

Undead 861

Chapter 861: Loosening Up! (4)

The uncaring bolt of concentrated Levin saw the large vessel that had been populated by tens of powerful experts before they met a swift demise, cry amid the swirling waves, and dip from the middle!

Everything was turned bright again, with barely any visibility afforded, especially for one of the two currently being smitten by the ferocious attack!

The vessel buckled, overwhelmed.

In all truth, the great ships provided by the Emissary were excellent vessels with incredible defensive properties.

The umbrella-shaped shield over the deck was resilient to attacks, and Replicus had theorized that it would take at least several seconds for the CURRENT Titan World Storm to break through it, time he didn't have when facing an Incandescent Stager.

Therefore, when he changed the target of the Titan World Storm to himself – his location on the enemy ship – he impressively created a pathway that bypassed the shield entirely, using a continuous activation of Spatial Lightning and Stagnant Space!

Visible now – to those with keen sight – the umbrella-shaped glow over the ship was still intact, though below and under it, was a dark void that let through the blast of Levin!

This method was also the reason why Pherdanta had appeared on the enemy's ship unnoticed.

The blonde Incandescent Stager screamed at the top of his lungs as his armour was destroyed; first torn and then superheated into liquid!

It barely lasted four seconds under the electric onslaught!

The woman in the glass armour would have loved to yell for her master and teleport to his location with the properties of her armour, but her position had become jumbled when the ship was smitten

by the Titan World Storm. She didn't know which way was where, and who was what, and the bright highlights only made things worse.

Pherdanta was different though.

Even with the discombobulation of sight and sound, and sensation, she could sense her master, after all, her armour was made by him and several of its functions made it easier for her to find him, like Limited Granted Warp.

Even without this, her mana manipulation allowed her to pinpoint where the Levin was hitting the hardest.

And right there...

"I direct the storm. Where the Levin hits is where I am, and where I am, is where the enemy is..." Replicus had said.

Which meant...

Pherdanta packed her large sword in the sheath on her waist, and pointed her hand towards the fierce downpour.

Two of her fingers pointed in that direction, and then she cried:

"Aggrante!"

Unlike before... unlike a mere Singlefold Aggrante, the might behind the Doublefold variant demanded Pherdanta to have a firm centre of gravity, otherwise she would be blown away by the force.

She did this to the best of her ability, but the thick laser which blasted violently from the ends of her index and middle fingers, its glaring light giving a dark contrast to the surroundings, was unbelievably ruthless!

It disintegrated the deck, everything under it, the barrier above it, and the glass armour adorning beauty who was unlucky enough to be in its way as it then smashed through the pillar of Levin!

Yet...

Also lost in the bright cast of the Levin was Grim, who was gliding over the waters a bit far from the blonde Incandescent Stager's great ship.

He pointed his fingers at the location he had been told, his two fingers outstretched towards it, and yelled:

"Aggrante!"

The white-haired Unlimited was sent surfing on the curling waves, but he maintained the direction of the tubular laser that spilled with immense force from his fingers!

"ARRRRGGGGGHHHH!"

An agonising scream was drowned in the onslaught.

Where the pillar from the dark skies met two others droning from opposite sides, the blonde-haired expert's skin began to burn furiously, his sides getting eaten away rapidly.

A failing cerulean neon glow was stuck to his body, helplessly fragmenting because of the two Aggrantes in particular!

The pain was atrocious.

The man could barely think.

The only reason he was still alive was because his Stage enhanced his physical prowess immensely.

Yet that was barely doing him any good.

The one stuck behind him on the other hand, Bright Storm... had sustained no damage whatsoever.

Neither the Levin, nor the Aggrantes could harm him.

The blonde-haired man couldn't see it, but he was standing back to back with a dark skeleton decked in furious storm clouds, for Replicus had removed his armour, which was susceptible to damage, unlike his body.

