The sound of something cracking lightly echoed in the expansive space.

Skullius turned to the sound as he prepared to go all out.

This room wasn't merely filled with inanimate objects after all, it seemed.

From one of the twelve hollows at the base of all the statues, something protruded.

It shoved its way out of the hard hold of stone, its figure which was also made of white stone, attaining colours and textures that brought its figure to life in an unnatural way!

Its appearance spontaneously changed, becoming quite lively!

The figure took a few heavy steps with slow and unsteady motion before standing still and jerking its limbs in weird ways – its own version of stretching.

The armour it decked was immaculate and pristine, its overall appearance nothing short of ethereally gorgeous.

And yet, before one could appreciate its beauty...

VWOOOOOOOOOOOSH!!!!!!

A literal storm of mana flooded from its body like a heavenly torrent of cyclonic judgement!

A bright flash of radiant light followed by a deafening crackle that caused the space to quiver was heard, Skullius and Ferex being blasted away by the force to smash against the wall and back down!

Atrocious!

Skullius hurriedly stood as he activated his trump card immediately!

This was it!

He said he wouldn't lose!

But this...

No!

He wouldn't make room for doubts, buts or even butts!

His senses grew firm and solid while at the same time, the tumultuous and turbulent presence before him died down, being reduced to but a smidgeon of its previous glory.

One that still caused a light, visible gust to beat against Skullius' skin still.

A clear voice, one that was mesmerising and incredibly cold at the same time leaked from the creature that had just torn itself from what seemed like slumber.

"I, Bassbion, born of the blood of the True Rose Mother awaken to welcome you. Only I and Reichiel remain to represent the legacy of the Order. The Diverse Oculus."

Gulp.

"I remain as the only one left fit to challenge all those who reach this place however and so..."

The figure seemed to pause as it faced Skullius in particular.

"Face me, Vile Filth."

Chapter 408: A Challenge

"Face me, Vile Filth."

A voice that sounded much too pure to be saying such a provocative statement leaked from the once stone body that now faced Skullius.

The Discount Human gulped unconsciously as changes appeared on his body, but he hadn't been able to sense the build his opponent yet, thus he lacked much of an appreciation of her.

From being the intricate carvings of white marble, this being that identified as Bassbion had changed to attain more lively features.

Lively feminine features.

On her rather tall figure, approximately 1.97 meters, a helmet that looked more like a white cap covering up to the bridge of her nose could be seen.

Where it covered her eyes, a hollow oval shaped socket could be seen, holding nothing but darkness as it awaited something specific to fulfill it.

The rest of the helmet overhead and beyond was shiny as if scrubbed and polished, with the part that covered up to the back of Bassbion's head having several tassels that rose and fell behind her along with her flowing dark hair.

These tassels had golden leaf-like protrusions on both their sides, making the back of the helmet look more like a strange set of beautiful vines. An erect shark fin-like protrusion rose from the direct centre of the helmet, also with a golden hue that gave an intimidating feel.

As for her armour, there was nothing much to say. It could barely be seen.

What was more visible when looking at Bassbion was the dozens of small, glowing and pristine white chains that wrapped all around the white-coloured armour, as if restricting the guardian

immensely. They hid much of the detail of what exactly the entirety of her armour's appearance was supposed to be, which was a little disappointing.

At her side, a sheath grasping a rather long sword, approximately 1.85 meters, was attached to it, unbound by these little chains.

'There's something off with this...' Skullius thought.

Yes, he could feel the atrocious waves of mana and the layered powers that came with the armour Bassbion wore but... something still felt off. Perhaps it was so because he had a reference that he was failing to recall.

Ferex also noted that there was something peculiar.

Below the helmet that Bassbion wore, the lower half of her face showed light red thin lips and eerily pale skin that bordered on transparent.

'Tomato flinger! Stop with your stubbornness and let me take care of this! She is leagues stronger than the other guardians I have fought in the past! She's likely the most powerful of them all!' Sila growled from within Skullius.

