

## Undead 541

Chapter 541: Sweet Proposals, Sweet Earnings

A day later.

"Father..."

"Don't start doubting your decision now, son. I for one accept it wholeheartedly."

"...Yes, father," Rudric Piyece said as he disembarked from the carriage and faced the mansion a short distance away.

His heart was pounding.

Conflict was strangling his morality and his well established values, not to mention his pride.

The six guards standing on both his and father's sides...

What would they think after hearing what the two were about to do right now?

Rudric gulped.

His father was the first to take a step in the direction of the mansion.

The Kinn Residence in Genhuis City.

Following Rudric's 'win' in his match against Vali Kinn in the first round of the Preliminaries, his father had nagged him about what the woman had told him before she surrendered the round to him.

The words had been hard to say as Rudric hadn't known what his father would think back then.

For him personally...

Gulp.

That had been an immensely wonderful proposition that Vali had given him.

He could hardly believe it even now.

He still wondered why Vali surrendered the round as it was completely unnecessary but that was a separate issue.

What mattered, was that he was here to finalise this thing.

Rudric's thoughts distracted him enough to where he did not even see the passage of time, him and his entourage already at the mansion doors where a woman dressed in a long white dress greeted them and opened the door.

The woman gave a short bow before another came to lead them all inside.

Soon after, the group had arrived in a lavish, neat lounge with thick couches and... questionable paintings hung on the walls.

Within it, the shapely figure of Vali could be seen seated with one leg over the other on a couch that was much too big to simply be called such, yet it was.

The woman wore a short dress that revealed her tantalising thighs, leaving her calves and dainty feet to be seen by all who wished.

Rudric and his father tried to resist but both, with expert level swipe vision, saw all they needed to in fractions of time and collectively swallowed lumps of saliva.

"You may sit, gentlemen," Vali Kinn said with a sweet smile.

Rudric and his father did so.

"I assume your presence here means you have decided to accept my offer?" the Head of the Kinn Family asked.

Rudric looked at his father first before gazing at Vali with struggling eyes.

"Yes. Yes, we accept," he said with a determined gaze.

Vali smiled in contentment.

"Good," she said as she snapped her fingers, one of the women on standby walking towards the table between Vali and the guests with a sheet of paper that she placed on the piece of wooden furniture.

After doing so, this woman dressed humbly like the rest other than Vali, remained in this position with an expressionless face.

Rudric for a moment swallowed her whole with his eyes. Despite the long dress she wore, meant to cover her figure, he could see her voluptuous figure when she pressed her hands against her thighs through the dress!

Seriously, this woman rivalled Vali in proportions!

After a brief moment, Rudric tore himself from her and looked at the sheet of paper before him with a breath.

"Now..." Vali said as she leaned in from her seat, "...if you just sign this, resigning the Piyece Family to become a subsidiary under the Kinn Family, Eosa here, my dear sister, will be yours to do whatever you wish."

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EXP : 500/500

Twelfth Task : Absorb 1,000 pieces of darkness - (1000/1000)

Sub Task : Create your own Precept of Light - (Completed)

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"Phew..." Skullius breathed out.

He had finally completed his Twelfth Task.

Both the main and Sub Tasks had turned out to not be as hard as he had thought they were before, which was great.

The Hybrid Luman had absorbed the darkness from the nine members of Kenno's band that he had taken, killing them afterwards to present their heads to Bull and the others.

With that, he had felt another settlement of weight in his body but since it wasn't that much, he went on to complete the main Task to see if there would be a reaction afterwards of some kind that gave him clues as to why he was piling on weight as he absorbed the darkness.

There was not.

Oh well.

Following the completion, a surge of energy much stronger than the one he had felt when he was at the Foundation Stage ran through his body.

The value of the five stat points he earned for each stat he had, had increased.

"I can only hope the next few Tasks are not too demanding but that's wishful thinking," Skullius thought aloud as he walked through the streets of Genhuis City with the sun drowning behind the horizon behind him.

He had managed to return to the city after one day of travelling, leaving him more than enough time to prepare for the Premium Age Royale matches tomorrow.

Maybe he would be next to stand on the platform.

He wasn't opposed to it.

After walking for a little more than six minutes, suddenly, from the side, Skullius saw three Capital Order Knights rushing into a large, fancy eatery.

Several seconds later, a man with a terrified expression leapt out of a window from the topmost floor of this building – sixth floor – and upon reaching the ground, his body exploded with mana as he shot away at full speed, knocking away innocent people on the crowded roads!

Screams and shrieks were heard as the man trampled over some people in his escape.

'Hmmm?' Skullius was intrigued.

This man was definitely an Advancement Stage expert. Somewhere at the peak of that Stage.

What had he done?

What was this commotion about?

Shockingly, one of the Capital Order Knights zipped out of the eatery like a bolt of lightning, his figure catching up to man who had rushed away before he could cover a fifty meter distance!

Naturally, the normal civilians couldn't see this, but the man was tackled brutally, his leg bending the other way and before he could even think to scream, a fist bashed his head into the ground while he was still airborne!

The man was knocked out instantly.

The Capital Order Knight then released a powerful pressure that made everyone pay attention to him and stop moving erratically before announcing..

"Attention please. Everyone remain calm and move away from the area. An important investigation is currently taking place."

Skullius had seen similar scenarios occurring ever since he came to Genhuis City – Knights suddenly dropping in on a random place unannounced and catching individuals who attempted to escape.

The Hybrid Luman had come to realise that these campaigns were largely sponsored by the work of the Diviners within the lean towers that rose above most buildings in the city.

Many forms of heinous crimes committed by some really bad individuals were exposed, the Capital Service being tipped off at the Diviners' discretion.

This always served as a reminder to Skullius that this could easily be him being apprehended if he didn't play his cards right.

Tsk.

Damn you Red Rage.

As the civilians left the area as ordered, Skullius also went his way.

Before he returned to the Bryne Residence, he wanted to go and quickly collect what he had earned from the Temple.

Surely, his efforts, not just the ones in Evic would be rewarded right? He had acted quickly goddammit!

With hurried steps, Skullius rushed towards his destination.

He took deep breaths on the way.

Asides from worrying that somehow whatever he was given wouldn't work, he was also concerned about something else.

There was another reason besides urgency that caused him to not go to Evic to talk to Anara personally.

UNCoddled.

There were three main factors that Skullius had discovered that determined how it functioned.

There was the actual contribution that someone made to help him – the object of interest.

There was also their level of strength.

Now, Skullius wasn't sure how UNCoddled would treat Anara if he told the Grand Priest that he contributed pretty heftily in Evic as from the way he left things, the Paladin Champion looked at him very favourably.

He would likely sprinkle in some good stuff to help Skullius a bit more which was... deadly.

However, Skullius had been thinking.

What if distance also affected UNCoddled – his proximity from the person who was helping him!

So far, all the people who had been affected by UNCoddled had been close to him when they died.

What if someone did it from a distance?

Somanda wasn't a god.

Maybe the curse wouldn't strangle someone if they were far enough.

Come to think of it, maybe this is why the Grinning Jester Fox back then...

This was a theory.

Even if Anara died though, he was counting on Oliviana, Bull and the others.

"Oh well. We'll find out soon enough," Skullius said as he reached the Temple.

Chapter 542: I Have Something To Show You

"We heard word of it half a day ago. The Grand Priest will see you tomorrow," a Priestess said to Skullius while blocking his path with a cold stare.

"It's urgent. Can't we do this now?" Skullius said with a deepening frown.

"You have no right to rush us. Every second you spend afflicted by the curse upon you serves as atonement. Receive it with open arms."

The Priestess no longer paid Skullius any attention as she attended to the many other people coming and going from the Temple.

Her expression turned bright, showing off delightful rays of affability with her kind handshake and smile, this being in stark contrast to how she had treated the Hybrid Luman.

How judgey.

You tell a tale about abducting innocents for a devilish cult and suddenly you're the bad guy?

Sigh. Yes, you're the bad guy.

Yes you're they bad guy.

Fairly so.

Skullius scowled and turned away.



"Well that's perfect," he said as he shook his head.

The moment he had arrived at the Temple, the Priestess had greeted him with a sack of hostility and the disappointing news that the Grand Priest wouldn't tend to him today.

Apparently, Anara had told them the good deeds he had done, but well, it wasn't enough to garner urgency.

'I hope this confirms my theory that distance does affect UNCoddled. Or perhaps Anara keeled over and turned into soup moments later,' Skullius thought with a shudder.

Whatever.

There was nothing he could do about this situation right now. He just had to come back tomorrow after the seven Preliminary matches.

'Coincidentally, tomorrow is also the day [Bringer of All] comes off cooldown. Good. Maybe I'll have many causes to celebrate,' Skullius thought.

It was finally here.

The much needed time to forge a blue core and create an Avatar with the powers of his Eternal Storm Veil Penetrator!

But that wasn't all.

Skullius had a few different things he wanted to try afterwards. He could barely hold in the excitement.

"Hehehe," he chuckled, his mood improving.

Skullius went straight to the Bryne Family Residence from the Temple.

On arriving, he found Setkh and Karrun sitting in the lounge with some of the maids serving them food as they chatted.

"Ah, Festos. Come and join us. We were just having a man to man chat," Setkh said with a delighted smile directed at Skullius.

"Yes, brother. Come and eat with us," Karrun said with an eerie subdued smile, as if he was taunting the Hybrid Luman instead.

'Brother?'

Skullius had always been repulsed by Karrun's desire to build this sort of camaraderie with him. This wasn't the second or even the third instance of this.

