

# Undead 81

## Chapter 81: A Profound Gap

A single skill was making the current situation possible, coupled with a few additional kinks that the owner of the Labyrinth of the Yoke had set in place for one who would be wise enough to take chances and give the least bit of effort to trying to understand the essence of the power of an Insurgent Magnus.

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[Basic Evil Invasion | Lv.1]

A proficient user of 'Evil Darkness' can literally invade the personal space of weaker beings, imposing a portion of their soul onto the body of target. Memories, experience and skills can be extracted to a very limited degree.

-Caution-

Stronger opponents may have strong mental strength and be capable of doing harm to the user's soul.

-Caution-

Soul damage will be accrued in case of death while using a target's body.

<Possible number of invaded targets – (1/1)>

Mana Requirements: 100 Mana Points per minute

Duration: ---

Cooldown: None

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Skullius hadn't looked too much into the skill but he knew that it was impossible to be doing what he was doing when the skill was so low level at this current point in time.

However, all this didn't matter, as Skullius had already acclimated and pulled out the strongest card that this body had.

"Majestic Territory!"

An ability that he had seen multiple times from beings that far exceeded him in power was now being used by him-ish!

Even though it would only last a few seconds, Skullius didn't neglect to fully indulge in the power that overflowed after he unleashed Eldris' Territory!

From Eldris' body, a dark red sphere appeared, expanding outwards immediately after as it released an overbearing energy that dyed the entire hall in a bloody hue!

The furniture and decor in the hall vanished only to be replaced by a searing hot scape where nothing but diverse red energies tangled with each other in an unsettling manner!

Mirages emerged from the heat that was extremely evident within this place, many of the hundreds that had been dragged into this odd space already feeling a weak sensation as the adverse effects of the Territory set in on them!

Everyone remained in the positions they had been, including Skullius' body which lay on the ground.

The Discount Human who was in Eldris' body was in the centre of the Territory, his body radiating with a red, pulsing glow while his eyes flickered with the darkness that trailed like flame.

This was Majestic Territory Expulsion!

A high level art whose mechanics were far beyond the understanding of most beings.

Skullius received a flurry of notifications a full three seconds after casting his Territory.

[You have used your 'Majestic Territory']

[+250% Agility within the Territory]

[+300% Strength within the Territory]

[+100% Mana Points and Mana Recovery within the Territory]

[+200% Skill efficiency within the Territory]

Skullius felt a ridiculous amount of energy settle in his body as his stats exploded!

His mana burst like a flame as it distorted the dark shifting reds around him!

'This is it...!' Skullius thought as he stole a glance at his body and the figures of the three that he had been about to go against for a second round!

His top priority among them was Remos!

The old man while in his robes narrowed his eyes as the view in front of him had suddenly changed into the eerie red, like an obscure painting.

The woman with navy blue hair and the other man looked on impassively, as their thick mana, one green and the other orange, surrounded their bodies protectively.

"Such a weak and unimpressive Territory won't get you anywhere, undead! You chose a particularly weak vessel for that," Remos remarked as his mana began to expand also!

'I won't let you!' Skullius thought as his buff appearance with long black hair vanished and appeared right above Remos, the space around him quaking from his movement!

Skullius immediately cast multiple offensive skills as well as other defensive skills that he was slowly beginning to recognise from the influence of Eldris' body that was eager to fight!

[Emperor Dragon Mimicking Art]!

[Breaking Wind Demon Art]!

[Savage Killing]!

[Unhindered Fist]!

[Broken Physique]!

The Discount Human didn't waste time trying to figure out the proper usage of these skills as he merely flung his fist with all his might!

Right before his fist reached the old man, Skullius saw Remos wear a surprised expression as his quick attack had caught him off guard!

Regardless of how much stronger Remos was in comparison to Skullius, he was still a mage type combatant in the end!

He hadn't thought that Skullius would use such a ruthless, reckless and unruly method of attack where he just mashed a bunch of martial skills together!

A fierce illusory dragon head appeared behind Skullius coupled with red sigils that danced around the open maw of the black creature that had three thick horns around its head!

Blue rings wrapped round Skullius' hand as well, giving him a majestic appearance that was complemented by the trails of darkness that followed his eyes!

Everyone within close range was blown away the moment the attack landed!

The impact was indescribable as only a heavy sensation of mana with different weavings to it exploded with a bright flash of red and black that both illuminated the space and darkened it!

Skullius' straight punch which was backed with all these skills had managed to reach Remos before he could sufficiently defend himself!

The result was a gruesome one!

Remos was collapsed on the ground with his torso having a large blotch where blood sprayed, flesh and organs missing!

He wore a crazed look on his bloody face as even with his damage, a green light was already beginning to cover his injuries and restore them!

"You...! You won't escape!" Remos barked, but Skullius was already gone. "I will give you flesh and make you suffer for this!"

Skullius: "..."

The invader hurriedly grabbed his real body and was prepared to run towards the direction of the double doors.

Despite the TERRIFYING threat he had just received, he was still happy that he had actually succeeded!

Remos' double wheel was gone after his body had been damaged, disrupting his spells!

As Skullius looked at his real body, he saw that the deconstruction had stopped and his cosmetic flesh was returning!

Phew!

However...

Skullius was impeded from running away immediately because of the immense strain on his mind that he felt as well as the heavy sensation of exhaustion that came with his previous movement and action!

'A Territory is this draining? Remos said that this... is unimpressive?! This..? I can't imagine what something stronger than this would look like! Oh, actually I do!' Skullius thought as he recalled the fox's Territory as well as Azila's.

He took a breather and dashed forward in the direction of the doors to escape.

With his ridiculous speed that caused the Territory space to make way for him, Skullius ran ahead when suddenly...

FKSHHH!

An arm was cut clean off!

"A Territory that can only boost your physique by this much isn't worth calling a Territory. To top it all off, Eldris can't even create an 'Imaginary GeoScape' yet. This ends here," the man who wore a simple shirt said, his figure appearing beside Skullius with his knife that was laced with quivering mana as it slashed laterally!

...!

Eldris' arm was cut off!

'Bro! I'm in a Territory for flesh's sake!' Skullius screamed in his mind as he tried to boost his speed further!

Unfortunately, thin slits of white raced in his vision at a tremendous speed and Skullius found deep cuts appearing all over his body after every second!

The pain only registered after the movements of a simple knife sliced through his flesh. The same flesh that was guarded by [Broken Physique]!

'Urgh!! Does this mean if I didn't have this defence skill I would be dead by now?! Bro, how strong are you?!

FWOOSH!

The Territory began to dispel itself as Skullius felt the exhaustion getting worse!

The image of the hall appeared as Skullius found that he was merely 20 meters from the double doors!

He could do it!

If he could just find an opening, he could do it!

But how?! This ridiculously fast sockethole wouldn't let him and furthermore...

HISSSSSS!

A long purple viper darted its way over to Skullius from the direction of the woman with navy blue hair!

It wrapped itself around Skullius while he was setting his sights on the immediate danger!

The long body of the snake squeezed tight, a bright tint leaking from its scales as it exerted force!

It raised its head and hissed in Skullius' face!

The only thing that peaked from its body was Skullius' hand that was holding onto his real body!

As he was restrained, the man in the simple shirt burst forward, an outline of mana trailing behind him with his shocking speed!

Skullius gritted his teeth!

Another moment where his life was in danger.

Why was this guy willing to kill Eldris anyway?

Were they not acquaintances at the very least?!

Such a lack of hesitation made Skullius tremble but he quickly forced himself to gather his thoughts and make a decision!

Door.

20 meters.

Free hand.

Real body.

Do it, you sockethole!

These four elements clicked within him and he gambled on a chance to turn his luck around!

With all the strength he had had left, Skullius reinforced his grip on his real body and struggled to free his entire arm from the viper's hold, just for a moment!

He swung his hand and threw his real body with all his might towards the double doors!

He could only do this much and hope for the best!

An instant after he threw his body away, the man in the simple shirt reached Eldris' body, a lateral slash of his knife lobbing off a Heroic Warrior's head!

Chapter 82: Damage | No Damage

BZZZT!



Skullius felt a wave of terror and pain as the knife sliced through Eldris' neck and chopped off his head!

Blood sprayed in his vision, but in the next moment, a notification gave him a 'clear' explanation on what had happened.

[Your host has died. You have accrued soul damage]

A electric feeling rushed through Skullius with a great intensity as at the same time, he found himself being pulled away from the dropping body of the Heroic Warrior and heading towards flying body that had almost reached the doors!

It didn't take more that a moment for Skullius' vision to zip through the distance and suddenly be replaced by the view of the doors as he returned to his Discount Human body which was still intact, though with almost half of the armour missing!

However, Skullius didn't have time to think of much else as his first thought was that he would crash into the door and ultimately see that his plan wouldn't work.

Yet...

The double doors opened slowly as if anticipating him, their low rumble making Skullius wear a big smile as he was sure that he would survive now!

'Yes! I made the right choice after all!'

YET...

For the moment right before he could pass through, his feet touching the ground as if to give him a chance to exit the hall with a hop in his step, a chill ran down Skullius' back!

The Discount Human didn't need to turn around to know what caused this dreadful feeling as even though the physical advantages he had enjoyed for a short time had ended, he remembered the super fast menace with the knife clearly!