Skullius didn't respond as instead, while appraising Bassbion, he felt the changes from his body post activation of his trump card.

[Jagged Merger]!

A skill from the Elimparidis Stone Staff that allowed one to merge with the staff and gain 4000 stat points to Strength, Agility and Endurance individually with absolute conversion applied!

Skullius was feeling the brimming energy from having these stats more than doubled, red cracks appearing on his body which was under his new armour.

His figure bulked up quite a bit, his muscles bulging with refined mass to contain the power he had gained.

Two lengthy cracks rose from his cheeks and ran through sockets, crossing over to his forehead as they visually depicted the effects of the skill.

'Yeah... it's heavy. I won't last long,' Skullius thought.

This wasn't the first time he had attempted to use this skill and during his earlier tries, Skullius had discovered that the skill forcefully pushed the body to attain more strength while restructuring bodily components to allow for better reception of the power.

As a result, it wasn't a surprise that his body wouldn't be able to handle it for lengthy periods, as the effect was caused by the means to attaining the strength rather than the strength itself.

"Instead of yammering why don't you tell me what she is saying instead? I might just die for no reason, you know?" Skullius responded to Sila with a half taunt.

Words could not express how frustrated Sila was, but he had no choice but to acquiesce, as it didn't seem like Bassbion was done talking.

"Many a challenger has reached this place through being graced with the undeserved mercy of my masters, women and vile filth alike, though much of you vile filth we have had to cull so that you never see the ends of the chambers where a sacred power is born," the white armour clad guardian said with a dull tone.

"Rejoice, vile filth, for after tens of thousands of years, the Diverse Oculus has finally found a host and you by your lonesome, should you defeat me, will be the first of the vile filth to enter into the long hidden chambers as a challenger and not an escort."

...!

Sila who understood what was said, spoken in the same dialect as the one used by the lips on the parchment at the entrance of the temple, was shocked.

A host was already found?!

So... why was the temple still here along with Fuwin's Majestic Territory?

Heck, anyone could still enter this place as a challenger. Why? For what purpose then?

"What's it saying?" Skullius asked Sila to which the aged piece of soul begrudgingly responded.

As he translated, he couldn't help but also think about how this served as an opportunity. His plan before, at least when Skullius had rejuvenated his spirits, was to enter the Temple regardless of the danger and the unlikelihood of being able to beat a guardian while being a male challenger because of the difficulty, as he figured he could attempt to pressure Skullius into giving him his body.

He now knew what would happen if Skullius dies. He was a part of the bastard so he would suffer the same fate but he gambled on how much Skullius didn't want to be drawn to that icy scape.

A lot of good that did, though. At the very least, he hoped they could get the blue core if that plan failed but now, there was a different guardian, one stronger than all the others he knew almost everything about!

"I see," Skullius said after hearing the translation.

If he understood this correctly though, didn't it mean that men couldn't get past this particular space to get to the legacy before now? If he was being allowed to pass provided he could defeat Bassbion, how did Sila get past then?

Had he been lying?

The item that Sila had been talking about was pretty obviously beyond this point, right?

"I have never had to fight before, but with all the others worn and torn through battle, I, the most powerful among my peers will be your opponent," Bassbion continued as if she was reading a largely spaced script. "Vile filth, I shall be generous. If you can land three strikes on me, regardless of their effect on my armour or body, I shall let you pass."

With that, Bassbion's power flared, making Skullius gnash his teeth as he felt its overbearing force.

If he was to compare, it was more like Unbreakable's raw pressure but league's ahead in terms of refinement and control!

That wild!

Yet, Skullius remained steadfast.

'I won't lose,' he thought, encouraging himself.

With the pressure piling on, Bassbion took a step forward as she delivered her last words before attacking.

"Be at ease. Most of my power is bound by these chains and I can only exhibit a twentieth of its entirety at this moment along with merely two unimpressive techniques that are at my disposal. If you cannot handle this much, you truly are a disgrace even among vile filth."