It was growing too annoying to bear.

Sure, since they bore the name Bryne now, they could be identified as brothers, but it was just so cringey to say it out loud.

"I've already eaten," Skullius said as he began walking to his room.

"Of course you're not the chatty type. You'd rather speak to my sister. Understandable," Setkh said while nodding. "I have a question though. How confident are you if you are pitted against Karrun?"

Skullius stopped and turned.

"What?"

Setkh waved his hands in front of his body hurriedly.

"Don't take it the wrong way. I don't mean it in a provocative sense," he said with a chuckle and then picked up a glass of wine. "I mean in the Royale. I'm sure you've noticed. There is nothing stopping members of the same Family to face off against each other. If you happen to be each other's opponents, how would you deal with the situation?"

Skullius only realised now that this was true.

According to Rearren, the matchups were decided at random. The Hybrid Luman didn't believe that fully but he assumed that some matches with well known individuals would be carefully placed and decided on by the Game Master.

For general folk such as himself and Karrun though, he now assumed the thought that yes, they could be pitted against each other by random selection.

However, since either way, the winner would be giving the Family shine...

"I'd kill him," Skullius said as he turned to Karrun.

This was his honest answer.

"Hahahahaha! How resolute! I like a man like you," Setkh said with a flirtatious gaze to Skullius that made the Hybrid Luman frown.

First it was his sister, now him?!

Which way did this man swing?

Karrun on the other hand, shifted in his seat, a wide, creepy smile appearing on his face.

"I promise to do the same too, brother," he said.

Skullius scoffed and walked away.

Those two seemed to compliment each other... a little too well.

Trying to link the calm and cool Stylla to this man was difficult. He couldn't imagine the fact she was really related to this guy.

The Hybrid Luman reached his room moments later and without wasting time, he slipped himself into Fortune, a glimmer of hope flickering in his <CURSED HEART> that Red Rage had returned but no.

The bastard Apostle was still in the wind.

"Tsk," Skullius grumbled. "Oh well, let's get Yuyui and make her an <Attachment>. Hopefully I don't regret it."

Skullius took steps towards the Temple of Unlusted Tears when...

"Master."

"Hmmm?" Skullius turned to the unfamiliar voice yet familiar presence that had suddenly rushed towards him from the side.

He turned to find Ferex in his Hound form, his sockets burning bright with a blue light.

"Oh hey there bro. I was just about to... Wait.." Skullius said, pausing midway through his sentence as he did a double take. "Did you just...?"

Ferex nodded.

"I did, Master."

Skullius gaped.

What the...?

Ferex could talk now?!

"I was eagerly waiting for your return so that I could show this to you, Master," Ferex said with hints of excitement noticeable in his voice.

Skullius couldn't believe it.

He walked up to the Hound and gave him a quick vetting, noticing changes through his senses that the Apostle had done to his body.

He had grown shorter with a height of roughly 1.7 meters, his build sleek with a shape akin to a greyhound – abdomen curved inward, long, slim legs and a smaller head. The Unliving Thread over his body layered multiplies times over and tightened to give a smooth, taut surface that shone lightly, announcing that it wouldn't break easily.

Ferex looked more like a dog as the name of his race suggested.

"Hahaha! This is fantastic! You can talk and you've modified your body?" Skullius laughed as he felt over the Hound's stretched Unliving Thread, his body, feeling how tough he was. "You've outdone yourself, Ferex!"

"Master..." the Hound said, displaying a little bit of confusion. "...this isn't what I wanted to show you."

"Huh?" Skullius expressed. "What do you mean?"

The Limitless Body Null Demon Hound suddenly stood on his hind legs and his body started to change.

The Insurgent Magnus was beyond shocked.

When Ferex said he had something he was working on, he didn't think it was something like this!

He had imagined something more tame.

As this new form was forged before his senses, Skullius could only shake his head and whistle...

Chapter 543: This Isn't Even My Final Form!

A mix of silvery dark blue stood before the Hybrid Luman.

It was in the shape of an exactly 2.3 meter tall humanoid figure that Skullius couldn't pin among many options.

It was like looking at a walking piece of armour. A particularly powerful looking one.

The most distinctive feature over Ferex's body was thick scales. They, in their silvery dark blue hue made up his entirety, layering over his powerful but slightly slim arms that had bracers of shaggy brown fur with streaks of silver and glowing marks.

The same was true for his long, mighty legs that had numerous protrusions and straight edges on the thighs with custom designs on the knees to give them the looks of poleyns. Boot like greaves also reached to his feet, the whole design imitating standard armour.

The chest was made with scales thicker than those on the rest of the body, layering in a circular plate like formation to the neck where something akin to a protective collar rose to Ferex's chin.

The Apostle's head looked like a wolf themed helmet, two tall ears on top wiggling flexibly as they didn't seem to be made of scales. From the ears there came two slanted openings as the eye slots with a blue glow suffusing from each, a curve to form an undetailed snout below them and another to complete the set to the chin.

Something else to note was the brown hide that extended halfway through Ferex's waist to the other side, the length of it reaching the right leg's knee.

"Wow," Skullius said as he felt Ferex again. He was even tougher than before, by at least three times!

Also this design could easily be mistaken for armour, meaning Ferex could walk with Skullius in the outside world (definitely not in the city) though.

Ferex extended his hand before him and with a flash of light blue energy, a lengthy shape was formed, its figure losing the brightness that came with its manifestation.

"Oh..."

What appeared was the form Ferex had used in the battle against the Fire Breeder. His sword form that had cleaved apart many Fire Breeders before harming the Grand Flame Bringer's soul when passed to Skullius.

Now, it was longer, the dark blue double-edged blade preceded by a shaggy brown hide as its cross guard.

Just now, Ferex had used the same move the Grand Flame Bringer had showed when it churned out fiery wings from its back to manifest this sword, something Skullius hadn't missed.

"I'm impressed, Ferex. You really copied the Grand Frame Bringer's body and some its abilities," Skullius remarked with amazement while patting the Apostle's shoulder. "This is really good work."

"Thank you, Master," Ferex said, his voice being a fair bit deeper than previously when he was in his Hound form.

Ferex could naturally only show a blank gaze but...

[Ferex approves of your praise. +40 favourability]

... the notification expressed his happiness at being praised adequately.

Furthermore...

[A 100 points of favourability have been reached between you and your Apostle]

[Apostle 'Ferex' has made his first pledge of loyalty to you]

[The following options are available for your Apostle. You may choose one:]

[-Skill Amalgamation | Tier 1]

[-Rank Bestowal]

"Ah. As expected. I guess it's your turn," Skullius said.

Ferex had always been loyal, unlike a certain someone. When Skullius had seen the notification for favourability he had fully expected this boon.

Before dealing with that though...

"How did you gain the ability to speak?" Skullius asked curiously.

"Master, I kindly asked to rip apart your servant's neck so that I could replicate how she made sound. From there, recreating the mechanism was easy with my evolved skills," Ferex explained.

"I see. And by servant, you mean Yuyui?"

"Yes, the servant."

"And she agreed for you to... rip apart her neck?"

"... Yes. The servant agreed."

Skullius wore a strange visage on his face.

He didn't know which part was stranger than the others.

The fact that Ferex was showing a sort of superiority over Yuyui, the fact that he obviously assaulted and killed her to study her insides or the fact that right now, Ferex wasn't speaking in the Known Language of Aigas or any other Language from this world but was instead speaking...in the bone language from Deadmanland!

Actually, after thinking about it, the first two were pretty tame compared the third one. Sure, there was no way Ferex had somehow learned to speak in the Known Language or any other dialect but it was weirder for him communicate with the bone tongue. Fluently to boot!



Technically, he wasn't worthy of speaking it. That was the Language of skeletons from the mine boonies.

"Anyway, good job. You're doing well. I see you have faint traces of mana all over each of your scales?" Skullius analysed.

"Yes, Master. I have carved all the Spells I learned from the Innate Holder I sample over all of my scales at least ten times over. Unfortunately, I lack the mana to power them all. If I had enough, the effects of each of the spells on my scales would pile over each other for greater power," Ferex said with yearning.

'Damn! He can speak well. The guidance field did say his race is pretty smart,' the Hybrid Luman thought.

"I guess we need to have you evolve soon then," Skullius said. "Also, since you have an appropriate body for it, I think you should be the one to own the Cross Pyre."

"...Really, Master?" Ferex asked.

"Of course. Just go and retrieve it yourself from the lava pool."

The Cross Pyre, the large greatsword the Grand Flame Bringer had wielded was now Ferex's to use! How fitting.

Skullius didn't have much of a use for it anyway. He had Demion's Dance. Even if the sword became inadequate later on, there was still the weapon in Fulgardt's chest. Soon, he would be able to get his clutches on it.

Ferex celebrated silently to this gain, seemingly trying to maintain a disciplined image.

"Alright, let's get you some new skills. [Rank Bestowal] doesn't have any effect with only two Apostles so let's just go with [Skill Amalgamation]," Skullius said. "I'll let you decide which skills to combine since you know yourself best."

The Hybrid Luman opened up the Hound's status to look at the Apostle's skills.