How could Levin harm the Titan World Storm Penetrator, the greatest in the Penetrator series at handing Levin?

How could Null Life Essence and mana fused together harm a Null Lifeform with impeccable control over both?!

Replicus turned over his shoulder.

'I didn't think it'd kill him immediately, but he's way more resilient than I thought. And he only has a blue core...' he thought.

Unfortunately, his expenditure was already tremendous, especially with the 'cheating' he had employed with a skill above his current level mana-wise.

Therefore...

The brilliant glow from the Titan World Storm vanished abruptly. A moment after it did, Pherdanta and Grim stopped firing Aggrante.

"When I stop, you do too, and retreat, regardless of the result," Replicus had told them.

And thus, they vanished from their positions.

Replicus donned his armour in an instant and turned behind him.

He and the blonde-haired expert were now submerged in the ocean, as the waters began to rise up again.

The latter looked absolutely pitiful.

His arms were reddish black, burnt blood and bone and destroyed flesh showing from them. Both his sides were open, giving a glimpse of what was inside him, a lot of which was locked under the white hue of mana.

The man's head rose. His face looked a lot less damage, but his lustrous hair was mostly gone.

A dark, murderous look spawned in his eyes as he looked up at the Penetrator.

Replicus snorted audibly, even within the water.

"Let's end this elsewhere, shall we?" he said.

Without warning, the waters beside the blonde-haired Faction leader bubbled, making way for something that emerged among them.

It was a ball of darkness as large as the blonde-haired man!

...!!!

Before he could even attempt to comprehend what this was, the blonde-haired expert felt a force so vicious that it pushed him away from the bone, blood and skin!

In a blink, he was rattled to find himself hundreds of meters from the closing whirlpool, skidding over the surface of the water!

"What was that?" he thought with dread while gathering his wits.

The attacks he had received so far were impossible to block with Perfect Aura.

Mobilising his Nitros by converting his mana hadn't been something he could do while receiving those brutal attacks, but now...

A white glow, like a solid shade of paint wrapped around the man as he sweated profusely, starting from his head and legs.

But...

BOOOOOOOM!

A fraction of a moment later, a staggering force caused the oceans to churn and quake, as though a whole whale had dove into them from the skies!

The blonde-haired Incandescent Stager shook.

A fist with stars over it had sunk into his chest right before the rest of his body could be covered by Nitros.

"That will do," Replicus said, his horned helmet pressing against the blonde-haired Incandescent Stager's, shocked, pale face.

The man looked down at his chest.

How in the world had he been done in by a single punch?

An Incandescent Stager dying by physical assault from someone weaker?

That was unheard of!

With his eyes bulging, the man attempted to mutter something while raising his hands to lock them together.

"Ma...maj..Maje..."

However...

"That won't do."

The same odd force the Faction leader felt in the waters from the large orb that appeared beside him, ripped apart his organs from the inside, beginning with his punctured heart... and then everything else.

Chapter 862: Sage Save, Sage Strain

Replicus appeared aboard his ship.

A deep sigh sounded from behind his helmet.

The experience from moments ago had been rather interesting, not to mention rewarding.

It was immensely pleasing to see the glowing notification before his eyes, which told of how much he had subtracted from the vast pool of required cumulative mana experience for Tier 4.

Replicus had earned 35,000 EXP from this single kill!

Thud.

The body of said kill fell with a muffled thump from his hand, slumping lifelessly on the deck. Everyone looked at it; Grim with a grin, Allora with bright mana-livid eyes, and Pherdanta with the expected stoic calm.

Araeyn had no immediate reaction, and Baddan, who was standing in the middle of the deck, controlling the ship, took a simple glance at the corpse before going back to staring at the oceans beyond.

"Easy work," Grim said enthusiastically.

"Don't say that!" Allora rebuked. "This was only thanks to the boss' carefully planning."

Grim scoffed.

"If planning was all it took to take down an Incandescent Stager, they would be a lot rarer than they are now," he said.