That's why, he didn't hesitate!

Perhaps the battle instincts he experienced from a powerhouse like Eldris had temporarily carried over to him, or perhaps there was another reason, but the Discount Human, in the next moment, activated a skill that he believed would improve his chances!

[Artless Dodger has been activated]

[Agility has increased by 25%]

As Skullius feet touched the ground, the residual motion he had plus the effect of this skill shot Skullius through the door a miniscule fraction of a second before he was cleaved in half!

The man in the simple shirt raised a brow as he was surprised by the sudden increase in speed Skullius had gotten right after he had exerted his strength to slicing him up a few centimetres of distance before!

Skullius stumbled and rolled before he straightened himself and looked back.

The figures of the men and women in the hall looked at him with unveiled malice. One wouldn't even believe that these were the people that had been hospitable to him before.

It seemed that they couldn't leave, which is what Skullius had been hoping for as that had been the general trend with captives in the Labyrinth.

Slowly, the doors began to close up again and Skullius breathed a sigh of relief.

He was safe.

Surprisingly.

He avoided meeting the gazes of the people within the hall, especially Remos who looked at him bright, blazing mana within his eyes!

DUM!

The doors closed.

Skullius finally sat down and allowed himself to grunt from the pain he was experiencing. It was excruciating!

The feeling was like when there was an internal itch that you can't do anything about except, in this case, it was like having a few dozen volts of electricity released to run rampant within your sturdy soul!

Skullius gnashed his teeth.

[You have chosen to enter the hall and accept Fulgardt's hospitality. Even though you have chosen to leave early, you will be rewarded]

[Please wait for your reward]

"Huh? What do you mean I left early? How else was I supposed to survive?! Urrgh.. its hurts!" Skullius yelled.

Now that he thought about it, what was the purpose of this section of the Labyrinth? It certainly wasn't simply about eating and being merry only.

As Skullius saw it, you could either be left in there to spend an eternity with them or you could just be killed after refusing to adhere to their request.

'So... all I had to do was enter and exit alive? Or was the purpose of the hall to make allow me to learn the new skills that I gained from analysing those guys?' Skullius thought while rolling on the ground.

There certainly seemed to be another grand reason.

[Your reward has arrived]

[You have gained 'Voiding Key']

At that moment, a silver key with strokes of white and black appeared in Skullius' hand!

As he held it, Skullius felt a rich amount of [Evil Darkness] and [Just Light] within it. The fascinating object lessened Skullius' suffering for a bit as curiosity overtook him instead.

Skullius immediately checked out its details with the guidance field.

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[Voiding Key]

<??>

A Key that allows the user three chances to go anywhere they wish within the Labyrinth. Verbal requests will prompt key to open a warp gate to the location.

-This is a rare item even within the Labyrinth and is seldom found by those who are unable to reach the hall of Fulgardt-

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"What in the Deadmanland is this?! I can go anywhere I want with this? Wait...!" Skullius said.

"Can I actually wish to go to the legacy?!"

Skullius thoughts reached this point immediately. This reward seemed way too convenient. This was obviously just him being directed to the final destination however, the special note on the skill made Skullius think deeper despite the pain he felt.

This was an important matter after all and strangely, the pain seemed to be subsiding little by little.

"This is an item that can found in the Labyrinth. So even if you don't enter the hall, or can't, you can still find it somewhere? Now that I think about it, what if there were some powerful humans in the past that actually managed to defeat all their opponents and reach wherever the legacy was without going through this hall! That's possible right? Gaaah...

my mind!' Skullius grunted as he had overexerted his mind again.

It was possible indeed.

There were many variables and too little information to go off of, thus Skullius decided to wait until the pain he felt subsided.

He had initially thought it was a very big deal, but it seemed like it was just fine.

Yet, it wasn't.

Another set of chances and luck had met to create a profound situation that allowed him to survive.

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In the hall, Remos was seething with fury. His dignity had been soiled by an undead. He who was a pioneer of a great art had been thrashed by the machinations of a lowly undead.

It was unacceptable!

He wore an ugly expression as this defeat had left a very bad taste in his mouth. The damage he had received had taken a huge toll on him, the mana required to heal in such a short time not being small at all.

"I'll find that little set of bones! Mark my words! I'll find its source and torment it for eternity even if it is covered by undeath!" Remos bellowed.

"Give it a rest. If you of all people start slipping then we'll start to go mad one after the other," the man with the knife said as he walked from the door and sat on one of the chairs.

The woman had summoned the viper to capture Eldris' body sighed and took a seat by his side.

At this time, most of the others were already beginning to get seated while chatting about the latest topic.

The furniture that had sustained damage had recovered, restoring the peaceful ambience of the hall.

"Hmph! You say that because you haven't had your pride crushed twice!" harrumphed Remos.

"Perhaps, but the fact of the matter is that we were had. Never in my wildest dreams did I imagine a low level undead with such cunning. It barely had a presence after it shed off its disguise. I wonder if the undead are making a move again," the man with the knife said.

"If that's the case, then I hope that the world is prepared for it. Perhaps most of them don't even know the true terror brought on by those Arch-Liches," said the woman.

"If they don't, it will be unfortunate. Right. Should be about time now," said the man with the knife as he turned towards Eldris' corpse.

A shocking phenomenon began to occur to the Heroic Warrior's body!

The dark mist in the hall began to coalesce and shroud Eldris' body with a thickness that almost made the corpse within invisible.

Several spots of light rushed towards the body and formed a bright halo that slowly floated above and around the body!

Slowly, the head that had been sliced off rolled on the floor and reached the neck stump of Eldris where it attached itself seamlessly!

An oozing of darkness began to ensue while the bright halo descended and sat above Eldris' head.

A moment later, the black haired man's eyes shot open and he woke up, taking in deep gusts of air with a semi-shocked expression on his face!

He panted as he tried to recall what happened.

"Welcome back, friend," the man in the simple shirt raised a glass full of wine at Eldris. "An eternity of celebration won't allow you to perish. Don't get too hopeful next time."

Chapter 83: Before It...

As Skullius rested, waiting for the soul damage he had sustained to recede, he saw an interesting guidance field notification flicking before his eyes. It immediately explained why the soul damage was slowly receding instead of becoming a persistent nuisance or worse.

[Soul damage has been transferred to the remnants of 'Sila' within you]

"Hmm?" Skullius hummed as he let the information he had just seen sink in.

'That's right! When I devoured Sila's soul, it said something about a part of him being engraved into me! What does that mean exactly? Is it that what remains of him is the one that's taking damage in my stead? Maybe it's only limited to soul damage.'

Even though Skullius was deeply curious, he was also quite happy that he didn't have to be nagged by that electric pain any more than he had had to.

This also made him mark [Basic Evil Invasion] as a skill he wouldn't use on a whim. This was already an established thing as Skullius couldn't use it on any strong opponents anymore.

It started to dawn on him that these skills he had been getting would probably not be as effective as they were in the Labyrinth when he used them outside, at least until his comprehension and strength increased in [Just Light] and [Evil Darkness], when he noticed how effective they were even against stronger opponents.

This issue with the individuals in the hall had shed some more light on that.

That notification he had received about 'pre-existing conditions' had been the first blatant hint.

Skullius sighed.

The pain he felt throughout his soul finally subsided.

He took the time to inspect the other skills he had gotten after looking into the seal of [Evil Darkness] that was imprinted within Eldris.

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[Basic Evil Weaving | Lv.1]

Shape 'Evil Darkness' into simple or useless constructs.

Mana Requirements: None

Duration: None

Cooldown: None

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[Basic Evil Sanction (Special) | Lv.1]

Assert control over the 'Evil' within a small area.

Mana Requirements: 500 Mana Points

Duration: None

Cooldown: 72 hours

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"The first seems to be a skill that's used like [Basic Mana Manipulation]. So I can use it to learn how to make [Evil Darkness] into what I want. But useless though, bro? I guess I'll need to work on that. It will be a handy one soon!" Skullius exclaimed. "But that one though..."

The second skill sounded a little more grand but with almost the exact same lack of description as the first one.

Furthermore, it was a special skill which made Skullius frown.

This concept was something he was yet to truly grasp as it actually made him more wary of the cores of his opponents. That said, he wasn't able to see what kind of cores of the monsters within the hall had.

This was true for even when he invaded Eldris.

In that particular case, it had been more about him actually being unable to tell the colour because of how bright and powerful it was than being unable to determine through other means as he was very short on time.

He knew one thing for certain though, it wasn't blue.

'Alright. I don't feel much pain anymore. It's time to get moving. I really wonder if this key works in the way that I think it does. The bad thing is, if it doesn't work that way, I'll have to keep searching which will entail meeting stronger opponents. The worse thing is, if it does work, I'll probably be walking into a trap or something,' Skullius thought.

But he didn't have a choice.

He needed to do it anyway.

He held onto the key firmly.

How it worked was stated on the guidance field but Skullius wasn't sure how exactly he had to do it.

There wouldn't happen to be a mini information packet for using the key would there?

Left without a choice, Skullius went for the easier approach.

"Take me to the legacy of Fulgardt," he said without a shred of belief that it would work.

Surprisingly, mana gathered with a sudden rush, bellowing as space began to distort, creating a small portal in the shape of a door with a keyhole.