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[ Name : Ferex ]

[ Tier : 1 ]

[ Apostle Trait : None ]

[ Rank : None ]

[ Level : 5 ]

[ Race : Limitless Body Null Demon Hound ]

[ Inv. Status : Pumped ]

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[ Stats ]

[ Strength : 440 ]

[Agility : 345 ]

[ Intelligence : 510 ]

[ Endurance : Infinite ]

[ Luck : 5 ]

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[ Health : 825/825 ]

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[ Mana : 4210/4210 ]

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[ Null Life Essence : 200/3000 ]

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[ Skills ]

[ Null Life Aura | Lv. 2 ]

[ Null Extraction ]

[ Lanterns of the Pure | Lv. 5 ]

<Racial>

[ Limitless Self Forging | Lv.2 ]

[ Smart Mimicry | Lv.1 ]

[ DETAIL! | Lv.1 ]

[ Demon Thread Weaving | Lv.6 ]

<Mutation>

[ Pseudo Spirit Walker's Hide ]

> Spirit Walk

> Spirit Touch

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"Seems like you levelled up a bit," Skullius pointed out.

Skullius could decide for Ferex but he had the right to pass on the power to do so to his Apostle. In short, he had more faith in Ferex than he did in Red Rage when it was that Apostle's turn.

Damn. Just the memory of it...

It didn't take long for Ferex's status to shift as the Apostle had already decided which four skills he wanted combined.

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['Smart Mimicry' has been combined with 'DETAIL!']

[...]

[The skill 'EXCELLENT FORGERY!' has been born]

['Demon Thread Weaving' has been combined with 'Spirit Walk']

[...]

[The skill 'Dark Soul Bending' has been born]

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With the birth of the last skill, Ferex's body immediately started to change.

His scaly body emitted a hiss of peculiar energy, its entirety turning illusory for a few moments.

This quickly died down as Skullius could already discern...

"You got something really good, didn't you?" he asked the Apostle with a smile.

"Incredibly so, Master," Ferex affirmed.

The first combination was obviously good but the second...

Combining a soul related ability from the Pseudo Spirit Walker's Hide with his ability to wave Unliving Thread...

The result was bound to be phenomenal!

'My wish to make Ferex a speed type Apostle never truly come to life. He gets soul abilities instead,' Skullius thought not knowing how to feel.

Still, he was curious about this [Dark Soul Bending] skill and he could see Ferex wanted so much to try it out.

"Why don't you practise with it? You can show me what it can do when you fully understand it," he said. He could check the description of the new skills but he preferred to see this one in action. Besides, he still had a lot of stuff to do.

"Ah, before I forget. Fetch me Yuyui, would you?"

## Chapter 544: Bolstering The Servant

Several minutes after Skullius watched Ferex in his new body dash towards the Temple of Unlusted Tears, the Apostle returned with Yuyui.

The poor girl couldn't walk steadily for some reason as with her movement came a weird limp.

Skullius couldn't see it, but she was roughed up quite a bit, her skin turned purple over several patches of her face with bruises and scrapes also noticeable on different parts of her body.

"Master, you called for me?" she said with a few rapid blinks.

"Why are you walking like that?" Skullius asked with a brow raised.

"Uhhh.... I—"

"The servant has a broken leg, Master," Ferex interrupted, sensing that Yuyui was about to lie to their Master. Or at the very least, was taking too long to answer.

Yuyui yelped.

She had found it surprising that Ferex could now talk but unfortunately, the communication barrier still existed between them as the Apostle could only speak in a language she had never heard.

"A broken leg?" Skullius asked in surprise. He then moved closer to Yuyui whom after hearing what he had just said, knew she couldn't escape having to explain.

Her eyes darted to and fro as she fiddled endlessly with her own fingers anxiously.

She always felt nervous in front of Skullius' Hybrid Luman form.

"Well... you see..." she began when Skullius held her shoulder with his right hand.

"Hee?"

A strange energy embraced Yuyui, sifting from Skullius powerfully with a soft feel.

In the blink of an eye, Yuyui's wounds were all healed, including her broken leg.

"Ah. Thank you, Master," Yuyui said with a bright smile. She flexed her leg with a joyous kick and felt that it felt even better than before.

"You mind telling me what's going on in there? What have you been doing with those two for the past few days?" Skullius asked.

Yuyui had been visiting the Temple of Unlusted Tears quite frequently and Skullius was sure she had a similar growth mission to Ferex's.

Thankfully, Skullius didn't have to bite it out of her as she freely talked.

"I was trying to have Bassbion and Yagrina teach me how to fight. I figured that with proper practise... I could do what I did before when we fought those fire creatures, better," Yuyui said while continuously shifting.

She was nervous.

How would Skullius take it?

Skullius nodded.

In his opinion, this was for the best actually. He wouldn't know how to train Yuyui on his own except having her grow skills continuously, which wasn't the best method to truly become strong.

He could also just fling her into a Cluster and have her fight until she killed all the monsters within but that would take too long and he wasn't even sure Yuyui was ready for something like that, especially without Demion's Dance.

"I see. Has it been working out well?"

"Ughh... yes. It working very wel—"

"The servant was being beaten and insulted when I arrived to bring her to you, Master," Ferex snitched.

"Hmmm?" Skullius tilted his head. "Beaten and insulted? Do those two still not want to accept you? Should I knock some sense into them?"

Skullius had taken a step when Yuyui blocked his path with a pale face and vigorous waves of her hands to discourage him from the sentiment.

"No, no, no, no, no! You don't have to do that, Master! I can handle it! Bassbion was just being typically aggressive! It's fine!" the lime haired girl hurriedly said with determined eyes.

Skullius felt her heart race but her stance was firm.

She really meant it.

"If that's the case, fine. The reason I called you, is to give you this..."

The Hybrid Luman placed his hand on Yuyui's vaguely protruding chest.

[You have chosen 'Yuyui Yuyui Yuyui' as an <Attachment>. Are you sure you want to proceed with this action?]

"Yep," Skullius affirmed the detail the notification before him presented.

[Processing...]

[Guidance field generation in process...]

[Patronage Rank 0 benefits loading...]



[Process will be completed in 00:00:05:59]

"What... are you doing, Master?" Yuyui asked, alternating her gaze between Skullius and his hand. She didn't have a problem with his touch as social cues were still slowly returning to her mind but she was curious.

"Something will show up in your sight soon. It's the same thing I see and use. It will help you identify things better and will you also help you grow stronger faster. You can keep track of your progress and techniques with it as well. Use it well," Skullius explained as he retracted his hand.

[Please note you have reached the upper limit of <Attachments> you are able to create with current Patronage Rank]

This was it.

Yuyui and Kenno were Skullius' <Attachments>, both with different purposes.

Yuyui's was obvious but when it came to Kenno, his role and goals would become clearer after tomorrow when the avatar was born – the one who would be managing all of Skullius' extra plans.

For now, this was enough.

"Oh, right. I also got you this," Skullius said as he pulled out from his spatial storage ring, a Legendary grade dagger. An item he had chosen from the treasury as his reward along with a Unique grade Prompt Spell.

Yuyui received it with both hands, her eyes shining bright as she looked over its gleaming, stainless surface. It was slightly heavy, with a length similar to her arm from the elbow to her hands.

Its black, red and gold design was exquisite but for a brief moment, Yuyui felt like it was a waste.

She refused to show traces of the reason why to Skullius as that was her own problem which she swore she would solve but still...

'Nomatter what... I'll pass the Tasks!' Yuyui thought.

"Thank you very much, Master!" Yuyui bowed without pause.

Skullius nodded and turned, pulling out the Prompt Spells he had.

"I'll be in the mountains if you need me," Skullius said to the two as he departed.

There was no time to waste. The Kindling Heath was sapping all kinds of energies from the concepts on the stout mountain and till morning came, Skullius was going to suck up all he could to passively learn more about Distorted Gravity and the other concepts.

Along with that, when [High Cosmetic Body] timed out, he was contemplating using [Unbound] to find out what other new skill he could develop. But he was currently in a dilemma as he had a few different options to think over for the 12,000 Null Life Essence he had.

As their Master departed, Yuyui and Ferex looked at each other for a few moments, the former not able to keep a steady gaze on Ferex because of his intimidating presence.

As the atmosphere got more and more awkward though, Yuyui found the courage to say something.

"I could teach you to speak other languages if you want," she offered.

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Second Day of the Preliminaries...

The excitement cascaded down the curved rows of human shaped adrenaline to barrel down on the platform where the first two contenders for the day were already standing off.

On one side stood a woman with pink hair, downturned purple eyes that showed a burning fighting spirit contained in her oval face. She wore a tight fitting leather armour with a fairly expensive looking design with features that emphasised that it was probably a Legendary grade tool.

On the other side stood a man already in stance, around his head a large black bandana that pulled his medium length chestnut brown hair back with narrow eyes that barely looked open piercing towards his opponent on his face. He held a long spear with a black, rough pole and a silver head that gleamed at the edges, announcing it's sharpness.

No doubt it was a Legendary grade tool.

Both contenders looked to be ready for fight and thus the Game Master shot up on glass pane, signalling for them to begin!

---

Name : Maxim Flatbed

Stage : Second Phase Master

Core : Blue

Family : Flatbed

-

Name : Hocce Ian

Stage : Second Phase Master

Core : Blue

Family : Ian

---

Within the tent that housed the contenders, Skullius clicked his tongue.

With Crude Vision, he recognised one of the contenders.

"Ugh, that bitch," he grumbled as he wished misfortune on that damned pink-haired woman.

Chapter 545: Not Funny Anymore

"Hey, you see that woman with the pink hair?" one witness, a middle aged man, asked excitedly while scratching the arm of the woman beside him.

"Yes?"

"You know her Family?"

"Of course I do."

"Oh. Okay then," the man said disappointedly as he turned to the person on the other side, hoping that they didn't know anything about the Family the woman who was contending was from. If so, he could show his well of knowledge on the lives of people far beyond his reach!