'Hey, that's unfair!' Skullius thought while drops of sweat sped down his brow, his focus growing to maximum. It was going to be extremely difficult to keep his Refinery in check while also battling Bassbion but he had no choice!

Ferex immediately vanished from his spot, evidently using his hide.

For Skullius, four [Beads of Malevolence] appeared around him as he felt the mana from the Elimparidis Stone Staff stack within his mana channels in its limited capacity.

He was ready.

Yet...

SNAP!

A metallic snap of the fingers rang out within the space, which was the Ground of Communion, Skullius feeling a horrendous straining force that seemingly blasted from all around him and pressed him on the floor cradling his figure!

...!

The Discount Human grit his teeth as he was forced to kneel despite all the effort he inputted to avoid such a thing, his hands moving on their own to grasp tightly against themselves while removing to part!

'What in the world?!' Skullius thought with alarm but the paralysis wasn't the worst of it, as another effect kicked in almost simultaneously!

...!

'My senses!'

Skullius felt his advanced alternate senses get wobbly, even his [Elevated Mana Manipulation] beginning to 'malfunction' when it came to its sensory purpose!

His only means of perception was compromised!

This was what Bassbion casually achieved with but a snap of her fingers!

The guardian casually walked forward, entering within range of Skullius' Outer Domain.

...!

Skullius was again flabbergasted when the image of the guardian finally entered his 'view' but because of the effect of this strange technique she was using, there wasn't one of her, but seventy two!

All of them as they appeared in his senses, with the vibration of their greaves on the floor, had different mana signatures and power!

...!

This was one of Bassbion's 'unimpressive' skills, Scramble Binding.

Skullius was prompted to panic now as he couldn't even discern the position of his enemy!

How was he to deal with such a thing?!

"Hmm?" Bassbion noticed something strange as she quickly turned her head to the side.

With the quick swish of her hand, a calamitous burst of mana raged, cross a long distance in a short time as it seemingly blasted the open air!

BOOOOOOM!

An atrocious force rammed into the wall on her far side, breaking it while causing rubble to fall!

Soon after, the image of Ferex appeared, dropped from the high point where he had smashed into the tough construct and crashed to the floor!

Everywhere from his neck to his hind legs was punched in with sizzling smoke that seemed to be constantly burning away at the Unliving Thread he produced as well as his body showing!

...!

Bassbion's image flashed softly over to Skullius who had just had a bad premonition and she raised her hand, balling it into a fist that practically exploded with mana and hammering it down on Skullius who was kneeling, his prized senses in the Inner Domain not doing jack to help him sense which of the seventy two Bassbion's was his real enemy!

BOOM! CRACK! CRACK!

With attack speed that Skullius couldn't even perceive, Bassbion smashed both of Skullius' shoulders in, the bones and flesh on these parts indenting and cracking into pieces as they brutally mashed with everything else inside!

With barely any delay, Bassbion's armoured hand pierced through Skullius' throat, gripping everything within it and ruthlessly pulling it out!

Blood sprayed out, staining Bassbion's armour, the guardian looking down on Skullius who choked, spewing a red fountain from his mouth with great disdain as she spoke.

"How abysmally pathetic."

At this moment, the agitated voice of Sila boomed within Skullius' mind, revealing something he had wanted to withhold!

'HAND OVER THE BODY NOW! SHE'S DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHER GUARDIANS!
SHE'S A SPIRIT!'

Chapter 409: Trodden Under Overwhelming Might Yet...

Sila's loud voice directed his words to Skullius' mind quite easily but the Discount Human could care less about the aged soul's ramblings, though he did hear the bit about Bassbion being a Spirit.

He still didn't understand what they were!

The guardian loomed over Skullius, but the Discount Human sensed a multitude of the feminine figures all around him, still, his body even then being incapable of telling him of these bodied him!

Skullius was panicking but he quickly calmed himself down as he knew this could be the determinant factor of how everything turned out next.