Its purple hue and constantly trembling image was a marvel for Skullius who couldn't believe it actually worked!

"I don't know if I should be happy about this but... here goes nothing..."

The Discount Human looked at his key, his eyes looking towards the keyhole on the door and inserted it reflexively. Skullius was immediately pulled in with a strong force!

His vision darkened for a few moments only to see... more darkness.

The only consolation was that this darkness was littered with golden white spots of light that moved around like fireflies.

As Skullius exited from the portal, it vanished, leaving him alone with within this strange place.

"It doesn't look all that much like a place you would keep a legacy," he said as he looked around.

The lights didn't illuminate the specifics of the place that he was in, but only showed their ability to not be swallowed into [Evil Darkness].

The mix of dark and light was quite beautiful if one took a moment to take it all in. The seamless harmony that existed between the two elements unlike with other opposites like fire and water, darkness and light made one want to see just how this was even possible and Skullius wasn't exempt from feeling this way.

"I can't see anything. I wonder if I can use [Just Light] to light up the surroundings. I do have some understanding in it after all, right? Or so the guidance field says."

Skullius immediately decided to give it a try. Unlike with [Evil Darkness] he had truly been neglecting [Just Light], not even giving it a try after getting more used to its counterpart since the beginning.

How different would it be?

He stretched out his hand, focusing on the blobs of light that raced within the surrounding darkness.

His affinity to the lights created a light connection that felt kind of prickly yet warm.

When he felt like he had gotten a bit of a hang of it, he moved his hand, watching as the blob of light followed his movement.

Skullius grinned.

He decided to take it a step further, focusing on multiple blobs of lights at once and pulling them together.

The process was slow but Skullius didn't mind. The thrill of learning to use something new made it worthwhile. He couldn't wait to see what he would obtain from this light that was given the prefix of Just.

The lights finally reached each other and began to converge, creating a larger, head-sized ball of light.

Immediately, the surrounding darkness within a small range was pushed away, making way for the bright light!

Skullius began to use his higher affinity towards the [Evil Darkness], spreading apart the darkness while having light make everything clearer!

An old floor appeared, looking to have miniature square tiles of gold and black that were now cracked and unsightly.

As the darkness receded further, Skullius saw something that leaned against the wall on his left.

As his big light shifted to illuminate the spot where he saw a glimpse of this peculiarity, Skullius raised a brow as the view of an armoured skeleton appeared.

It looked dusty and aged with even the colour of its bone becoming a rather unhealthy shade of pale.

Skullius shuddered at this blasphemy.

Had his bones ever been this trash before?

Beside that matter, Skullius was surprised to see this. Was his inference before correct?

'So there really were some people who managed to reach this place, assuming it really is where the legacy is. Now that I think about it, I hadn't see any skeletons or corpses since I came in here.'

Skullius reached down to touch the armour but as his hand ran over its design, some parts of it were brittle, breaking easily while others made it painfully clear that this barely counted as an antique.

Skullius moved his light along the wall where found a cluster of other skeletons with burns, decapitated bodies, ravished armours, violent fractures that left the skeletons torn among other forms of mutilation.

The floor began to show signs of being relentlessly broken down, craters and cracks being more frequent the more Skullius moved forward.

'Just what the flesh happened here?' Skullius thought as a bad feeling began to assault him.

The something that befell these warriors could potentially befall him too.

The anxiety that stemmed from that singular scenario made him quiver a bit.

The validity of this feeling became apparent when he suddenly sensed a vast power that came from the direction that he was heading to.

Skullius stopped.

He sent the light over in the direction of the terrifying power he felt and as it went, not only did the number of bodies as well as damage to the floors show, but also how big this place was revealed to Skullius.

Calling it a room would be an injustice.

Furthermore, the word 'room' wouldn't have been fitting to say when the figure that released the horrendous amount of energy was revealed.

It sat upon a wide yet small staircase, while hanging its head.

...!

Skullius remembered the feeling that this monster gave him!

It was definitely alike and there was no doubt about it!

This was...

Chapter 84: The Endgame (1)

Right in front of Skullius was a terrifying figure.

It was eerily similar to the creature with the odachi that he had seen at the beginning when he had entered the labyrinth with Denille.

A large creature with its head hung low, its upper torso uncovered while it donned some dark, old pants on lower body was what he saw.

Half of the creature's arm was a bunch of yellowish, dirty bones that looked to have accumulated a unreal amount of dust while the other was covered in dry flesh that looked to be millennia old!

Its head was akin to that of a mummy, hollowed eyes and the outline of a skull was visible through the thin layer of flesh that covered its face.

As it sat down, visible waves of horrid energy radiated from its body, causing the surroundings to look like they were twisting around it.

It released a burst of hot air from its mouth, and uttered incomprehensible words.

"Ah... ah... ukhufaijei....huesajipaa....Ah..Ah..."

Skullius didn't dare approach any closer. He didn't even dare speak out loud.

What was with facing powerful creatures at every turn?!

Where was the slow progression?!

Where was the hero's journey?!

This monstrosity was beyond powerful!

He took a few steps back and shuddered.

'What... the... hell?!' Skullius thought.

He had expected to see a powerful enemy but this was ridiculous!

With his especially flimsy level of mana discerning, all he sensed was the mash of power that threatened to explode from this thing.

What made it worse was that while he couldn't sense the exact tangling of mana that formed the strength of this individual, he sensed the terrible powerful amount of [Evil Darkness] and [Just Light] that oozed from its body!

'What's going on? Why does it have such a large concentration of both elements? Is it a challenger who has both of them like me? No, that can't be. It must be something else!'

As Skullius backtracked, he stepped on a pile of bones that cracked under his feet.

His vision shifted to the remains of the challenger he had stepped on.

'Is that a...'

In the remains of the challenger's fingers was a key!

The same kind of key as his own was in its possession!

Skullius looked around with the ball of light to search the other skeletons and found some of them to be in possession of the same key!

'Just as I thought! These guys probably found the key like I did, but under different circumstances! I guess having the two elements gives you a big advantage after all,' Skullius couldn't help but have an 'I was right' moment even in the middle of this situation.

The creature that stood before Skullius suddenly raised its head and gazed at him with its hollow eyes, a chilling sensation running through Skullius and for a moment, he felt like he had been shredded to pieces!

His mind gave him the impression that he had finally met his end for a split second but his senses told him otherwise!

The creature didn't do anything other than stare at him, but this was enough for the Discount Human to remain glued to his position and he began to pant incessantly!

A few minutes passed with Skullius stuck in this state.

He only tore himself out of it when the creature once again spoke incomprehensible words and hung its head.

'What the hell was that?! I couldn't even do anything for a few moments!' Skullius thought as he took the chance when the creature was not paying attention to him to rush a few meters away from it.

It was only when he was far that he breathed out, a sigh of relief from his fake body and stumbled to a fall.

'Am I really going to have to fight that?!' Skullius thought. 'Wait! Why is that creature just sitting there? Won't it attack? Did I miss something?' Skullius thought.

The moment he had seen the creature, his full attention had been on it and it alone.

He hadn't checked if there was something else of note.

Was the creature guarding something?

There was a high possibility. Skullius turned to look at the remains of the many various warriors.

'If they all wished to find this place by using the key there must be something here for sure. Maybe that thing isn't attacking me because I haven't shown any desire to take whatever it is that its guarding,' Skullius assumed. 'I should...'

Skullius took one step forward.

And that was it.

When he tried to move the other one, he felt stuck. It just wouldn't move.

He tried multiple times but his body just wouldn't heed his command.

Skullius grimaced.

He was afraid.



Even though he was a distance away, the ridiculous waves of power that the creature was releasing still reached him. His legs were as if made of stone!

In this situation, there didn't seem to be something that would make his mission a little easier.

It really felt like the endgame.

And he was on the losing side.

Would he just stand here for eternity then?

'I've come this far already. There's no way to exit this place on my own and if I don't do something, I'll just be doomed anyway. I should at least try to see what the thing it is guarding is, right? Come on you sockethole! Move already!' Skullius pushed himself, a milligram of courage added to his 10000 kilogram capacity tank.

His leg finally moved, but his cosmetic body started to released a rather loud sound from his chest.

BA-DUM! BA-DUM! BA-DUM!

Skullius ignored the noise and crept forward.

It was such a pity that the previous challengers' weapons and armour weren't things he could use anymore but he doubted they'd be much help.

His best bet was to use the new weapons in his arsenal.

In particular the Basic Evil skills.

As Skullius moved, inching his way towards a doom inducing terror, he activated [Basic Evil Weaving] and began to test it out.

The moment it became active, the darkness in his immediate surroundings began to shift aimlessly. They coiled, uncoiled, roiled and turned, these movements being strangely vivid to Skullius.

'This skill really makes it easier for me to control this darkness. I wonder if this creature is weak to [Evil Darkness] and [Just Light] like the others.'

Skullius doubted the thought immediately.

The reason why, was the fact that this creature had a tremendous amount of both elements visible in its body unlike Sila or Dezrael.

As Skullius moved with the light he had made before, appearing before the creature's presence again, he shuddered once more.

However, he didn't tear his eyes away from it.

A discount man who had nothing and everything to lose at the same time was a terrifying existence with an atrociously good amount of mental tenacity after all.