Hmm, that sounded familiar.

On the platform, the man with the spear, Hocce, swished it all around him with complex, well-trained moves before pointing it at Maxim, the woman with the pink hair.

"You mind if I attack first, milady?" Hocce asked with a confident smirk.

Max denied him a response.

She merely faced him with her hands on her hips, bits of mana flowing from her body to show that she in fact, was ready to fight. She even puffed out her chest, but unfortunately...

Where the gods blessed once, they would not bless again, some may say.

"I'll take that as a 'yes'," Hocce said as he shot at Maxim, six point star shapes appearing wherever he set his feet on the platform with his rapid movements!

In the blink of an eye, he had covered the distance between himself and Maxim, his body becoming wrapped in a storm of bright mana!

'A speed type auxiliary technique...' Maxim noted as she lowered her centre of gravity and took a step forward to prepare for the coming attacks.

A series of deadly swings from the spear assaulted Maxim but she displayed an incredible level of flexibility, dodging the attacks that left little room for her to manoeuvre!

All she did was defend for the better part of seven minutes despite Hocce being fairly skilled and his attacks ferociously bombarding her nonstop!

"You're good!" Hocce complimented Maxim with a chuckle.

He suddenly swung his foot at an angle, a vicious kick blasting at Maxim from the side. As performed this, he pulled his spear back from its lateral stance.

Maxim's eyes shot open!

She leaned back to dodge Hocce's kick but then, the man spun with inertia from his kick before he thrust hard with his spear while she was still in that vulnerable position from the dodge!

...!

Unfortunately for Hocce, Maxim wasn't as helpless as he had initially thought. The pink haired woman slid down to perform a clean split before she rolled away and stood, preparing for another exchange!

The man with his spear chuckled again.

"Impressive. You're quite flexible in your movements," he said as she swung his speed again.

The more cultured witnesses watching the match sagely nodded in agreement as that flex by Maxim left nothing more to be desired. Her thighs printed on the tight leather armour touching the white platform brought on a lot of satisfaction in all the right organs.

While this wasn't what Hocce was referring to, the witnesses didn't care.

"Allow me to respond in kind," Hocce added as his mana poured out voraciously from his body, its hue turning to a pale maroon before it formed a slim figure with long limbs that floated above, its size being thrice Hocce's own.

This figure had two large golden glows in its sockets and a stitched mouth, over its long limbed body cylindrical covers and numerous joints that made it look like an insect.

As soon as it appeared, Maxim's face hardened and she drew back.

A Genuine Incarnation.

A living type at that.

When this was paired with Hocce's spear, what would be the resul—

"Here it comes!" Hocce called as with a simplistic movement, he threw his spear up to the Incarnation and right after, he bolted in Maxim's direction!

The Incarnation caught the spear and with a shockingly fast movement, it cocked back, seeming to drew upon all its strength before it brutally flung the long weapon at Maxim!

By the time it had thrown the spear, Hocce was already halfway to Maxim's position and with his distance already grown too far with the short ranged Incarnation, it vanished after – but it had fulfilled its purpose!

The hurtling spear tore the air on its way to Maxim but...

Hocce grinned.

It was a Legendary grade weapon after all. Its durability and speed wasn't its only selling point!

The spear released a ringing noise as just before it reached its target who was already preparing to defend against it...

It vanished.

No..

Rather than vanishing, it was suddenly replaced by something else!

It was replaced by Maxim!

The spear and maximum switched places!

...!

"What?!" Maxim was caught off guard by this sudden change.

Now, Hocce was closer to her and she only had a few milliseconds to guard against his fierce attack which caused her to become indecisive for the briefest of moments.

While caught in a myriad of thoughts, Maxim didn't notice something else approaching her from behind and before she could react...

PTCH!

...!

Shockingly, a spear head penetrated her left shoulder from the back, causing her body to jerk forward from the force!

"Urgh!" Maxim screamed.

What?!

She hadn't thought that....

POW!

Hocce blasted his fist against Maxim's chest, knocking her back a great deal of distance before she tumbled on the ground, spilling blood from her mouth!

"That was easy," Hocce said with a breath.

Maxim grunted in pain as she hurried to get up, pulling the spear on her shoulder.

"Don't bother. That spear cannot be drawn when it has struck its target. It never misses and it never lets go," Hocce explained with a smirk. "This is the part where you quit the match. Given the fact that you don't use a weapon, I assume you're only good at hand to hand combat. Without healing your shoulder, there's no way you can fight me.

Even if you summon your Incarnation, you'll lose."

Hocce was confident.

He wasn't from a traditional Family.

He and his friends, a local band of thieves, had taken advantage of the Premium Age Royale to register as a new Family and participate in the Royale in order to try for a chance at getting a spot in the EverSword House, much like everyone who was participating.

He didn't know the circles of traditional Families or their abilities as he and his comrades did not have a reliable information network but he was sure for this first round, he had been pitted against someone from the weaker tier of Families.

This should be a good showing for their Family even if he was relying on a Legendary grade tool.



Maxim struggled to breathe and gripped the spear from where it protruded from her shoulder, attempting to pull it out again only to find that truly, this would not work.

It didn't budge.

"I already told you. It's impossible to pull it out," Hocce said while shaking his head and walking towards Maxim. "And here I was even nice enough to spare your pretty face and strike at the one unimpressive aspect about you."

...

With Hocce's voice ringing out through the barrier, many grimaced at his words while for some more knowledgeable witnesses and contenders, the man in the crowd who had been trying to sell himself as an expert on the lore about the Families included, shook.

Maxim stopped struggling.

She stopped quivering in pain.

She turned her gaze from the spear and faced Hocce, her eyes turning cold.

"Unimpressive, huh?" she said as her lips twitched.

This fucker was talking about her chest!

Her flat chest!

He dared to desecrate the memory, no, the history behind this flat chest!

Maxim gripped the spear tight, her mana blasting out in tremendous waves as it wrapped around it.

"I was looking for reasons to take someone like you seriously. Reasons to take this match seriously. Reasons to not kill some pathetic asshole like you who relies on weapons to attack..." Maxim said as her purple eyes gleamed dangerously.

Hocce's face turned pale, his eyes shaking as he took a step back.

The chill he felt from being glared at by those furious eyes made his snark turn tail.

'What is she talking about?' he thought while gulping down saliva.

What was going on?!

His spear didn't just stick in its opponent, it would progressively weaken them too!

It was a high tier Legendary grade weapon!

Someone in the stands was answering this question right now, telling someone who was not entirely interested the simple history behind the Flatbed Family.

"The legends say that the Flatbed Family was founded by a great matriarch from millenia ago who gazed intently at a flat sheet of paper for a whole century, her focus being so immense that she herself became flat! Literally! Can you believe that?!"

They say following the enlightenment she received thereafter, she could morph between flat and otherwise at will along with showing a series of other abilities!" the man exclaimed, spewing this information to no one in particular.

"I heard that all her descendants afterwards, as long as they were female, were born with flat chests! Maybe it was the price to pay for the power this matriarch earned? No one knows but given that we have a real life example before us, I don't think anyone has reason enough to doubt this!"

As a clamour exploded from the seats around, the spear Maxim gripped, its body devoured by her mana, suddenly shook from within her flesh, stretching her flesh!

Then with a seamless yet illogical transition, the spear came out of her body but it's form.... it became flat!

It seemed to be framed in a very thin glass, like an art exhibit of some kind!

Maxim breathed out, and flexed her shoulder with a straight face, as if the pain didn't bother her at all.

Her murderous visage then turned to Hocce as she dropped the flat spear which fell on the platform with a crisp slap!

"What the hell, man?!" Hocce gritted his teeth as he summoned his Genuine Incarnation which hovered over him. His gaze locked on his spear with a tragic feeling of loss and it was clear that he hoped that by some miracle, it would return to its original form.

'That's a Legendary grade item! How can she so easily...' Hocce wore an ugly expression.

Maxim saw where the man's focus was and scoffed, raising her leg and stomping on the flattened spear!

PWA!

Shockingly, the spear, in this flattened state shattered into pieces and the horror that registered on Hocce's face made it known that he understood that his weapon was also completely destroyed!

While the former thief was still mourning over losing his weapon, Maxim dashed towards him with insane speed many folds faster than what she had displayed before!

Was she holding back before?!

Had she seriously been looking for a reason to take him seriously?!

Hocce growled and had his Incarnation rush forward a short distance from him to intercept Maxim!

He had to stop her!

He didn't want to risk facing this crazy woman himself!

"You think my chest is flat, huh?! It's funny to you, isn't it?! It's funny isn't it?!" Maxim exclaimed each question with frightening emphasis, each sentence breaking Hocce's will.

To his and everyone's shock, Maxim's mana covered hand met with the maroon Incarnation's fist and...

PWAA!

The manifestation of Hocce's Perfect Aura was also turned flat, its image falling to the platform in a thin glass casing!

Even Incarnations were not safe?!

But they were supposed to...

Hocce paled but it did him no good!

He tried to recall his Incarnation but the energy was.... stuck in that form, trapped in the thin casing!

This technique...!

Less than a split second later, a scowling Maxim had her hand on Hocce's chest, a sadistic smile over her mad visage as she activated her technique for the third time.

"Not so funny now, is it?" she said with a satisfied breath, a bright light consuming the space for a moment before another art exhibit fell to the ground!

"ANSWER ME, ASSHOLE! IT'S NOT SO FUNNY NOW IS IT?! HUH?! HUH?! IS IT?!" Maxim yelled with grin as she raised her foot and stomped on Hocce's flat figure!