He was far outclassed in power and this enemy even had the ability to somehow see Ferex despite his hide!

The Apostle had even been taken out of commission in one hit!

Logically, there should be no other option besides death or handing his body over to Sila but...

'I won't lose!' Skullius thought as his mind churned, his momentarily lapse that had led to him slipping in his control of the Refinery to his core fading ever so slightly as instead of weaving the mana from the Centre, he focused on holding it all back!

Whatever was happening to [Elevated Mana Manipulation] was screwing up with his plans for his core!

The majority of his focus was funnelled to Bassbion who still looked on at him as he bled out profusely with a cold face.

With Skullius' mind that was working hard like there was no tomorrow, as there could very well not be one, an important detail was quickly noticed!

Bassbion wasn't finishing him off!

...!

Skullius immediately realised why!

"A standout like you deserves nothing more than to die slowly for daring to intrude with such weak and unrefined strength," Bassbion said with incredible apathy.

The Discount Human she faced held back the flood of fear and uncertainty he had in this moment as this was his chance!

Yes!

It was an opening!

Bassbion thought he was dying, but actually, Skullius was perfectly fine.

He could just use [Great Saint's Invigoration] to mend his body but not yet.

He had to make the next move count while the guardian was still lost in the thought that she had got him but this also depended on whether this ability, [Scramble Binding] would wear off, allowing Skullius to move again.

Still though, he could attack with some of his more accommodating skills as his mind wasn't bound!

And what was Skullius' next move?

[Perfect Night Domain]!

A flood of [Evil Darkness] burst out of the immobile Skullius as it covered quite a bit of ground, trapping Bassbion within it!

The guardian didn't seem phased or surprised but rather... a tad bit intrigued.

The thick of the pitch black bore down on her but she remained standing, staring into the dark with her covered eyes.

Skullius immediately healed himself while feeling the rush of energy that increased his stats by 80%!

At the same time, [Scramble Binding] was conveniently deactivated, allowing Skullius to move freely again!

The Discount Human didn't even question why the ability had suddenly shut off with impeccable timing as with his mobility returning, he quickly attacked!

The [Perfect Night Domain] supported its master with strength and awareness as Skullius immediately pulled out Demion's Dance and slashed before him in a lengthy diagonal arc, all his might stuffed into the strike!

Yet...

...!

Skullius was dumbfounded!

Even though he was in his domain where everything was shared with him constantly, with even a bit of enlightenment added on top of it, he... he...

Skullius still felt the presence of seventy two Bassbions!

'How?!'

To make matters worse, the moment he slashed with Demion's Dance, he cut apart nothing as the seventy two images flashed out of his sense for a brief moment and appeared a distance away in the darkness!

Bassbion could move freely without restriction in Skullius' own domain, and it seemed she wasn't the least bit affected!

"I thought something was peculiar. Your life energy, as different as it is from that of other living creatures wasn't dwindling one bit. It looks like such an injury is not enough to kill you," Bassbion said as she lowered her stance.

Seeing as she was talking to him, Skullius couldn't help but wonder if she could see him as well!

"OF COURSE SHE CAN SEE YOU, TOMATO FLINGER! SHE IS A SPIRIT! SHE CAN PERCEIVE SOULS!" Sila hissed. "SHE IS CLEARLY BEYOND YOU! JUST HAND OVER THE BODY AND I WILL DEFEAT HER!"

Skullius' hand trembled as he momentarily felt completely defeated.

The domain was something he had pushed all of his faith into, hoping that it would allow him to trace which Bassbion was the real one, on top of granting him more strength!

Yet he was wrong!

The domain even failed to hide his own presence from Bassbion!

Why?!

Was he just not thinking of better ways of attack with what he had?

How could Sila have so much confidence in defeating her when he would be using the same abilities and the same body?!

What was Skullius missing?!

Was he simply incompetent?!

'No! I won't lose! I'm giving it my all this time! Luck, convenience! Throw all that aside! I can do this!

I just have to—'

BOOOM!