His eyes started to see other details he had missed before.

Wisps of darkness that were darker and thicker than the darkness in the surroundings rose from the creature's body.

Additionally, tiny spots of light were visible on the skin on its head and flesh arm!

...!

Skullius was taken aback for a moment. Did this mean that it was similar to the individuals in the hall?!

Did it have some form of skill manipulating it?

Furthermore, on top of all this, Skullius finally found what this creature was guarding.

A massive double door was behind the creature after the short flight of stairs that it sat on!

The colour of the door and the walls matched to such a scary degree, making Skullius miss it the first time, especially when his mind was occupied with panicking from the sheer difference in strength between him and his opponent.

Spiral grooves were dug into the door, spinning in a disorienting way until they reached a spherical hole in the centre.

Skullius moved the light with caution towards the door, and an important detail was revealed to him when the visibility was increased.

The grooves had faint residuals of both [Evil Darkness] and [Just Light] barely noticeable to his perception of the elements.

'Does this door lead to the legacy then?!' Skullius thought.

He took another step forward after feeling a rather faint rush of excitement in the moment, but the guardian of this door raised its head and muttered another set of incomprehensible words with a choked and cracked voice.

"Mir... asira..dekim...arlot..."

Skullius stopped as he found the creature's attention on him, its overbearing power beginning to crush him.

His body lowered and he felt weak to the point of kneeling.

He even felt the remains of the ArchLight Generation Keeper crack under the power and slowly tried to draw back.

Then, it happened.

Something that would answer one of his questions and provide him with a sense of overwhelming powerlessness.

Something began pouring out of Skullius, the Discount Human feeling a great sense of loss.

He didn't understand what it was exactly at first and made several guesses.

Mana?

Health?!

But it was none of these!

The answer was revealed by the guidance field, dealing a rather lethal mental blow to Skullius.

[You have lost a portion of 'Evil Darkness' to a Higher level existence. 'Evil Darkness' has been demoted to D rank]

[You have lost a portion of 'Just Light' to a Higher level existence. 'Just Light' has been demoted, stripped of any rank]

'...what?'

Chapter 85: The Endgame (2)

Helplessness.

Anxiety.

Rage.

These were the emotions that climbed onto Skullius when he saw the notifications.

His progress so far had been slashed apart right when he thought he was making descent progress.

Sure he had the numerous skills he had obtained, but they wouldn't be effective if he lost all his comprehension in the two elements that formed them!

"WHY?!" Skullius boomed as he subconsciously took a step back. "Why is it like this?!"

He felt the elements that left his body lessen as he distanced himself and thus he pushed himself even further back!

Even with the severe sense of weakness, Skullius wouldn't allow himself to lose so pitifully after reaching this far.

The figure in front of him did not move. It merely sat and Skullius sensed the pieces of [Just Light] and [Evil Darkness] that he had fly over to this creature and sink into its body!

Immediately after, a darker shade of the wisps that came from its body was applied to them and then... flesh began to grow from its arm to its chest!

Thin strings of dark, unhealthy flesh ran through the body of the creature and soon, half of its chest was donning the same mummy-like flesh!

The view of the creature became even more eerie now and Skullius' mind raced.

What were the implications?

What was this thing?!

He trembled.

It had just absorbed his [Evil Darkness] and [Just Light] and grown more flesh!

The darkness that he had been getting a better feel of started to behave a tad bit wonkier as it had been before the promotion of his affinity!

'What am I expected to do in this situation?' Skullius thought. 'Was this what this whole thing was about?!'

Even with his clouded mind, Skullius finally got an inkling of an idea as to why he had been given these elements after entering the Labyrinth!

It was all to... feed this thing?

The reason and the result didn't seem to match.

Was that why certain spots were designed to give him a chance to grow and gain more of this broken power?

Skullius didn't fully understand but this notion made him feel enraged.

'Still... I can't just lose it all now!'

The notification that had just appeared said that he was within range, and he began to think that it was a distance thing. At least for him.

The more he approached, the more he would lose.

Still, the creature didn't move.

Skullius didn't want to confirm this theory on what would happen if he kept getting closer.

He drew back and... sat down.

Dying was one thing, but losing what you had earned through a rather harsh journey before dying was a different matter altogether.

'I... I have no idea what I can do get past this thing... Can I even do it? All these guys failed and they probably had to higher affinities than me.'

The large door behind the creature seemed even more attractive from the clutches of darkness that Skullius hid within.

But... he couldn't get to it. Just like all those that had died around him, he yearned to see what was behind it.

A few minutes passed with Skullius sitting on the rough ground.

He finally stripped himself of the crippling sense of helplessness and decided to try a different approach.

In as much as he wanted to give up, his encounter with Somanda wasn't so attractive. Why rush to that sad ending when he could give his all here.. and then die?

'This sockethole doesn't seem to mind my presence... In that case, let's see what else I can find in this place. So far, I've only been able to get interesting things through details that others wouldn't exactly look for,' Skullius thought.

He stood up and walked over to the remnants of the different challengers.

The bones could be broken down easily as they were especially brittle, depicting the amount of time that had passed and the conditions of the space in general.

Skullius began rummaging through the old and rusted equipment as he searched for something useful.

He saw ancient swords that barely looked the part of powerful weapons and stacked them in rows depending on how trash they looked.

He did the same for all the other equipment, several pieces being arranged neatly on the ground.

'One of the perks of having to tend to the mana gems back in Deadmanland. <Sigh>. I'm suddenly beginning to miss that place,' he thought.

Skullius began to checking the stats and descriptions of the weapons and armour, founding most of them to be utterly ridiculous.

However, none of them could even be used which made Skullius deflate like a balloon. They were old and cracked, rusted and worn out.

He held one particular sword that had a golden hilt and blueish curved blade. It looked to be in the best condition out of all the other weapons.

All its beauty and power had been wasted here which made Skullius yell bone expletives at the bones he thought to belong to the owner.

Looking closely at this sword's stats, Skullius shook his head.

~~~

[Demion's Dance]

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

-Damage-

50,000-75,000

-Durability-

0/80,500

-Special Effects-

- 75% increase in speed



- 30% increase in strength

[Skill: Epic Memory]

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

---

[Skill: Irida You Whore]

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

~~~

'What a waste! I could have used this!' Skullius thought.

He caressed the sword's blade for a while before suddenly jolting up with an idea.

'What if I use Null Life Essence to take the skills that are in it?! Why didn't I think of this before?!' Skullius thought.

He immediately went to business, trying to feel for his Null Life Essence that was still a part of him even in his Discount Human form.

However, as he tried to sift it from storage to the sword, the Null Life Essence didn't budge!

Skullius was dumbfounded.

'I can't use it? Does it mean that's its an ability only available to a Boneman or a Null Lifeform. Or... right. It's a class ability for the Vehement Bone Nullmancer isn't it?'

It dawned on Skullius that he was practically two different people right now, each with its own diverse powers!

It was exciting and depressing at the same time.

He didn't want to give it up.

The [Demion's Dance] sword in his hands was a powerful tool that he wanted to use. He had thought that if he got the chance to live through this, he would use [Unbound] on it, but he was afraid that it would lose its skills and attributes.

He knew at this point in time that [Unbound] could change the durability of a weapon and alter its shape in addition to all the crazy it could do. This was normally a good thing, but in this case, it was bad. If he could manipulate [Unbound], he'd at least keep the skills.

Perhaps, he could try to manually control what he wanted to be upgraded.

'I'll have to try that.'

BOOOM!

From the wall, a massive impact made the entire large space quake!

Skullius jumped up from his position in surprise and looked to where the sound had come from.

Naturally he couldn't see anything from the darkness, but something else could.

The creature that sat by the staircase lifted its head and turned to the direction of the noise.

The sound of chunks of the wall falling could be heard as they knocked against the floor.

The creature suddenly extended its bony hand and a pillar of flame blossomed with a magnificent intensity, gushing wildly in its hand!

The flames illuminated the void and even from his distance, Skullius was forced to turn away as the flash of light from the red flames that spilled ever so often like magma was too bright.

When the flames died down, a large claymore was what remained, its appearance with a black, cross shaped hilt and a polished blade that had various cracks!

The sword's appearance made the darkness within this place shift away and Skullius, who saw and felt the blade's power couldn't help but open his eyes wide in shock!

'The amount of [Evil Darkness] in that sword is ridiculous!' he thought.

Surely, the claymore radiated vicious gusts of darkness around it.

BOOOM!

Once more, the wall was met with a frightful raw force that finally caused it to collapse and make way for a tall and thick giant!

The creature that sat upon the staircase stood and took a few steps down to reach the floor.

With each one of its movements, the darkness receded, as if making way for a king.

It swiped with its hand, making the darkness that veiled the new entrant disappear and allowing for the full view of the giant to appear.

"Aha ha. I knew it! Those with a colourless string are usually oddities that deserve attention. To think that you would actually reach this place even though you're so weak," a boisterous voice travelled a distance and slammed into Skullius' ears.

There was no need to hypothesise as Skullius felt it clearly that the individual this new challenger was talking about, was him!

'What is that? What is it talking about?' Skullius thought while backing away. He had never seen a giant before.

Sause's grinning face made him feel extremely uncomfortable as it peered through the patches of darkness between them to look at him deeply.