PWAA! PWAAA! SQUELCH!

Hocce's body shattered and with this came a mix of blood and glass!

The man could be seen frozen with a shocked face but he was unable to react to the mutilation of his body by Maxim who didn't stop stomping until all that remained were nail sized bits of glass and a whole lot of blood n' stuff...

Chapter 546: Dangerous

"That's some technique," Skullius said as he leaned from his secluded seat and scratched his chin. With his sockets blazing with darkness, the whole fight had been vividly shown to him with only the expressions lost to his sight.

'It seems there are Tiers among Genuine Incarnations, much like I thought and when it comes to Maxim's technique, it's probably one of the strongest ones around. And just like I felt before...'

Skullius thought back to the event held on the night of the day that the Premium Age Royale officially began. He had sensed an extremely complex weaving of mana that formed the same effect he had seen just now.

It seemed that the level of complexity went past the effectiveness of a simplistic Incarnation like Hocce's.

This was what was leading Skullius to this discovery.

Even among Second Phase Masters, there were wide gaps and it was only logical.

Considering that between the Tasks and Experience required which continued to double as one progressed, it was likely that the gap between a Level 31 and a Level 40 Second Phase Master was unimaginably astronomical. Even a single level difference was bound to be huge.

That said...

'If that's the case, then only Masters at the very peak can bully all mana based skills it seems,' Skullius came to a conclusion.

On the platform, Maxim was still crushing the poor figure of Hocce who died silently, unable to scream or mourn his own passing.

"Say something, you bastard! Say it isn't funny anymore! Say it!" she screamed with a maniacal expression on her face.

At this point, the entire stadium was no longer as lively.

Many were shaken by the brutality.

This was the price of clarity. The price of being able to see everything with excruciating detail.

Most still talked about it though, as this had been quite an interesting battle all things considered.

Brutally interesting.

A green glow bloomed around Maxim, announcing her as the winner and soon, she was warped back to her seat where she took in deep breaths to cool off.

That was intense.

Over the platform that was stained with a gorey mess, a rippling blue light emerged, washing over the scene. When it passed over the glass and bloody mix, there only remained rising white particles, the after effects of human stains that were being erased from existence, leaving the platform clean again.

Guissepo descended from his height and gave a light clap.

Without a word, he smiled and snapped his fingers, two flashes of silver light registering on the platform as they brought two more contenders.

When the two came into fully view from the flashy show, a great amount of interest registered from the large, oval shaped tent in particular.

Every Contender seemed to know who one of these two currently standing on the platform was either by recognising his face, his signature weapon or the dreadful presence that he emitted which was mostly contained by the barrier but still managed to seep out and be felt by the individuals closest to the platform.

Even Skullius narrowed his eyes.

'So it was him, after all,' he thought.

He, along with everyone in the tent had sensed each other growing tense.

The atmosphere seemed to grow heavier as the collective recognition, a dark recognition with a bit of hostility within it ran wild.

'He definitely is the one that Stylla mentioned. Nicknames and all.'

The man who stood on the platform was Gabel.

He was the art-loving, eccentric man Skullius had been drawn to. The one who didn't typically hide his overwhelmingly deadly presence.

He was definitely the one dubbed as the most dangerous.

His medium length darker than night hair draped over his temples to almost cover his similarly coloured small, slanted eyes. The man's build was quite tall but he stood with a low hunch, a long, thick weapon weighing on his shoulder while a small book stole all his attention in his left hand.

Gabel wore a vest that accentuated his perfect muscles and broad shoulders, clearly unconcerned about any damage he could receive.

There was not a speck of protective armour or the likes on him.

Ta!

He swung his weapon from his shoulder and let it drop to the platform. It was a glaive with a rather thick pale blue pole that had a ball attached to its end. On the other end, a blade with too many similarities to a butcher's knife could be seen, dark blue veins feeding into it from the pole.

Whether this was just a design or if this proved to be an essential part of the weapon itself remained a mystery for now.

Yet still, this weapon was largely infamous.

The presence of Gabel outshined his opponent's, so much that no one even cared who he was. They only cared about this man who took bounties to carry out slaughters without ever being caught or failing to accomplish them.

As most of the contenders expected, Gabel's opponent was about to raise his hand and immediately call for surrender but...

"Shhh..." Gabel said from the distance, his lazy, eyes causing his opponent to shut his mouth and sweat profusely.

He seemed to have been struck a paralysing blow from a distance!

The dark haired man walked up to his opponent while returning his gaze to his little book.

"Silence little soul. Your form has too much to spill. My blade cannot allow you to scamper away in fear..." Gabel recited while pulling on his glaive which produced sparks while scraping against the platform.

"...You might disgrace me before the veiled beauty I seek to court with red and silence. Come, little soul. Let me carve you clean as a gift for she that gives me purpose."

The momentary paralysing fear the irrelevant man facing off against Gabel felt faded briefly.

He had to surrender!

That was the only thing he could do to keep his life.



He mustered enough courage to resist the sliver of Gabel's will that restricted his own and shouted at the top of his lungs.

"I surrenderehhhhblll—"

This opponent had felt reassured once he uttered the words to give up on the match, however, a striking force bore through his stomach and pulled his body inches from the ground as it went on to carve cleanly from his abdomen to his shoulder, ripping through it to let itself out!

Blood sprayed unhindered from the man's body as he fell to the ground again, unable to speak or stand.

This much, everyone expected as they watched his corpse slump down. There was no way this match would have turned out differently.

However what was mysterious though, was the fact that Gabel had not made a single movement or taken his eyes from his small book. In fact, when the insignificant opponent was cruelly cleaved, he had been reciting lines from his book without urgency or a shift in his expression.

This was what put most people on edge.

How had this man done it?

He was clearly the one who killed his opponent but how?

His glaive which he hung with his right hand while its bottom touched the platform did not even have a trace of blood on it.

Curious and terrifying.

Among all the contenders though, one man had seen through this trick.

He was shivering in his seat from a false cold while biting on his nail as he pulled on his oversized furry coat.

"Interesting. Maybe I misjudged you. To think you were a combatant of this calibre..." this man said before muttering curses over the cold.

"Since you have Veneration... are you perhaps the one I'm looking for?"

Chapter 547: Showy (1)

A green light flashed around Gabel, while a red one circled his dead opponent.

The result was clear.

However, Gabel's eyes were torn from his notebook for a moment.

He looked at the corpse of distance from him, specifically the limb on which the Control Seal was planted.

A faint glow lit up on the Seal but Gabel was teleported back to his seat before he could see what came of it. He felt a little strange when watching that glow.

Something was amiss.

As soon as he appeared in his seat, he began to write everything to do with it down, thinking of a shrewd ballad to mix in with this occurrence. Whether this was a hidden secret or something as mundane as the Control Seal disappearing as it was no longer necessary, he did not care.

It was interesting and maybe, it would interest the veiled woman he sought to court.

....

The witnesses were starting to get a better sense of how...'real' this was.

An event where humans slaughtered each other wasn't something that everyone could agree on, but it was only a minority that expressed complete disgust towards outright. The rest were either mildly disturbed, indifferent or all for it.

The people dying here weren't forced to participate, right?

They came of their own free wills. It was only natural that some would die.

This was how many consoled themselves or reasoned in order to condone this.

Some merely found the issue of free food attractive and thus didn't care about anything else.

It was all good as long it wasn't them being killed.

Guissepo descended from his height once again and had the platform cleaned before the next battles could commence.

His eyes took a glance at the man who was writing on his small book in his seat under the tent and he showed hints of curiosity.

'How extravagantly amusing...' he thought before snapping his fingers.

Two matches passed quickly afterwards.

Somehow, it became trendy to kill your opponent instead of simply defeating them. It wasn't clear whether those fighting within the next matches had genuine grudges from outside the Premium Age Royale or if they were trying their best to not be ones who ended up as flesh chunks that were scraped off the platform, bringing a close to their hopes and dreams.

Whichever it was, the audience had to watch.

The progress of the matches was quick but Skullius piled under mountains of thoughts as this happened. Most of these thoughts were all about Gabel.

He linked everything he had learned from the bandits whose information he had extracted with [Basic Evil Sanction] to what he heard from other channels.

There truly was a secret... or rather a hidden, seemingly untraceable society solely based off the demand for illegal or typical unusual goods and services.

There were those that were content with allowing the organisational structure flowing from the Royal Family to reign over them with its mandates and rules, and then there were those who weren't.

According to what Skullius knew, there were two main pillars in this society.

One, was the Severed Union.

It was something like the Guilds Association, an organisation that gathered separate individuals under its wing to offer chances at handsome rewards in exchange for completing some pretty nasty tasks.

The other was something akin to a myth. No one knew if it was real or not but that didn't matter as that didn't change what its purpose was.

It was a band of individuals who were known as the Nine Immortal Perils.

It was rumoured that they established this underground society and they maintained it, keeping it untraceable even by the strongest powers of Feinheath.

What was scariest about this was that this society wasn't based in Pelian. It seemed to have global roots, some even hypothesising that it even reached Opungale in its treachery.

'It bothered me when I first heard about bounties and such. I thought such a thing would be something the Capital Service would want to deal with but since it runs so deep...' Skullius thought.

Why was he thinking about this right now?

It was because of Gabel.

Apparently, his most recent fame came from dispatching a few Families ruthlessly. No one was left alive.

No one.