A staggering force bombarded Skullius from his abdomen to his chest, causing a gnarly depression, the Discount Human being launched at disgusting speeds out of his own domain and into the wall six meters high in less than half a second!

Blood involuntarily gushed out of Skullius' mouth from the impact and he dropped to the ground gracelessly!

A distance away, the [Perfect Night Domain] was dispelled and Bassbion appeared with an unimpressed half face, her gaze towards Skullius who staggered to a stand while maintaining a firm grip on Demion's Dance being sharp.

"I admire your persistence. I thought your will would be broken by this much but you are proving to have above average resilience, vile filth," Bassbion said. "For that much, I shall give you a partially honourable death by the swing of my blade."

Bassbion crouched down and placed her right hand on the dark hilt to her sword that had small blue squares along its length, the guard clinking as she tightened her grip while her left hand held the sheath.

The sword in this sheath was called the Spirit Blade of Cessation, a beyond Legendary item that turned an opponent's life force into strings that would be visible to its wielder, giving them the ability to hack them apart with the result being the death of the target.

It could also do the same with souls, but to a limited degree, though a casual strike was enough to injure the body and soul if no defence was rendered.

That said, the armour Bassbion wore was called the Spirit Encompassing Adornment, another beyond Legendary treasure in this set that allowed Spirits to interact better with physical matter without relying on spells or ethereal means.

This revelation begged the question of what exactly were Spirits in the first place however, and to that, the most basic yet sufficient answer would be that Spirits were overseers of the realms where the souls of the dead roamed.

The relationship between the two was rather intricate, with the properties of both more similar than otherwise, but this was a discussion for another time.

VWOOOOOSH!

Around Bassbion, a torrent of mana suddenly burst out, creating a thick layer that shone bright but with immense refinement and finesse!

The mana that flooded from her body started out smooth before spiking out in all directions, creating serrated skewers that had a strange spin at their ends, like a whirlpool, a pointy whirlpool!

The floor under Bassbion's feet got skewered as it was blasted by mana, the guardian's second and last technique available to her at the moment ready to strike!

This technique was called, Hyperfocus Motion Counter!

Skullius even from a distance and with Bassbion, or rather the seventy-two Bassbions, just barely within range of his Outer Domain, could feel his skin being pricked!

This technique was deadly and this wasn't even accounting for the fact that she was about to draw her sword.

[Jagged Merger], Skullius' trump card had barely been used and now, as he felt the mana he had left, barely 2500 points, he couldn't imagine what skill he could use to escape this.

Would his resolve still trudge on?

Sila who was within Skullius' soul could feel hints of depression and despair from the Discount Human.

'Good!' he thought.

While he was still at an incredible risk, with a little pushing and encouragement, he could convince Skullius to let him take the driver's seat. He just needed to play his cards right.

Skullius remained looking blankly at Bassbion, his thoughts hidden from everyone but him.

Sila approached his consciousness like the devil, his voice reaching Skullius' mind with half baked urgency.

'Come now, tomato flinger! Weren't you the one who said that we should put away our mutual hate for each other and work together to achieve common goals?! I'm willing to cooperate, but you need to give me your body so that I can save us!' Sila yelled but no response came from Skullius. 'You have a lot to do, don't you?!

Don't you want to find out who that girl is without being trapped by Somanda first?! Don't you want to find VOW again and speak to him?! Don't you want to help your friends in Deadmanland?!

Sila bit on every sore wound and hopeful moment that Skullius had but...

Still...

There was no response!

'FOOL! Have you already given up?! If so then give me the chance to fight for my life!'

"I'm coming, vile filth!" Bassbion's voice suddenly echoed from the distance as the spiking mana around her raged up and out like a voracious beast with whirling thorns, her figure launching forward with the explosive force of a volcano!

The Ground of Communion shook as Bassbion turned into a white streak that travelled at well beyond perceivable speed, her darting image revealing another short streak that had begun to slide out of the sheath at her side!