Replicus shook his head.

"We're far from done. Don't let your guard down," he said, and looked past the glow around the deck.

As the ocean was turning steady again, the fleet of ships had returned to sailing forward, though in a more haphazard formation than before.

The skies were starting clear, bringing back to mind the idea that the day was yet to fail for the night to come.

Pherdanta paid keen attention to the other ships' behaviour.

"Looks like no one is that rattled by the storm, huh? Typical," Replicus said, as though Reading Pherdanta's thoughts. "Or maybe they are aiming for a surprise attack once we relax?"

Pherdanta turned to him.

"I'm more worried about the Bishop, master. You may have just excited her with the light show," she said.

"Probably," Replicus chuckled. "That 'lightshow' was to attract anyone other than her and Eaniss though. I'm sure a few are going to fall for it, thinking it was meant to be something other than a supplementary attack to a very specific situation."

In short, while [Titan World Storm] was a very powerful skill, Replicus had decided to use it now rather than to save it for later because, first and foremost, he didn't know if it would work as well with what the conditions would turn out to be like the further they went past the Central Boundary.

There was also the fact that its effectiveness on some of the more renown Incandescent Stagers would basically be non-existent for a plethora of reasons.

Lastly, was the fact that [Titan World Storm] was a very good tool when it came to raw showmanship, and making a spectacle that caused the eruption of an all out battle would be very exciting, not to mention unnecessarily epic.

That said, what Replicus had shown of the [Titan World Storm], was nowhere near its full prowess. It barely counted as half of the skill's strength.

Replicus had to 'cheat' just to activate it, and this 'cheat', was through [Sorcery of Essence]'s subskills [Sage Save], and [Sage Strain].

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[Sorcery of Essence (Special) | Lv.8]

All standard forms of energy and essence are brought to submission by the user's will, as their concentration, pattern and properties are exploited fully to achieve various incredibly complex commands that mirror what the user desires.

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-Passive-

- All external forms of energy and essence automatically become richer and more potent when the user draws them, giving a 10% efficiency to what the user utilises them for.

- All internal forms of energy and essence are enriched by 120%.

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-Active-

[Sage Save]:-

Once activated, this sub-skill builds a potential 0.0001% boost to additional mana quantity every moment the user spends without using their internal mana reserves. The total boost is added to internal mana reserves the moment Sage Save is deactivated. Effect lasts for five days with a cooldown of 24 hours.

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[Sage Strain]:-

Once activated, this sub-skill builds a potential 0.001% boost charge to mana concentration every moment the user spends without using their skills. The total boost is applied to internal mana reserves the moment Sage Strain is deactivated. Effect lasts for five days with a cooldown of 24 hours.

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Mana Requirements: 300,000 (I) Mana; 100,000 (I) Mana every day.

Duration: ---

Cooldown: ---

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The results of the two active sub-skills grew more phenomenal with time for both Replicus' mana cores.

He had been following the conditions of the skills for as long as he possibly could everyday.

The benefit of [Sage Save] on his mana, increased his total pool of mana for five days, and [Sage Strain] increased the total concentration – meaning the qualitative difference between core colours.

As the moments Replicus spent without using his own mana accumulated in worth to the equivalent of 25 days – for his main mana core – and those without using his skills totalled to roughly 15 days, the amount of strength he had just added to himself was atrocious – for both mana cores.

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[ MANA (II) Partial : 742,023 ]

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[ MANA^ (I) Partial : 2,204,755 ]

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As [Sage Save] added a 0.0001% increment, Replicus' first mana core had its total mana quantity inflated by 211%, and his second – which had not been used in accumulated time worth 29 days – had been inflated by 245%.

[Sage Strain] which added a 0.001% increment had adopted a 1,269% increase in concentration for both cores in the 15 days worth of time Replicus didn't use his skills. As a result, Replicus' mana cores jumped in quality – the first one adopting a similar quality to the purple hue, and his second, blue quality.