The giant then turned its gaze to the creature with the claymore and it turned solemn, a genuine expression of surprise and a hint of sorrow etching itself on Sause's face.

"I see," he said as he breathed a deep sigh. "This is what you became in the end... Fulgardt."

#### Chapter 86: The Endgame (3)

There were three things that influenced the concept of power in this vast cluster of worlds.

Divinity.

Direction.

Ambition.

Divinity was a thick boundary that a mortal could transcend to reach a higher form of existence. An existence that is unbound by concepts of those that lived on flat worlds.

Direction had many names. Fate. Destiny. The divine will. It was a trail that each individual was meant to follow.

The biggest question to mortals was always 'Who made my destiny or fate like this?'. The answer was simple. Too simple in fact.

Those that reached Divinity would instantly know the answer and their response to said answer was always a disappointed and hollow, 'Oh'.

Ambition was something shared by both mortals and deities. To desire. To want. To envy. To covet. This influenced power in every aspect of its meaning.

Who was more conceited and devoted to desire than the being that Sause was thinking of right now?

A walking pile of bones with a chunk of flesh covering its arm to its chest, an ugly face with hollow eyes that seemed way too deep to have been those of a mortal.

In its hand a dangerous looking claymore that threatened to cleave anything in its path.

This was indeed the remains of Fulgardt the Immoral!

'Fulgardt... to think you'd desecrate even your own corpse. You make it difficult for me to hate you for what you did to me,' Sause thought.

His eyes once more turned to Skullius who remained looking vigilantly at him, his posture giving the impression that he was ready to run at any moment.

His keen eyes caught the embers of darkness and a very faint light that rose from Skullius.

As he saw these, his eyes turned back to the creature with the claymore and he scrutinised its flesh, finding that microscopic spots of darkness and light wove into it.

His eyes also took in the skeletons of the past challengers and he reached a conclusion.

'You never change do you? Even in death. Have you been trying to bring yourself back to life? Perhaps it's not something as simple as that, seeing as there really seems to be something grand behind those doors.'

Sause's vision could see the weaving of darkness and light that was incredibly dense from the gaps between the double doors and the ground.

Something precious was definitely hidden behind them. The legacy of Fulgardt's power perhaps.

But then, something didn't add up.

All of Sause's thoughts barely lasted for five seconds.

Two figures came from the cracks of the wall and stood on either of his sides.

It was Benzard and Reon.

Reon's face showed the irritation that he felt from being used like this. Hours upon hours had passed with them looking for Skullius, Sause muttering something about a colourless string that he was following each time Reon had the free will to ask him what in the hell they were doing.

Benzard was a bit more composed, though a different light could be seen in his sugar grey eyes now.

His previous wounds had been healed and even as he donned next to no protection on his upper torso, his image was imposing nonetheless.

He had his hand on the hilt of his sword as he looked ahead, the darkness that surrounded this place reminding him of what he had left behind.

He couldn't regret it.

He wouldn't.

What he had attained... was surprisingly much better and straight forward.

Strength.

He had paid a price, but by the looks of it, obtaining Fulgardt's legacy was even more demanding.

"Young challenger," Sause suddenly spoke to Skullius with his boisterous voice. "Why don't you come here?"

Skullius' brow rose as he heard this. After having taken in Sause's image for a rather long time, he found the request unattractive.

"Thank you but no thank you, large bro," Skullius said while making a X gesture with his hands. His eyes lowered to take a glance at the third leg on Sause's body and he unconsciously shuddered.

"Hmm? It's not working," Sause mumbled to himself in surprise. He couldn't compel Skullius to do his bidding with his speech. "Is he immune? No, that's not right. Is it because of you then?"

Sause's eyes once again focused on the skeletal remains of the owner of the Labyrinth.

It must be.

He turned to Reon and said, "Raise your right hand."

Reon's right hand rose suddenly, shocking even him as he hadn't intended for it.

'It still works when I use it on them. Hmmm?'

"You realise that there is nothing for you here right, young challenger? You're just one of the many sacrifices that is needed to resurrect the Immoral himself. I assume you've at least seen a bit of what I'm talking about," Sause said to Skullius who frowned, recalling when his some of his comprehension of [Just Light] and [Evil Darkness] was taken.

"That look in your eyes tells me that you have. You see, just like cumulative mana taken from another being that has stored and personalised it, this Labyrinth lets challengers like you cultivate darkness and light before they inevitably give it up to this walking pile of bones and die. Do you wish to meet the same fate?"

Sause had analysed Benzard and Reon especially, finding that they had been granted [Evil Darkness] after entering the Labyrinth. Further questioning of these two led him to piece together what could potentially be happening, with the final piece being everything he had seen in this room which confirmed his previous inferences.

Some clarity was brought to Skullius after he heard Sause's words as it made a bit more sense now why this entire exchange of elements was happening.

But still... that didn't mean he would just switch sides.

What guaranteed that he wouldn't be killed by this giant? Wasn't this just a similar situation to when he had been taken by force to follow Benzard and his group?

Reon and Benzard wanted to kill him too and he didn't want to re-join a team made up of these people that had considered him a tool from the beginning.

He wasn't quite clear on what these two were doing with this giant, but it didn't look he would get any benefits from it.

"Once again, I'll have to say no thank you," Skullius said firmly while anticipating the worst.

No more being trampled by stronger beings.

He couldn't even sense how strong this nude giant was, but that in itself was an indication of how much it was out of his league.

Sause sighed.

"I was looking forward to seeing what makes you so unique but..." he said. "... I can't let you be more nourishment for this dead man. You two... kill him."

The order was given to Reon and Benzard to kill Skullius!

Sause had wanted to get Skullius' key to get out of the Labyrinth but the situation had changed after he saw what Fulgardt's goal was. Looking at Fulgardt's corpse also gave him an idea as he then checked Reon's body which had a very faint trace of darkness.

'Perhaps there isn't merely one way to get out of here aha ha,' Sause thought while getting a wild idea. 'Instead of this challenger, how about I let someone else receive Fulgardt's legacy.'

This was an idea indeed. There was a risk that the one to gain the legacy would be corrupted by Fulgardt's will, but Sause thought it would still be better to give it a try since he already had a hold over Reon. There was definitely a way to use the Insurgent Magnus' power to leave this place.



The young challenger seemed to be under Fulgardt's protection from compulsion. Who knew what else Fulgardt's remains would do to protect him. Therefore, he had to disposed.

Sause could own two pawns with powerful energy after returning to the world again!

Reon's body began to move on its own, his hand gripping his sword as he took large strides.

Benzard on the other hand, didn't move.

"Why don't you kill him yourself?" he asked Sause. "Surely it wouldn't take long."

"Two simple reasons. One, there's a force that's trying to expel me from this room. Only humans can inherit the legacy of Fulgardt and only they are in invited into this place. I'm using quite a bit of my strength to keep myself here," Sause explained.

Sause knew quite a bit about Fulgardt's motivations. The man wouldn't give any of his knowledge to any other race other than humans. He might have been the Immoral, but he was less so when it came to his own race.

"Two..." Sause said before he took a step forward.

The moment he did, the creature by the staircase raised its sword and pointed it at him, a rough wind beginning to blow in the entire room!

"Fulgardt valued strength. Only the strong were his opponents. The weak were existences he ignored. That's probably the reason why that young challenger is still alive. Fighting a mindless puppet packed with individual values possesses some advantages sometimes. How lucky.

Now... get killing. Be sure to show off your new tricks, my boy."

The grin on Sause's face irked Benzard who saw it from below.

He held his sword and began walking up to Skullius with a stern expression, his blue core beginning to bubble as it pumped him with mana.

The image of a shocked Skullius reflected in his eyes as he activated the strength he had inherited from a powerful giant!

#### Chapter 87: The Endgame (4)

'Are you fleshing me?' Skullius thought as he felt the two intense bursts of energy that came from Benzard and Reon.

Another conflict has risen for him and this one was especially vexing.

Reon dashed over to Skullius, covering the vast distance in a flash and swiping his sword with all his might!

The blade flickered and shone under the luminance of the golden white spots of light as it aimed for Skullius' neck, the Discount Human not being able to react to this at all!

MBING!

Reon's sword clashed against a large claymore that blocked the way, failing to kill its target!

Skullius' eyes were wide open as he only realised what had just happened a moment later!

The remains of Fulgardt had suddenly appeared, blocking Reon's sword with its own!

Skullius drew back and so did Reon as he trembled at the presence of this skeleton that exuded power like he had never felt before. It gazed at him intently with its hollow eyes and reached its hand to grab him!

"How about I be your opponent?" Sause said from a distance, his body beginning to radiate a powerful surge of mana but produced a red glow which drove away the darkness and light!

The creature that had been about to attack Reon stopped and turned its head to the giant, its figure flickering like a dying light and appearing before the giant with the claymore clutched in one of its hands, raising it high!

Sause grinned.

His body bulged, thick vessels growing to become visible from his flesh.

His red eyes became even more menacing and he prepared to tank the attack of his foe.

The claymore came down and when it did...

Darkness and Light sped towards the sword as it sliced through the air, merging with its blade to replace the dark grey shade of the metal with a strange mash of bright and dark that couldn't be explained with mere words!

Sause who had convinced himself that he was prepared for this attack was shocked as he, who was on the receiving end, felt the full suffocating pressure of the attack as it blinded him with both darkness and light!