Those who took jobs for the Severed Union rarely did anything too big, which was why there hadn't been that many collaborative events between Emeradis, Pelian and Maqi to source out this thing from the routes.

They barely did anything garnering immediately and absolute action. That was the essence of the Severed Union.

However, this recent kill by Gabel. There was no one it was personal.

Someone had definitely hired Gabel to get rid of that many people and unlike with many such requests that were miraculously intercepted by the so called Immortal Peril in order to keep the society afloat, this one... was let to pass.

This made many fearful of the implications of this one of them being, Gabel's identity beyond a simple bounty hunter.

Wait. Was he even a bounty hunter to begin with?

This discovery was one of the central reasons Skullius wanted to broaden his network.

There were too many things in Aigas that acted as landmines to his ignorant self. The more knowledgeable he was, the better.

Another match passed with Skullius still lost in his thoughts but then...

...!

He felt a ring of silver energy grip him firmly, rejecting any of his attempts to resist.

In the next moment, he found himself standing on the white unblemished platform, cleaned perfectly after the latest brutalisation.

'It's finally my turn, huh?' Skullius thought.

Standing within the confines of the thin barrier seemed surreal and to actually witness how large this platform was, made Skullius smirk.

The subdued excitement had begun to pick up again and all of it being carried down from all sides down to him was... strangely exhilarating.

He limited himself to the most basic application of the Insurgent Magnus powers, forming small balls of darkness that acted as pupils on his white eyeballs. This was a limited version of Crude Vision but it would do.

'Right...'

Skullius looked up, coming to gaze at the image of the enemy up close.

The Game Master.

Guissepo noticed his gaze and looked down at him with a simple smile. Of course, Skullius had a hard time seeing expressions but he could feel it.

This guy definitely remembered him but he didn't care at all!

'This unsettles me more and more.'

There was nothing much to gain from acting more suspicious by taking a prolonged look at the Game Master so Skullius focused more on his opponent.

Before him was a middle-aged looking man.

An opponent who didn't seem to care about him whatsoever.

"Ahahahahahah..." the man laughed lightly while waving to one of the witnesses seated a bit higher on the stands. "Can you see me, Aliyah? Your dashing fiancé is about to take care of business."

This person whom he was waving to could hear and see him of course. She waved and blew a kiss at him while standing from her seat. The people beside her seemed to carry her enthusiasm forward, chattering endlessly about this dynamic.

"Awww... I wish some incredible warrior would wave to me too before bashing in some random fool."

"Right? It's so romantic! This woman is so blessed. Her betrothed is about to mercilessly shed blood on her behalf!"

"Oh, may the Deities bless the poor soul standing between this showing of love."

Skullius felt insulted but he didn't show it.

Somehow he felt like somewhere out there, he was being treated as some random fodder about to die.

'Tsk. Getting enraged about it would only feed to the profile,' Skullius thought.

Mana began to sift from his body as the information about his opponent was revealed to him.

--

Name : Kurtish Oldd

Stage : Second Phase Master

Core : Blue

Family : Oldd

--

Skullius used his guidance field on this man on top of this. Given his realisation during the fight between Hocce and Maxim, he figured it was better to know how strong the Second Phase Master he was facing was. His battle with Kenno was also telling.

If he was to face to a Genuine Incarnation that was as fast as those cards the bandit boss could produce without having expected it and while keeping his Insurgent Magnus powers under wraps...

It would be disastrous.

After the individual before him, Kurtish, was done tending to his celebrity cravings – waving at random people also – he finally faced Skullius.

His smooth chocolate brown hair which met with a like coloured anchor beard gave him a dashing look that was only spoiled by the arrogance that twinkled from his satin grey eyes.

His armour was showy too, nigh impracticable in its appearance, as if not made for any type of high speed movement or combat at all.

The man gave Skullius a look of pity, sizing him up multiple times.

"To think my first appearance on the stage will be with a nobody such as you," the man said while elegantly holding his forehead in genuine distress. "Is this truly a coincidence, Game Master?!"

Guissepo gave a short laugh before flying up, giving no reply to Kurtish.

Skullius ignored the words of his opponent.

'Might as well end this quick. I'd rather not show too much,' he thought as his body grew light.

Seeing the look on the Hybrid Luman's face and his stance, Kurtish Oldd wore a shocked face, his hand elegantly touching his chestplate as if he was appalled by something truly vile.



"Young man! Are you truly...ahaha! Are you truly under the impression that I will battle you?"  
Kurtish Oodd said with the shake of his head.

"Sadly, this battle ended when you witnessed my glorious image."

...!

Suddenly, Skullius felt a torrent of mana brush out of Kurtish and converge to a single point!

No.

It wasn't just a torrent of mana!

Skullius could have sworn this man had expended 90% of his entire mana reserves in an instant!

Wait! No!

He didn't expend it! This was something of an automatic activation of a technique that immediately withdrew the required amount of mana!

The result was...!

Chapter 548: Showy (2)

There were a variety of Classes in each category – Energy Former, Arma User and Form User.

Some were hard to practise and were thus rare as once one chose a class, changing it was difficult. Therefore most chose to not even try for harder classes.

Among Energy Formers, there was one particular class that was hard to master.

As Skullius felt the convergence of mana, his body was already on the move.

He couldn't let this guy finish whatever he was planning.

However, it happened faster than he could react even while boosted by the gravitational effects of his core. And rather than a lack of speed, this was something Skullius couldn't avoid in general!

The bright mana that gathered before the smirking Kurtish flashed so bright that the majority of witnesses had to turn away to avoid the piercing pain it brought to the eyes!

When it was done...

"Woow, what is that?"

"It's beautiful!"

"Bless the Deities!"

What greeted the eyes of everyone watching, was an enormous, magnificently designed box!

It stood before Kurtish, covering a third of the platform with its rainbow coloured hue that was sprinkled with bits of moving stars over its surface that made it look like something out of a fantasy of a fantasy's fantasy!

On its five visible sides, large protrusions, sculpture-like items attached to the box could be seen with glossiest sheen of gold in the shape of creatures with the likeness of griffins!

A crushing amount of mana fumed from this box.

A large amount of mana was required to forge it and once it covered its target, it secured them inside.

"Hahaha!" Kurtish turned and bowed as if he had just given a brilliant performance, waving at the crowd that cheered.

This was a unique show of strength.

This dashing middle aged man had imprisoned his opponent!

This was the prime means of offense that came with Kurtish's class which also extended into his Family Technique.

Kurtish was a Wardlock.

Some preferred to call them Barrier Masters but the few Wardlock's took on this name instead as they were not only limited to creating barriers but were very skilled in creating seals too. In short, their job was to restrict movements, concepts and energies.

The Oldd Family back in the day was well-known and relied on for its knowledge on seals and barriers.

135 Barrier formations.

87 Seal formations.

All these were secrets crested and kept by the Oldd Family, making its standing very high among the Families.

Despite how Kurtish looked, his knowledge and experience with energies along with his capability to use them to forge Seals and Barriers was quite impressive. Thus, he never needed to learn complex combat forms.

"Witness one of my Family's prized, yet basic Barrier forms, the Royal Constriction Box! The longer my opponent remains within it, the more it shrinks. Soon, it will fit inside the palm of my hand! Hahaha! You can guess what will become of the one who remains inside. Hahaha!

No need to concern yourself with that. You won't have to see it," Kurtish said as he touched the large box which shook a bit before, with a loud thrum, it reduced in size by at least a quarter of what it had been!

The crowds were intrigued.

To have the ability to win without ever fighting was actually most people's dream.

And this man had that exact same ability.

Some of the contenders from the traditional Family circles scoffed at Kurtish. Him turning a fight into a showing of his Family Technique instead was... unsightly.

"I have to admit though. He certainly pushed back the heavy atmosphere that built up after that man came on."

"You're right. Everyone could use a break. It's a pity for Kurtish's opponent though. The only thing more impressive about the exterior of the barrier techniques of the Oldd Family is their interior. They are layered with high levels of intricacy and finesse. Without a powerful technique, you're pretty much doomed."

"That's right. These matchups are seeming less and less random the more they go by. How can there be this many consecutive mismatched opponents?"

How and how indeed.

Kurtish revelled in the cheers.

He touched the barrier again and it dropped in size further.

He then leaned in and spoke in a condescending tone towards the box-shaped barrier.

"You know, it's become a trend to kill your opponent lately. I would love to eliminate you as such but... I'll give you the chance to surrender. No, no. That's too generic. Beg for me to release you, otherwise you'll have an excruciating painful death.

Did I forget to mention? No one can hear or see you when you're trapped inside, except for me that is. But if you ask nicely, I'll let them hear you plead for your life," Kurtish said while caressing the side of the large box shaped barrier.

"Come on now. Beg."

BOOOOOM!

A thrum of power knocked against the barrier with a sharp impact, one so fantastical that it reverberated throughout the platform from the Royal Constriction Box!

Kurtish moved back with slight surprise.

"Hey, hey, hey! Don't scare me like that," he said with a self-reassuring chuckle, his eye darting towards his fiancé. He waved.

'Everything is under control,' Kurtish said in his heart with a smile.

The man's gaze turned back to the box.

"You're still refusing my offer? I'm being merciful here!" he called with a slight build up of anger and trepidation.

Kurtish had to actively peer into the box to perceive what was going on inside and when he did so...

Within, his opponent was standing near one of the walls of the barrier with a look of incredible focus.

Suddenly, his mana spiked, covering his entire body as a massive film that stretched out quite a distance from his body before gathering around his right hand which was balled into a fist!

Then...

BOOOOOOM!

Again!