'TOMATO FLINGER!' Sila growled with immense hate and animosity, foreseeing a tragically cruel end.

As it was.

...

And yet...

Right after Bassbion launched at a jaw dropping speed, Skullius... did the same...

The Discount Human burst to meet Bassbion!

The REAL one!

At the same speed!

...!!!

The Discount Human's figure was set alight, even the new armour he wore as a fierce flame devoured his flesh and skin from the absolutely ridiculous speed he had unceremoniously, unexpectedly and shockingly launched himself at!

A speed way beyond what his stats could afford him!

...!

Bassbion, for the first time in this fight, no, for the first time in millenia, was shocked!

This pathetic challenger somehow matched her speed?!

Before she could unsheathe her sword, she had already encountered Skullius whose sockets flared, chock full of darkness that fumed horrendously, Demion's Dance in his skeletal hand which was burning incessantly with nauseating smoke rising from it, swinging sloppily at her and scratching the side of her armour!

ZWUUUUP!

Skullius' figure burst past Bassbion as he hurtled, crashing into the wall on the other side, beside one of the twelve statues!

BOOOOOOM!

A thick flame coupled with the dark smoke of charring flesh sizzled as Skullius then protruded from the wall, his face barely a face as a dirty skull with sockets that flamed with [Evil Darkness] showed, fire illuminating the rows of teeth partially darkened by the heat!

Skullius stood, ignoring his current pathetic state as he... began laughing maniacally!

Bassbion who had gracefully halted a meter before hitting the wall turned to look at her opponent.

Skullius' armour was beginning to somehow reform, covering his flaming body, but the Discount Human did not heal his own flesh, keeping it as it was.

"IT WORKED! IT ACTUALLY WORKED! HAHAAHAHAHAHA!" Skullius roared in exhilaration, his sockets turning to face Bassbion as he could actually SEE her now! "That's ONE, right?!"

Bassbion didn't give a reply, but it was all but hidden what the answer was.

And as Skullius revelled in this feeling of achievement just before facing death, his <RUSH BLOOD> boiled, his <HEART> beating at an astonishing speed!

Yes...

Skullius was HYPED!

Chapter 410: Awakening!

Huff, huff!

Skullius unconsciously took breaths as the skill [HYPED] activated, his <HEART> beginning to beat ridiculously fast while the <RUSH BLOOD> in his burning body started to rapidly boil with the cells within it multiplying and banging against themselves!

This phenomenon alerted Skullius of the fact that he couldn't keep his body burning now, as he needed more of his flesh for this skill, and though he had wanted to maintain this look for convenience, he used a bit of his remaining mana to heal himself passively through [Great Saint's Invigoration].

Flesh reformed under the regenerating armour he wore, giving [HYPED] more to work with as Skullius' perception in all its forms grew more refined and intricately more... intricate!

His [Elevated Mana Manipulation] became more concise, picking up on even the most minute detail while his natural senses tingled at everything that inched anywhere in his Domains!

As for whatever he could SEE, it all became all the more clear!

Despite the effects of [Scramble Binding] persisting, those that scrambled his senses at least, making it difficult to perceive Bassbion, Skullius was holding on just fine with his newly developed way around it.

'Heh.... that was insane, and having [HYPED] activate now is just what I needed,' Skullius thought, his eyes never leaving Bassbion who slowly turned to him all the way. 'Unfortunately, I used IT all up. I don't know if it's possible to even build up some more so fast. Though, maybe with my blood rushing like this...'

Just maybe, it was possible!

Sila within was still gaping. Even while he was literally within Skullius, he didn't know what the flesh this little Null Lifeform had done just now!

He had taken off with a speed that far exceeded what he was supposed to be capable of!

'Tomato flinger...' he voiced but Skullius was in too deep. He ignored and kept his focus where it mattered most.

On the other side, Bassbion slotted her sword back into her sheath as her mind processed what had happened while she prepared for another attack.