What followed was a phenomenon that noone expected!

The ground rumbled from the force, the power released being enough to push Reon, Skullius and Benzard from the ground involuntarily and then be struck by a storm of darkness and light that blew them to the other side of the large room!

All three knocked against the sturdy walls with Skullius feeling the shock in his body that fractured his bones!

Reon gritted his teeth as he remained lodged in the wall while Benzard had a thin layer of deep red that traced his body as he stuck to the wall, a dent with his shape around him as well.

The scene before the three was catastrophic as half of the place was obliterated, the once sturdy floor having large blocks that protruded out of it, dust rising upwards!

Ahead, the skeleton that guarded the spiral groves door was in its stance, the sword that had just slashed everything to heck oozing of mana while everything in front it save for one thing was demolished!

Rubble cluttered while what had been firm structure were ground to dust, such as the walls and everything that had made up the next room!

The bulky figure of Sause stood with its arms crossed, a shallow wound trailing from his forehead his abdomen.

Blood was leaking from this cut, but Sause didn't seem to mind.

The awe he felt was unveiled through the shining of his eyes and the wide smile he wore.

He had successfully defended, but just barely.

The attack packed a lot of the power that Fulgardt had created for himself.

[Evil Darkness] and [Just Light].

'Aha ha. This is intense. I can tell this is nowhere near as strong as Fulgardt. Even this darkness and light is an imitation of the real thing. This corpse can probably only use the two elements as its power. This still begs the question of whether or not Fulgardt really intended to hand over his power to someone else.

I can't even sense mana from his bones. Could he have...? Anyway, I should focus on stalling for those brats to do their job,' Sause thought before he suddenly threw a jab punch at Fulgardt's bones!

The punch left white after-images as it sped, reaching the way shorter figure of Fulgardt which raised its sword and held it vertically to defend!

BOOOOM!

The ground once again jumped from the power exhibited by Sause, but the claymore in the Fulgardt's hands didn't budge under the impact, defending its wielder perfectly!

'Fascinating. That's not even your weapon of choice, Fulgardt! You truly intended for someone to inherit your legacy after all, didn't you?!' Sause mused.

On the other end, Skullius pulled himself from the wall and landed on the ground.

He saw the battle that was taking place a distance away through the gaps in the darkness that remained after the remains of Fulgardt had drawn a huge chunk of it all and used it in that fearsome attack.

As Fulgardt was preoccupied with Sause, Skullius saw the unguarded double doors to what was probably the legacy that he had resigned to grab for himself and get the heck out of here!

There it was.

Only a few seconds away and waiting for him to take it!

Skullius suddenly bolted towards the doors at full speed, using every ounce of strength he could find!

He even pumped mana from his white core and into his body to increase his speed and the result was a significant boost to his agility!

The door with spiral grooves came into view, becoming bigger and bigger as he Skullius got closer!

'Almost...!' Skullius pumped himself up as he reached out his hand to the floor.

This had to be it!

The reward for his suffering, endurance and tolerance to everything that had happened in this place!

It had to be him to get one over these fiends that had brought him here!

As he climbed up the staircase, faith brimming in his core, the hairs on Skullius' cosmetic body rose, a bright flash of light along with a electric noise resounding in his ears!

Skullius didn't dare to turn around as he kept his eyes on the prize.

BZZZZT! BZZZZT!

Thick bolts of lightning razed the floor and ceiling as they rampaged!

They lit up the doors and pushed away the darkness with their eerie red saturation that made the immediate surroundings look like they were dyed in blood!

Skullius found himself unable to move forward as streaks of lightning ran along his body, a crisp sound along with billows of smoke rising from his flesh!

Benzard's sword had penetrated his back, coming out from his chest as it released squirming bursts of lightning that began to fry Skullius!

The Discount Human saw his skin ignite, darkening as the heat brought by the red lightning tore away its natural colour and lively appearance!

"I'm afraid your role ends here," Benzard said, his voice being monotone and devoid of sympathy.

A tattoo ran along the left side of his face to the hand that held onto his the sword which he held his sword with.

The power of the class he had received had finally shown itself, taking to its first victim!

Chapter 88: The Endgame (5)

BZZZT! BZZZT!

Raging red bolts of lightning roiled around within Skullius' cosmetic body and he felt that they would detonate his body at any moment!

Just when he was so close, he was held back again!

His body was lit on fire, beginning to break down while Skullius ground his teeth. Though he couldn't feel the pain from the flesh, the sheer odds stacked against him threatened to bring his will down!

'Not yet! NOT YET!' Skullius growled in his mind as he then brought his thoughts together to find a solution.

"Luminous Healing!" he yelled.

A stream of rejuvenating energy coursed through Skullius' body as he activated the skill he had taken after defeating Dezrael!

Skullius felt the relaxing energy that gushed into him absorb mana from his core crazily and when it exhausted his current supply, he pulled on the mana from the ArchLight Generation Keeper!

His body that had been giving out began to pull itself together, the reddening and cracking that had been evident vanishing as the skill battled against the damage that the lightning inflicted!

Luminous Healing would continue to heal Skullius as long as he kept giving it mana!

If he stopped even for a moment, not only would his body break down again, but that would incite the cooldown to take effect!

However...

'This isn't enough!' Skullius thought as he prepared his next move.

Benzard who had thought that this would be an easy kill was surprised to see Skullius' body recovering, battling against his lightning!

'Still putting up a fight, huh? I respect that. I'll just have to... hmmm?'

From the human that was impaled by his sword, facing the doors ahead, Benzard saw his recovering hand turn in his direction, palm open wide as in the next moment, a purplish orange tint battled against the prevailing red to bring forth a large fireball!

Skullius' head had turned back to this man with the eerie red tattoo and he wore a determined face while activating his only fire type skill!

[Bitter-Sweet Hell's Inferno!]

Skullius unleashed the roaring flame, but didn't aim for Benzard directly.

He aimed at the man's feet, recalling how Eldris had shrugged off the flame easily in Fulgardt's Hall!

His intent was to provide some cover for himself to reach the door instead!

The ball of fire produced a profound heat and light as soon as it reached Benzard's feet, a resplendent explosion consuming both men!

Flames roared and a light resounding tremor ensued!

Skullius jumped out of the explosion, the ArchLight Generation Keeper having protected him from the flame that was most definitely weaker than Benzard's lightning at this moment!

The Discount Human leapt towards the doors, his non-existent heart beating as he had almost reached his goal!

YET!

BZZT!

The ground trembled, a quaking that made even the double doors vibrate occurring as a bolt of lightning as thick as a human arm aimed itself at Skullius!

Skullius saw a brighter tinge of red coming from behind and the panic he felt was unmatched!

His mind used up every single point of intelligence it could muster to think of a solution but its computing power wasn't faster than lightning!

The bright lightning flashed and blasted against Skullius, the ArchLight Generation Keeper only being able to hold for a few brief moments before the Discount Human it protected lost his leg and part of his torso!



They disintegrated under the majesty of the blood coloured lightning, the remains of Skullius smashing hard against the doors and falling down the stairs with the same grace as that of a brick!

Fizzy 'blood' tried to sprinkle from the charred and severed parts of Skullius but ultimately failed as even the helmet that Skullius donned began to fall apart.

The Discount Human had a single arm left, with a full leg gone, the other being burnt to a crisp.

The ArchLight Generation Keeper barely had any points of durability left, with each decrease coming a fall in a portion of its defence.

Benzard emerged from the remnants of the flames, his figure covered by a red film of energy that outlined his shape.

He looked at the pitiful image of Skullius that tried to get up. The Discount Human tried to lift himself up but unfortunately, his limbs couldn't handle it.

Luminous Healing had begun its cooldown the moment there wasn't anything left to heal.

He rolled and leaned against the double doors.

From under them, he felt powerful wisps of darkness and light that resonated with him, seeming more powerful than the darkness he had seen so far.

He had wondered what was so special about [Evil Darkness] as it was what he was most familiar with.

What it could do was still a vague area for him and the wisps he felt on the other side of these doors seemed to hold the answer.

Unfortunately, it didn't seem like he would get the chance to know what truly was [Evil Darkness] and [Just Light].

Benzard stared down at Skullius, Reon coming to stand beside him.

"I didn't think you had such power all this time. You had us fooled," Benzard said.

"I already assumed the worst after we split up but I have to ask. What became of Denille or Irlen?" Reon asked while raising his sword.

He was still under the compulsion to kill Skullius, but he still asked as he wanted to know.

Benzard couldn't bring himself to ask. It had seemed exceedingly strange that Skullius was running around alone this whole time, but he had his fair share of troubles that weighed on him to bother asking about it.

Reon however, bothered to inquire.

He felt no pity for Skullius, as even while under another being's control, his eyes showed his indifference at killing Skullius.

The Discount Human's damaged face looked up at Reon.

The question that had been posed to him made him recall that hateful woman whom he wanted to kill eventually and an emotion welled up in him.

He had reached this fore warned event.

Another point where his life was to be snuffed out by stronger beings who saw him as nothing more than a pawn, however...

Why would he tell these guys any good news about Denille or Irlen?

Why would he provide any comfort or closure to the people who wanted to kill him?