'Hey, hey, hey!' Kurtish ground his teeth, watching the Royal Constriction Box shift an inch to the right from the force!

From the tent, some of the contenders were surprised at this development.

"Hey. Is the barrier actually failing to contain the impact?"

"It seems so. As far as I know, this is the barrier Kurtish usually uses for confrontations and it never fails to contain powerful attacks, especially when dealing with high level beasts. Breaking it would require otherworldly strength. Don't tell his opponent has something like that?"

"He's from the Bryne Family right? Signed in from elsewhere. I doubt he'll amount to much. After all..."

Kurtish restored his cool.

The barrier still held. In fact, it wasn't even damaged. All he had to do was stopping playing the mercy card and dispose of his opponent.

"And here I was being so kind!" he yelled before having the box shrink to half its current size!

Then another half!

And another!

The witnesses marvelled.

Here comes another agonising death!

The moment the barrier reached about twice Kurtish's size, he wore a ruthless face and had it decrease further in size!

'I was getting a little worried there. Fortunately for me you ended up becoming exactly what I thought you were. A stepping stone for my rise,' Kurtish thought.

BOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

It happened a third time.

A shocking impact.

This one however felt different!

That was because as Kurtish ignored it and forced the Royal Constriction Box to shrink once more, he felt an incredible level of resistance!

The barrier seemed to be... full!

It was filled to the brim with something that maintained the shape of the barrier, refusing to let it shrink further!

'That's not possible! There can't be resistance from the inside of the barrier! That's preposterous! Damn it! If I had just used a stronger barrier from the start!' Kurtish thought in anguish. At this point, everyone could see that he was struggling and his image would plummet after all his blabber.

But he couldn't lose face over this.

He wouldn't.

BOOOOOOOOOM!

"No way!"

The barrier broke!

Cracks emerged on one side, allowing for something to seep outside, giving insight to what was happening inside!

First, a sharp golden white leaked from the cracks as a few streaks only to disappear nigh instantly!

After it, blackish red wisps of energy that quickly spread out like a virus into the air before the barrier was knocked hard again showed, the force of the impact shattering one side completely as it struggled to shrink itself according to its master's will!

Kurtish frowned and gave up on trying to forcefully manipulate the barrier.

"You annoying little pest," he said with a sigh.

His opponent had broken out.

The Royal Constriction Box shattered into rainbow coloured pieces of glow that faintly vanished.

There weren't some of Kurtish's pride.

'Tsk.'

The wisps of blackish-red that had swam in the air vanished, the same going for those that leaked from Skullius' body.

The look on his face was not particularly cheerful as he wasn't too happy about being forced to use abilities he wanted to keep hidden for now.

He was annoyed.

"It seems you're just as furious as I am. Good!" Kurtish's said with his head raised high.

It seemed this battle was just getting started and everyone was getting excited, save for one person.

A certain surprise contender was standing from her seat with a look of incredulity!

Her pretty crimson gold eyes expressed something beyond shock with her lips trying to emit a few words.



How was that possible?!

That light...

That golden-white light that h

ad flashed for a brief moment had brought on a devastating amount of shock to her.

That extreme sense of familiarity...!

How?

How could a human possess..?

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Chapter 549: Showy (3)

Two minutes ago...

Skullius had just launched a punch backed with the entire 30,000 tonnes he could pack on the wall of the barrier, but other than making it quiver slightly, there had been no real damage to the barrier.

'I didn't see this one coming. The activation of this technique is incredible. This... Kurtish man wasn't lying. As soon as you face him, it's pretty much over,' Skullius thought.

The barrier looked the same inside as it outside, with only the large figures of the golden griffins missing from it.

Moments before this, he had heard Kurtish's taunting words.

Apparently if he begged, the man was willing to let him live.

'That's funny,' Skullius thought with a smile.

Begging, huh?

Scraping those useless, entitled demands, the rest of what he said was a big help though.

'So no one from outside can actually see or hear me, huh? That leaves me open to a lot of temptation. I could freely use everything in my arsenal to escape but that would mean exposing all my cards to this man. He would know them all, in which case I'd need to kill him. That's probably not a good idea though.'

The Hybrid Luman gave it some thought.

This wasn't a Genuine Incarnation.

This was a barrier that locked him in and shrunk as per its user's will.

As simple as it sounded, he didn't have a counter towards it except his raw strength... which was lacking.

To remedy the situation, he had to make a decision.

None of his non-class skills packed enough strength to break him out of this. Not on their own at least.

Unlike bandits who didn't have sophisticated and powerful techniques, true born heirs to Families like Kurtish were different.

'I don't have a choice. I have to use it. At the very least it's mainly a feature of my race than it is a feature of my class so I have a chance of getting away with it if it turns out that someone can see through the barrier,' Skullius thought in annoyance.

Merely risking that was not to his liking either.

The reason why Skullius was hesitant about using his [Evil Darkness] and [Just Light] powers was because he had this sinking feeling that someone out there might tie them to their origin.

It was a little far fetched when considered logically but he trusted this feeling of his.

Maybe the WILLS of Fulgardt were drawing him towards another conclusion.

All this said, using his Insurgent Magnus powers now, or rather a muddled up version of them while hidden from view was acceptable right now.

So Skullius went straight towards executing his plan.

A singular, expansive wing burst from behind his back with a shocking luminance!

[Wing of the Just].

Skullius felt a rush of strength bury him under a feeling of omnipotence. Shining glitters appeared over his skin, giving him a brilliant image fitting of the five fold increase to his power that was rendered immediately!

Without wasting time, Skullius cocked his fist and let his mana run wild, its entirety exploding out with an enormous level of output!

A total of roughly 14,500 was multiplied fivefold to give a total of 72,500 points of mana that raged with a level of quality and thickness above and beyond what Skullius normally had!

His stats were also quintupled and with that came something Skullius wanted to exploit!

Weight.

Quintupled quality of his weight manipulation with mana!

150,000 tonnes were freely clinging onto Skullius' fist right now as a result!

Above this, he used every skill that augmented his strength and speed before throwing a full power fist at the barrier!

The roar of the magical construct, its creak as if it was made of metal, brought a satisfied grin to Skullius' face.

"This isn't enough, huh?" he thought before adding something else.

The <CURSED HEART> caused a blackish-red energy to seep from Skullius and wrap around his fist.

His Hybrid Luman form assimilating a portion of the [Swindling Death Dance] abilities was still an anomaly that Skullius was yet to fully understand but he knew that the energy wrought from it was fairly destructive, even without Demion's Dance!

All this power when put together as Skullius expertly landed another straight punch in the same place he had hitting all this time finally broke the barrier!

When this occurred Skullius immediately dispelled the [Wing of the Just] and exited the broken Royal Constriction Box to face Kurtish.

Gasps and bursts of shock as well as excitement rung from all corners of the stadium!

An unexpected development!

This wasn't going to be a one sided exchange after all!

"Would you look at that? He's competent after all, sister," Setkh who was seated in the crowd said with a glance towards his sister who didn't look to have been concerned in the first place.

"Of course he is," Stylla said.

Skullius wouldn't die here.

The old man from the tower had reassured her of that with the words he had given to her. Something would happen before anything akin to death met the Hybrid Luman.

Something she was warily guarding against.

Unfortunately for her, something else was now plaguing her mind. Something she was holding in her hand.

A delicate piece of paper.

Silrat on the side had been concerned for a bit but he relaxed after seeing Skullius emerge from the barrier but Yuyui seated to his right side only nodded with confidence.

"That's right!" she said with pride.

"Hmm?"

"Nothing!"

Within the circular tent, several contenders were looking at Skullius with a lot of intrigue without his knowledge.

The first was naturally Darwel who had taken her seat, recovering from the earlier shock.

'There's no mistaking it. This man... I must speak to him as soon as I can. What is the meaning of this?' Darwel thought with her eyes studying Skullius closely.

She was usually laid back as there nothing new to obsess about in Pelian but now...

She was so glad she didn't hurry back home.

She was so glad to demanded to join the Royale through Rearren.

This caught her interest.

The other two individuals who also looked to Skullius with interest were none other than Gabel... and Vali but for completely different reasons.

Vali tapped her fingers against her cheek.

'Hmmm. The quality of that mana. Tantalising. The Bryne Family found a gem...' she thought silently.

Back on the platform, Kurtish shrugged.

"It seems you're as furious as I am. Good. I'm rather upset with you ruining my image. No, that can't be right. It was my fault for using such a basic barrier to begin with," the middle aged man said with a flamboyant spin.

His armour, as impractical as it looked seemed to have functions above basic defence as it suddenly shone bright, releasing tendrils of verdant green energy that swirled around Kurtish who revelled in the light!

As this occurred, Skullius with the same annoyed look on his face blasted towards Kurtish incredible speed and gave a heavy punch to the man's head!

A shockwave pulsed around the two but...

"Be patient, will you? I'm recovering my lost mana here, " Kurtish said nonchalantly, not affected at all!

Skullius' fist was blocked by a beautiful barrier that looked like hundreds of thick, royal blue crystals were stitched together and layered over each other to form a curved shield that defended Kurtish from the front.

Once again, this was an automatic activation!

'No wonder this guy is so arrogant. His techniques activate on their own and if I'm to take what he just said seriously...' Skullius thought as he drew back.

Surely, Kurtish was recovering his lost mana.

Even if the Royal Constriction Box he used was a basic barrier form, according to him, it still look a large chunk of his mana to perform.

Skullius assumed that the automatic activation sapped a lot more mana than the barrier technique itself but the lost mana was recovered through the armour.