There was no need to rush anymore and with how this was devolving in a way she didn't expect, perhaps she could treat it as a more thrilling detour while the Temple waited.

While she waited!

'From the moment I wielded my blade, I discovered he doesn't have any strings depicting his life energy, though those reaching into his soul are clear. On that subject, he also possesses peculiar soul. Are they supposed to be so ugly? Maybe leaving my duties back home has crippled my ability to perceive this better,' Bassbion said as she felt over the scratch on her armour.

'Still, that caught me by surprise. He seems different from before. Was it a fluke or some kind of awakening? Hmph. Vile filth, let's find out.'

Bassbion crouched again, her mana spiking with incredible refinement as it covered every direction around her once again!

[Hyperfocus Motion Counter] was activated!

Bassbion held onto her sword as she prepared another charge.

One where she wouldn't let shock slow her down again!

Skullius felt the intensity from the distance and grinned while his sockets hurled out darkness that rose in wisps.

He strengthened his grip on Demion's Dance and breathed out a burst of hot air. In his sight, a greyish figure, more like a detail less human shape, with small dots of darkness was crouching while holding onto a pristine white sword.

This was what he saw!

How?

Well...

Skullius had committed to something he had wanted to test out since the day he started to appreciate his new attuned body!

To expand his senses, he needed something more than his fleshly senses and mana sense.

And that was obviously through the sight provided by [Crude World Projection]!

While using it was dangerous for obvious reasons, Skullius had decided to attempt using it while withholding his Projected form, a feat he had managed to perfect just now, while gambling on his life, as he then retained the vision that was available to him as the dark floating figure but... without having to become a dark floating figure!

It was thrilling!

He had actually done it!

This one perception was untouched by [Scramble Binding]!

As for the speed he exhibited earlier...

Well.... funny story.

The Discount Human had all his emotion out as he analysed the grimness of the situation.

'This is still bad. I managed to scrape through one attack, but as I am now, it's impossible for me to even pick up on her figure when she starts moving. This could be my last chance. So...'

Skullius drew in on most of the mana he had left, conjuring [Evil Darkness] that covered a small range of almost ten meters, compounding itself as it formed a sphere around him!

This was a spherical variation of [Perfect Night Domain], a skill that had failed him earlier but he refused to lose faith in it!

With [HYPED] active, Skullius was experiencing everything around him at ten times how he usually perceived it. As a result, with everything he was thinking and planning, his body and mind demanded perfection and profoundly focus!

This included all the work he was doing in his core!

While encased in the darkness, Skullius breathed out and crouched, mimicking Bassbion's stance from he had seen it earlier. As she was out of his range due to both of them being at the far ends of the vast Ground of Communion, he could only sense her mana.

Since he didn't have a sheath, he simply performed the same drawing stance that the guardian was using but with his left hand an inch over it!

"I'm coming, vile filth!" Bassbion said from the distance.

BOOOOM!

The guardian once again launched herself towards Skullius, the air parting for her while it exploded with a thunderous noise, [Hyperfocus Motion Counter] countering friction, mana and any type of resistance before Bassbion at an astonishing level!

Skullius felt the massive surge in mana, but instead of despairing, he grinned while paying his full focus into the Domain.

A myriad of thoughts flashed through Skullius' mind, most of them being about how very close he was to DEATH but he didn't push them away!

He embraced them.

He was likely to fall, despite him currently weaving all the plans he could to survive!

Sila felt the imminent danger as well, and growled.

'You stubborn fool! Are you really going to let us die!!!'

Skullius didn't respond and only paid all his focus on what came next with a entranced grin.

'Not yet! Even if death comes! I won't lose!' Skullius said as he cast away his fears.

This motivation.

This drive.

It seemed to have bloomed from nowhere and even Skullius was not sure why he suddenly became emboldened to this degree, but none of that mattered!

WIIING!!

None of it mattered.

WIIIIING!!

Demion's Dance rang lightly in the Discount Human's hand but Skullius didn't pay it any mind.

But even if that was the case...