Just like he had done when they had asked about Eobald's fate, Skullius' nature burned with a desire to give them one last flesh you.

He wished Denille had met the most cruel death by his bony hands but the least he could do was fabricate one and hope that these two would find sorrow in it.

"Kek... right. I watched her get fleshed up. She was turned inside out... crying and screaming for Eobald... hehe.

But honestly, I just wish that..."

Reon's face scrunched up while Benzard frowned slightly from hearing Skullius words.

However, that wasn't all.

An ominous air coiled around Skullius as he continued to speak.

"... [THE SAME WOULD HAPPEN TO YOU]..."

Chapter 89: The Endgame (6)

A minute before...

Bright flashes popped in and out of existence with each exchange between Sause and the skeleton of Fulgardt!

Sause made sure to lead the troublesome bones away from the two that he had assigned to kill Skullius!

The remains of Fulgardt were quite powerful, the sword that they wielded giving Sause a run for his money. Ever since he had awakened, he found himself to be restrained.

He couldn't exhibit much of his strength and he often found that wherever the darkness gathered, he had to blow it away, otherwise he'd constantly feel weakened.

His transcendence above the normal threshold of power in the world was what allowed him to achieve this feat as even though the darkness and light he had found so far was merely a downgraded version of the one that Fulgardt used in his life, it was still an extraordinary power!

A bright red energy enveloped Sause, shielding him from a dangerous slash that came from the claymore his foe held!

Unfortunately, everything behind him shuddered and broke down from the one handed slash that had been dishd out by Fulgardt!

Sause kept his eyes on Fulgardt, but in the next moment, the skeleton vanished from his sight and appeared above, darkness being pulled to his sword and changing its form into a larger, dark bastard sword that it swung with an untraceably fast movement!

Sause's senses flared as he sensed danger but he didn't dodge!

He couldn't!

The red energy gathered onto his hands that he then crossed to receive the impact!

A clash of red and black reverberated in the air, causing the world to become warped for a few moments, Sause finding himself being crushed under the weight of the force of the blow!

BAAAM!

He kneeled, the ground under him breaking down as the force he took on was too much for the furnished rock to handle!

'So much for gaining a chance at divinity by sharing my strength. Though, I have to admit that I wouldn't have been able to last this long if I hadn't. I'll give my thanks to Benzard later,' said Sause as he revealed the reason why he had given Benzard a portion of his strength. However, this would only become relevant only in the future.

"Why are you doing this, Fulgardt? Your conflicting actions don't make any sense," Sause said as he felt the weight of the massive, eerie sword that overlapped over Fulgardt's claymore increase!

"Ah... mieji...os..kateh.. umhie....slahet iminar... ivetuka... aik..bir..." the unsightly remains of the Immoral uttered with a broken voice.

...!

Sause's eyes opened wide.

He couldn't believe what he had heard. This corpse had uttered words. Comprehensible words that he understood.

However, it wasn't talking to him. It merely recited what it was supposed to.

" 'Even in death, a powerful will should rise... I am not done nor am I gone. I still have business with them that...' " Sause interpreted what Fulgardt had said.

"It's incomplete...urgh.." Sause said with a heavy grunt, his muscles bulging as he struggled to withstand the force from the bastard sword of darkness. "Unfortunately I can't wait for you to tell me your entire will. Nor will allow you to fulfill it. We've had one Immoral too many. There's no need for another! At least one that I don't already have a grasp over!

RAAAR!"

The red energy around Sause bubbled and expanded with his roar, bursting out and pushing against Fulgardt's assault just enough for him to roll over and evade its eventual continuity!

Once more, the ground shuddered under the force but Sause had already retreated.

He was preparing to counter when something caused his skin to crawl!

The darkness around the room rushed towards a certain place, flowing with a tremendous speed as if it was being sucked into a drain!

Sause turned while in utter shock as a sensation he was very familiar with followed after this peculiar occurrence!

A power he knew of too well.

His eyes focused onto the figure of Skullius that was leaning against the double doors in the distance, awaiting Reon's sword to put it out of its misery!

"|...THE SAME WOULD HAPPEN TO YOU...|"

Darkness rushed into Skullius' mouth as he spoke as if to carry his words, empowering them!

In the next moment, under the shocked gazes of Reon and Benzard, the same darkness shot out of Skullius' mouth and assaulted them like a tidal wave!

"NO!" Sause barked with an unsightly expression as he extended his large hand towards Benzard, the red energy that surrounded him bursting from him and gushing through the air to reach Benzard in a flash before he could be completely covered by the darkness!

The two disappeared in the onslaught of darkness under the surprised gaze of Skullius.

"EEEEEEEEEEAAAAAHHHHH!" a horrifying screech was heard from the darkness as someone yelled at the top of their lungs!

The darkness suddenly withdrew, seemingly absorbed into something.

That something happened to be Reon, darkness speedily sinking into his body to enact a tragic and terrible command!

FKKKKKSHHHH!

A terrifying scene appeared next, Reon's body tearing itself open to reveal all the organs that he had within!

His body warped as bloody flesh and dripping innards wiggled, shifting continuously whilst Reon's eyes popped from his 'face'!

His entire body floated in mid-air, the fleshy noises that it made as it adjusted itself making Benzard who was at the side with a horrified expression, tremble and move back!

A thick film of red energy had warded away the darkness that had almost done the same thing it was doing to Reon, to him!

As he looked at his comrade who had turned inside out, his eye couldn't help steal a glance at Skullius, his mind beginning to wonder just what on earth was going on with this weak human he looked down on!

Mana gushed from Skullius' armour as it supported the atrocity that was happening to Reon!

The man's body splattered on the ground, not a trace of his armour or skin visible at all; only flowing blood, flesh and organs that continuously twitched remaining in view!

Skullius was genuinely shocked, his body going on to convulse as his mind began ringing and causing him immense pain!

He didn't even intend for [Pseudo Evil Veneration] to activate. He had merely wanted to spite these two men by giving them no closure yet...

He had taken out one of them!

[You have killed a Higher level existence, LV12 Human. You have gained experience]

[150,000 Exp awarded]

[Your prey emits the Essence of Null Life. Would you like to extract it? Remaining time 59 seconds]

'Right... I'm not done yet!' Skullius held onto his sanity while trembling as he then looked at the bewildered Benzard who looked at him as if he was seeing a demon.

Now was the chance he had!

Against the pain, he had to make the most of his chance!

From the moment he had seen the doors that he was currently leaning against, he felt the embers of the elements [Evil Darkness] and [Just Light] on the spiral grooves.

To Skullius, it seemed like a hint for what he had to do to open the door.

Even though he hadn't tried opening it, he had a feeling that pushing and grunting wasn't the way to make it reveal what was hidden behind it!

Thus... he pushed himself to focus!

Even as he felt a flaring pain that threatened to cripple his mind, he knew that it was all or nothing.

[Basic Evil Weaving!]

The Discount Human activated a skill geared towards moulding [Evil Darkness] to his will.

The surrounding patches of darkness were drawn to him as he pulled on them, finding it to not be easy, especially when his body and mind were rebelling against him.

Yet, he pushed on!

Light was even more difficult to focus on.

The spots of light that were around the room didn't seem to respond to him as his comprehension had dipped!

He tried to focus on the closest spot of light that was around two meters away but it seemed too distant for his influence to grab its attention!

'COME ON!' Skullius pleaded.

Sause tore himself out of his stupor.



'That was definitely a Veneration art! A verbal one at that! How in the world did this little one get his hands on it, much less use it?!' he wondered as his mind was still under immense shock.

Sause saw the darkness that was converging around Skullius. He didn't know what this human was about to do next and didn't intend to find out.

If he lost his investment in Benzard now then...

"Don't just stand there! Kill him!" Sause barked at Benzard.

Benzard shook himself from the terror he felt and wielded his sword.

His body blazed with a fearsome aura and he didn't hold back!

"Full Body Aura!" he spoke, trying to dispel the phenomenal fear he felt towards Skullius at this moment.

Lightning danced around him, spewing like waves to cover a distance of four meters, a circular cage being formed by the vicious element around him and Skullius!

Skullius' eyes opened wide as he felt the bubbling energy. Something was strange about this guy and his power. It seemed to constantly be growing without pause.

Benzard's sword became tinged with a blood red hue as he prepared to attack with everything he had.

He wouldn't underestimate an opponent like this!

Skullius found pulling the spot of light extraordinarily difficult and it didn't seem like he had the years needed for his affinity to [Just Light] to grow sufficiently!

In a last ditch effort, he used [Basic Evil Weaving] to push forward a plume of darkness to wrap around the spot of light and pull it towards himself!

At the same time, Benzard's sword came down, flashing with hundreds of bolts of lightning that began to assault Skullius before the sword even touched him!

The darkness with the spot of light in tow reached Skullius' charred hand and the Discount Human didn't waste time, pushing both the plume of darkness and spot of light against the door's grooves!

Immediately, the two unique elements ran along the spiral grooves in harmony, quickly covering the entire spiral way and reached the centre of the door but...

Benzard's sword reached Skullius' head, the Discount Human's auburn hair being ignited and his skin turning into crisps as a prelude before the bright red blade descended with the intent to erase every speck of his existence!

Chapter 90: Benefit Times Benefactor!