Talk about inefficient use of resources.

Kurtish didn't care!

He could recover what was lost and replenish tools with similar effects.

Soon, the showy man's mana was fully restored and he gave a wave to the audience again, to his fiancé who reciprocated with a sweet smile and another kiss.

"Now. Let me show you a sliver of my true strength," Kurtish said with an arrogant grin. "When my Family Technique is combined with my personal strength."

...!

Sunset orange coloured Perfect Aura started to flow from Kurtish's body, rising hurriedly to form a humanoid image!

It was a feminine figure with soft facial features.

When someone from the crowd so its face, she blushed!

As the Incarnation formed, another chunk of Kurtish's mana was devoured for the activation of something extraordinary!

Something that emerged before him with a complex, hard to articulate structure that spun, spun and spun again vigorously!

"Do you know what happens when two or more conflicting barrier formations are forcibly merged together?" Kurtish asked, his expression growing increasingly confident.

Skullius furrowed his brow.

'Yeah, this could be bad,' he thought as he pulled out Demion's Dance from his storage ring. 'There's no way to half heartedly fight this guy. It's either I kill him or he kills me.'

Therein lied the choice and the dilemma.

Could Skullius defeat this man?

Chapter 550: I Missed

Skullius tossed his Demion's Dance to his left then to his right hand as he built up a strategy in his head.

This guy was one of the toughest opponents he could ever fight.

His physical stats weren't going to give him an advantage because of Kurtish's barriers techniques especially without a boost like the one given by [Wing of the Just] and his mana techniques would be nullified by the Genuine Incarnation that had just appeared.

After all, his gravitational abilities hadn't even been formed into a skill, much less a high level one like Maxim's.

The sunset orange coloured giant, Skullius' opponent's Incarnation had the exact same face as Kurtish's fiancé!

It softly wrapped its arms around him with a loving smile, a halo of the neon coloured Aura creating a film around Kurtish that would protect him as well as bolster his technique's offensive effect!

As for what Kurtish was cooking up for offense...



Right in front of him, something dreadful was forming. It looked like long strips with texts written over them tangling madly against each to create a sort of condensed whirlwind of bright red, gold and white that spun in a thrilling rotation, generating a huge amount of potential energy!

This thing was also packed with profound interactions of mana that appealed to the Hybrid Luman from afar, its form being confusing to say the least!

What was this thing?

Come to think of it, what did happen when conflicting barrier formations were smashed into each other like this, as Kurtish had mentioned?

The answer was obvious.

It was destruction.

However, the form of destruction was one that would surprise most.

Skullius saw this terrifying entity and breathed out a sharp breath.

'I thought I was a bit stronger than most of the contenders here but that was not true at all. Even with my Insurgent Magnus powers, I still don't think I would win this...' Skullius thought.

Unless he used the Preeminent Attegoth, his Precept of Light which required an astronomical amount of mana far beyond what he could current produce on his own, his [Evil Darkness] AND [Just Light] powers wouldn't help in this situation.

If they wouldn't work anyway, it was better to keep them under wraps.

All he had now, were the things he was used to plus a few other skills he wasn't going test out in a battle like this.

Skullius took another breath.

'First...Let's time this out,' he thought before fully extending his [Koten Machi] to encompass everything in his range along with having [Greater Mana Crafter] help him sense every single detail around him.

'See it all,' Skullius thought as everything became clear, especially with [Beyond the Hype] passively making him experience everything at twice the norm.

When this was done, Skullius brought Demion's Dance before him with a tight grip.

'I haven't progressed much with my swordsmanship but this blade still has untapped potential with its active skill [Epic Memory].'

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[Skill: Epic Memory]

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

~~~

The stronger Skullius grew, the more he could access the strength hidden within this skill. His latest use of the sword was a testimony of this as his last strike which had sliced Kenno's hand days ago had cleaved through a ten mile distance.

Now...

If he put his back into it...

His mana flared like a storm, his maximum output exploding out with a serious force that pulled the air away from his body.

Kurtish grinned at the Hybrid Luman who was in serious stance.

"Looks like you still have more tricks up your sleeve!" he yelled with a cackle before setting his amalgamation of incomplete barrier formations loose!

The tangling strips shot out with a mad and unexpected effect on the surroundings!

First, it cordoned off the path to Kurtish, an obscure warping of space that soared high and wide as it then blurred Skullius' positioning of his opponent!

Next, it seemed the distance between Skullius and Kurtish continued to grow continuously but forever remaining in the confines of the barriers surrounding the platform somehow!

As if all this wasn't crazy enough, a series of barriers of different kinds started appearing spontaneously in this stretched out space, smashing into each other and exploding in nerve-racking ways while also causing dangerous distortions!

This....

This was the power of Wardlock!

Kurtish's grinning face was telling of the fact that this wasn't him randomly spinning things together.

This was actually an offensive technique and one of his strongest too!

Skullius felt the threat.

Regardless of how it looked, it was actually approaching him at a tremendous speed.

Yet... on his face, a grin appeared.

'This is it!' he thought as with the hand that wasn't carrying his sword, a phenomenal pull dragged every inch of mana that could be found anywhere within a mile's radius!

The ambient mana.

The bits of mana leaking from the barrier.

The remnants of the mana from the people who died on the platform.

The mana from the activation of techniques and basic usages on the platform in previous matches.

With [Koten Machi], Skullius had felt it all.

And he pulled it all with his utmost level of control of [Greater Mana Crafter]!

With as much speed as he could conjure, Skullius then dragged all this mana into his core.

Into his Centre.

This wasn't pure mana but he had to pass it all into core so that he could pull off the necessary stunt with gravity he had planned!

It didn't take a millisecond for all this mana which weighed on his body like a miniaturised world to be expelled out of the Shell of his core as more or less the same as his mana, structured for gravity!

Skullius' pinned himself on the ground and lowered his centre of gravity.

His sockets glowed immensely as the mana he was carrying was all packed into his mana channels, its purpose being to keep him rooted to platform no matter what!

Demion's Dance was pulled back, as if to be drawn at a moment's notice from a non-existent sheath in a quick draw.

The Luman was ready.

Soon, the spinning atrocity reached Skullius and with its hundreds of colliding barriers, it eviscerated, incinerated and melted his flesh when it was a meter and a half away!

Parts of Skullius' body were shattered instantly, some turning into dust within a fraction of a millisecond before the main show bashed into him!

But Skullius didn't lose his focus.

The profound tangling of mana within the amalgamation of barrier formations became clear to him and for a moment, he appreciated it.

It was beautiful.

If he had [Epiphany] right now, it would have registered this as something he could potentially learn but alas...

But he didn't.

All he had was his [Greater Mana Crafter], his mana, Demion's Dance... and Null Life Essence!

....!

At this point, it seemed like everyone was silent, holding their breaths!

What seemed to happen in a matter of minutes had only taken place in the span of three seconds from the launch of the terror that contended with space to now, when Skullius pulled on the utmost peak of strength he could muster with the cleanest slash of the sword he could perform...

When in that exact moment, as a screaming flare of blackish-red energy from [Swindling Death's Dance] erupted like a singularity, as if giving Skullius the full strength of Demion himself...

When in that same moment, Skullius, with the gravity keeping him on the platform, layered the edge of Demion's Dance with a fine slew of Null Life Essence, which he was still an amateur at controlling...

A darkness tore through everything happening around him for a fraction of time, friend light being cast away for but a moment as a dark, thin line split cleanly the taboo of barrier formations and

caused the festering of a blackish-red hue on the platform all the way to Kurtish who was already assuming victory!

When a hard to articulate amount of time passed, a deafening explosion ensued!

It roared from Skullius' position, from the spinning tangle of formations interrupted by the cleave from a green blade!

A Unique grade blade!

The witnesses drew back on reflex, as it genuinely seemed like this eruption of power was about to escape the protective layer around the platform.

But these worries were for nothing.

The flashy turbulence remained in the enclosure of the barrier.

A second later the cataclysm was dispelled by the platform and all that was left where the explosion occurred was an empty spot on the far side of this stage whose entirety was painted with a blackish-red hue!

"Dear Suzamete...."

"What... what happened...? I didn't see anything..."

"Is the winner decided?"

The silence that had been plaguing the atmosphere during the tense moment vanished as the witnesses turned to Kurtish on the opposite end of the empty stage and found him kneeling on one knee with his head hung low.

The Incarnation above him fragmented before vanishing but there was no discernible damage to Kurtish himself, which confused the audience.

Kurtish gnashed his teeth and...

"Ha..ha...haha....ARRRRRRRRGGHHHHHHH!" he screeched in agonising pain, tears spilling from eyes.

His right hand that was protected by armour popped off, blood flooding from the joint!

His right ear also fell off from the side of his head and the poor middle aged man wriggled like a worm on the ground!

"Master?" Yuyui stood from the crowd, looking for Skullius with concern.

Where was Skullius?!

Silrat was concerned too.

No.

Everyone watching seemed to be concerned now.

Did this other participant land a critical blow on Kurtish and... die?

"Look! Look up there!" one of the witnesses called while pointing high up into the barrier.

There, where Guissepo was sitting on his glass pane, his relaxed eyes looked behind him...

There... was the figure of someone who was literally on fire.

Flames covered his entire body along with a thick, pitch black smoke.

"You're not supposed to be here, you know?" Guissepo said with calm smile.

Skullius ignored him.

His only concern was laying on the ground a long way below, screaming in pain.

"Tsk. I can't believe I missed after all that," he said in annoyance.