Skullius' body twitched, the cracks over it sparking as the Discount Human seemed lost in the moment, Demion's Dance in his hand showing a light bloodlike aura over it that funnelled into Skullius and activated the skill [Epic Memory] in a more grandiose manner!

A portion of the strength and skill depicted by this sword when it was used in a legendary tale, an epic battle, blasted into Skullius allowing him to understand the technique that he hadn't been able to utilise even vaguely efficiently until now!

The Swindling Death Dance sword technique buried in Demion's Dance!

Demion's Dance was responding firmly to Skullius who in this moment had left the fear of DEATH behind, solely embracing the fact that some victories transcended TIME and SPACE!

He COULD die but he WOULDN'T lose!

That's what he believed!

CLANG!

Skullius' hands throbbed with veins as he swung the sword in an elegant arc at an attack speed that matched Bassbion's!

And this time, HE didn't stop!

Like watching a seasoned butcher swing his cleaver under the limited light from a window, the edges of Demion's Dance produced sparks and reflections of what seemed like excess movement, a sword technique that brought Bassbion to take Skullius seriously as the first swing came after a set of moves that seemed more like a juggler's routine than anything else!

CLANG!

Bassbion parried by wielding her sword laterally, Demion's Dance hammering twice over hers in a split second before its wielder flashed out of sight for another fraction of second, a series of

reflected lights from the sword appearing soon after as Skullius burst forth with a series of quick moves that Bassbion couldn't quite read!

'What kind of sword technique is this? Every movement seems so excessive but... No! Not only is each swing meant to create a variety of possibilities in handling options, it's also creating openings purposefully... creating the risk of being killed in a single hit!' Bassbion analysed as she found herself clashing madly against Skullius who continued to get faster and stronger with each strike!

A series of leaps, twirls in footwork and handwork were produced from Skullius using the Swindling Death's Dance, Bassbion parrying all of them as she briefly indulged her curiosity of this technique.

Yet... after tens of clashes, she found Skullius repeating the same swings without being able to match her physicality, if it could even be called that!

'This is going nowhere. I thought there was something impressive here but...!' Bassbion suddenly drew back and....

SNAP!

Her fingers snapped, Skullius being subjected to paralysis once again as his body fell to its knees, his arms colliding as they stuck together!

"It's over. You were not so disgraceful in the end, vile filth, I'll give you that," Bassbion said as she slashed down with such a quick strike that blood didn't show on Skullius' body, depicting that he had been split in half diagonally until a breath later!

Promptly after, the blast of mana knocked him a distance away, as he then hurtled over the distance and rolled over with his two chunks going separate ways!

Bassbion looked at the pathetic sight, scoffing as she saw that Skullius' upper half still had the right hand holding firmly to Demion's Dance.

"Perhaps I should cut his soul also, so tha—"

...!

Bassbion paused midway through her sentence, her lips frowning as shockingly....

The man who had just been hacked in two just now... was whole once again!

It was as if she had been watching a full sequence which then abruptly cut away to when everything was fine from tragedy!

Skullius was standing, his body reattached cleanly and his mysterious armour reforming over him again.

The Discount Human had used his once a day lifesaver, [Irisa You Whore], repairing his body as he saved the bits of mana he had left.

He raised his head, the dark red aura from Demion's Dance still coursing through his body as it actually went on to grip his <HEART>!

"You know..." Skullius said with a subtly hollow and yet jovial tone in his voice. "I just remembered that I died once..."

Bassbion held her sword once again as she prepared to take care of Skullius once and for all, ignoring his ramblings which she couldn't hear anyway.

Yet...

"But now, it looks like I'll be dying every time I wield this sword..."

The dark red aura around Skullius suddenly flared and with all his might, he slashed at Bassbion, this time in a vertical arc from top to bottom, his left hand following the sword from the side as if to protect it!

A different result from any other was produced in this moment, allowing a suffocating pressure that bellowed towards Skullius' enemy!

SHIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIING!