A massive eruption of mana and lightning ensued, consuming the ground, staircase and all but ultimately being unable to move or scratch the double doors!

Only a dark patch could be seen after highly concentrated lightning had slammed towards Benzard's target.

The man with a tattoo on his face frowned as his apprehension told him that he....had failed.

Even if the attack he used wouldn't have permitted anything of Skullius to remain, he wasn't convinced that he had snuffed out the Discount Human's life.

Sause who was staring down at the figure of Fulgardt while paying attention to Benzard's actions wore an unsightly expression.

'Unbelievable. He managed to squeak through right before he was decimated by the attack,' he thought as his eyes vigilantly kept glaring at the stationary pile of bones before him.

Ever since Skullius had used [Pseudo Evil Veneration], Fulgardt had stopped attacking, muttering his broken sentences of incomprehensible words continuously.

'Since it has come to this, let's see what will emerge.'

\*\*\*

Skullius' eyes had been blinded by the bright flash of light along with the sudden pulling sensation he had experienced right before he was about to annihilated!

It was like he had just phased through the double doors and appeared on the other side after he had injected the portions of [Evil Darkness] and [Just Light] into the groves on the doors.

'I... made it?' he thought in disbelief.

It seemed unreal.

That last exchange had been a really scary one, challenging his ability to continue fighting both mentally and physically.

Even now, the pounding of his mind was evident as the after effects of using [Pseudo Evil Veneration] were still lingering.

'Inside out... kek... that was a good one,' Skullius gave a short internal laugh after recalling what he had said about Denille.

Inside out was actually another game that he used to play with his fellow gravemen in Deadmanland.

Since undead like him had nothing to hide, being essentially 'see through' so to speak, they had a kick out of making fun of each others' insides and outsides, the main topics of comparison being mana cores and bone toughness as well as bone frame.

Skullius always took pride in his larger mana core that he had pumped mana into for mana years but his physique had been severely lacking.

When he first saw living creatures after arriving in Aigas, he had gotten the thought about how funny it would be if all these creatures who had fragile insides would have to live with their insides and outsides exposed.

To them who could actually feel pain, it would no doubt be horrendously painful, which is why he had used it as a flesh you to both Benzard and Reon.

Skullius tried to raise himself up, but his missing limbs refused to make his wish a reality.

His head was half roasted, his hair burnt up while his skin was blackened by Benzard's attack.

Streaks of lightning had carved into his torso, dealing massive amounts of damage that wouldn't be getting healed anytime soon.

If Skullius had the ability to feel pain, he would have long died by now.

~~~

[ Name : None ]

[ Level : 1 ]

[ Experience : 1000/1000, <Pending Task> ]

[ Class : None ]

[ Race : Discount Human ]

[ Inv. Status : Still doomed ×2, Cursed ]

-----

[ Stats ]

[ Strength : 110 ]

[Agility : 10 ]

[ Intelligence : 40 ]

[ Endurance : 45 ]

[ Luck : Atrocious? ]

-----

[ Health : 1/199 ]

-----

[ Mana : 255/255 ]

-----

[ Skills ]

[ Basic Mana Manipulation | Lv.14 ]

[ Greater Communication | Lv.2 ]

[ Flesh It Like You Mean It | Lv. 1 ]

[ Bitter-Sweet Hell's Inferno | Lv. 3 ]

[ Artless Dodger | Lv. 1 ]

[ Mana Bolt | Lv. 4 ]

[ Null Extraction ]

[ Basic Evil Weaving | Lv.1 ]

[ Basic Evil Invasion | Lv.1 ]

[ Basic Evil Sanction (Special) | Lv.1 ]

<Arts>

[ Pseudo Evil Veneration (1%) ]

<Oddities>

[ Luminant Seed (Dormant) ]

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[ Affinities ]

[ Evil Darkness - D ]

[ Just Light ]

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'My stats have really grown but...' Skullius lamented, cutting off the tormenting thoughts he had.

Now that there didn't seem to be a threat on its way, Skullius took in the view of this place without worry.

Surprisingly, it wasn't as big as the previous room.

Unlike the other rooms where thick darkness pervaded, that wasn't the case here.

Skullius could see a stone tiled floor and immaculately carved walls that had strange markings inscribed on them.

These were similar to the ones he had seen when he had tried to read using his affinity to [Evil Darkness] and gained [Pseudo Evil Veneration]!

Spots of extremely bright light lit up the room, giving a vastly more powerful and concentrated vibe than the ones he had seen outside.

In the corner of the room were two chests that looked to be made of a rather rare and tough wood, one in a golden colour white the other was in a black one.

A pedestal sat in the middle of the room, a cluster of these bright golden white light spots revolving around it while the thing atop gave out ferocious waves of darkness that travelled in strips, being so thick and dense that wherever they passed, they temporarily discoloured the items in their path.

'Woow... what the heck is that?!' Skullius thought as he set his sight on the object that sat upon the pedestal, releasing powerful bursts of darkness.

He was drawn to it.

His eyes couldn't tear themselves away from it.

It was all too beautiful and mesmerising for Skullius to simply give a casual glance.

An ethereal mark danced atop the pedestal, moving this way and that but within the confines of the space on the circular pedestal, its quick movement within centimeters worth of distance being like that of a dragonfly.

It was shaped like a dark flower with a bright golden cross that oozed of smoke-like essence!

Skullius didn't know if it could be touched but he wanted to try it anyway.

He inched his way towards it, pushing himself against the ground as he reached the pedestal after a full minute.

He ignored the blinding light spots and gazed at the ethereal flower shaped mark.

A sense of apprehension gripped him for a moment and he debated whether or not to go through with this.

'Just like that? No more atrocious surprises? Nothing?' he thought as he looked around.

'Ah, flesh it! Let's get this over with!'

Skullius reached out his hand, grabbing the ethereal mark!

As soon as his burnt fingers touched the thing above the pedestal, the blinding lights and darkness raced towards him with a ravenous ferocity!

Within one mere moment, Skullius was bombarded by two vicious powers that threatened to consume his entire being.

However, would he let that happen after all he had done to reach this place?

Heck no!

He gritted his teeth as he felt a majestic presence settle into his body and cover it with two unique powers.

A flurry of notifications blasted Skullius' vision thereafter!

[Congratulations, you have inherited the legacy of 'Fulgardt the Immoral' along with his will]

[You have gained the hidden class, 'Insurgent Magnus']



[You are rebellious and haughty, mighty and proud, transcendent and domineering]

[You have taken up the power of a legend who died before his story ended. You shall finish his story]

[A remnant of Fulgardt is engraved into you permanently]

Skullius felt a ridiculous surge of energy descend upon him with insane boons flowing into with another light show.

[+100 Mana]

[+50 Strength]

[+50 Agility]

[+50 Intelligence]

[Evil Darkness has been fully awakened within you]

[Just Light has been fully awakened within you]

[You have received the following skills....]

"Ohohohoho!" Skullius joyfully giggled as he saw the notifications pouring in.

He couldn't wait to see what new skills he'd get.

Yet...

[Interruption detected...]

"WHAT?!" Skullius yelled in fear, his one hand quickly checking if the ArchLight Generation Keeper had finally given out but that didn't seem to be the case.

[The skill 'Flesh It Like You Mean It' has timed out – 00:00:00]

[You will now revert back to 'Null Lifeform (Boneman)']

'Wait... but.. my skills! Let me see my new skills at least dammit! Why now?! Gah...

I really miss my real form though!' Skullius felt conflicted.

He welcome his Boneman form as the cosmetic flesh turned into fleshy balls that receded, being replaced by a tall foggy grey skeleton with blazing blue flames in its socket.

The remains of the ArchLight Generation Keeper seemed to fit Skullius' Boneman form more than his Discount Human form, the only downside being the missing arm.

'Right? I lost this to that sockethole,' Skullius thought as he appreciated his form nonetheless.

He felt the power of darkness and light be replaced by the power of Null Life and a tinge of happiness cascaded into full blown joy.

However, even with this, it didn't seem like his boons had ended yet.

[You have broken past many hurdles and reached LV10. You are now able to evolve into the First Tier of power. Do you accept?]

"Oh! Right!" Skullius remembered that he was already legible to become a Tier 1.

Finally!

"Yes! Let's do it! It better be worth it!"

Unlike the extravagant light show that had occurred when Skullius had received the Insurgent Magnus class, a tranquil yet vast energy enveloped Skullius' consciousness and for a moment, he felt like he had been put to sleep, his vision darkening.

His vision became clear in the next moment, a rather blurry image appearing before him. He once again felt like he was a body less consciousness that floated aimlessly in the middle of nowhere.

Before him was a gigantic sphere with different shades of blue.

None of the details were exactly clear but he could see a myriad of things that moved despite the deep blurring.

'What is this place? Did the evolution fail?' Skullius thought to himself, beginning to think that he had somehow died and ended up in a weird place like Somanda's Hall of ice!

"No, it did not," a feminine voice responded to Skullius' thoughts.

Skullius turned in all directions as he sought to find the source of the voice.

A small flickering blue flame appeared before his sight, dancing slowly before the massive sphere that Skullius couldn't see clearly.

"It's good to finally have a chance to speak to you, Skullius," the voice continued, coming from the small flame.

Skullius was beyond confused.

"Uh... who are you?" he asked.

"I... am Serenity."