Unfortunately, the caveat for [Sage Strain] was that when using skills, Super skills, for instance, activation would be possible, but the full capacity of the skill couldn't be reached as the mana quality received through the sub-skill was more of an imitation than the real deal.

That didn't stop Replicus' physical stats from jumping very high in potency though.

Right now, the Penetrator could feel the ridiculous surge in his strength which would last for five days.

It didn't waft out like how a natural purple core would, but that wasn't important.

All was fair.

He had a feeling that he was only able to handle this amount of power because he was all bones though. All strong bones. Other experts probably couldn't handle such a thing at once, which led him believe that [Sorcery of Essence] wasn't an attainment common even among Mages.

"Boss. I think we've attracted a few..." Grim said while looking left and right.

Two ships were coming their way from opposite directions. One of these seemed to have the intent to crash into theirs.

Replicus' sockets flared.

While he was able to invade other ships, he still didn't have the ability to look past the barrier that veiled the decks of others' ship.

'Annoying.'

Not knowing who he was up against was a hassle.

He had marked Eaniss' ship and the Bishop's, but the rest were hard to differentiate. The last target had been picked at random after discounting the two he had designated as no-gos.

In any case, Replicus had planned for most scenarios.

"Allora. You're up," he said to the tall, female Unlimited.

"Right!" Allora said and prepared to finally take up her role as the enemies sandwiched them!

Chapter 863: Shots Fired!

Allora's Hidden Class, the Charmed Illimitable Rounder, allowed her to gain a limitless amount of mana which continuously poured from her mana core once a certain condition was met.

This condition was that she had to suffer damage to her mana core while in combat.

As simple as it sounded, it wasn't the easiest thing to bear. From the moment Allora acquired her new class, her abdominal region had become a fragile zone that allowed any mildly forceful hits to come into contact with her mana core.

Her mana core became susceptible to damage as well, though whatever damage it sustained was the reason why mana would flood out of it without end – which was extremely dangerous.

The tall woman had never been so glad to have a decent level of mana manipulation. Thanks to it, she was able to keep her mana core stable after the damage was received.

As Allora stood on deck, she felt the pulses of pain from her mana core radiate throughout her entire body. If her mana core was damaged enough, she would die with certainty, especially if an enemy knew about her weakness.

Thankfully, for the current endeavour, she had received a friendlier blow from Grim after exchanging a few blows in order to achieve the condition required for boundless mana.

A wave of energy furiously bellowed from her body.

The deck rattled as the endless amount of blue quality mana shuddered out of her and rose madly with a brilliant glow.

At the same time, the two enemy ships flanked Replicus' ship, getting a little too close with each moment.

The Penetrator, while emanating a voracious sort of might, like his Unlimited, raised his hand.

Around the great ship, four large, dark orbs appeared on each of its sides, a tremendous amount of energy pouring into them.

At once, the ship on the right became encased in a oval, jade-coloured barrier that had thorny patterns at its base. It was transparent, allowing outsiders to vaguely see the umbrella-shaped shield over its deck, along with its dark hull.

The one on the left disappeared from the sea as soon as the orbs emerged, and appeared upside down, right above Replicus' vessel, flying at a speed that matched it!

Replicus scoffed.

What obvious mockery.

He turned his attention back to the ship on his right.

The four Gravitational orbs standing between his ship and this one should have sent it flying thousands of meters away with barely any resistance, but because of the jade, circular barrier, the best they could do was keep this ship from approaching further.

It resisted the repulsive force coming from the four obs.

A barrier of that level produced so quickly...

It could only be...

"Hey, Warding Pride! Why don't you be more open with your hostility?" Replicus called out to the ship on the right.

A moment later, the golden glow around it receded to show a woman with blue skin from her neck leaning against the edge of ship, looking at Replicus with a pair of lazy eyes.

It was indeed Warding Pride, decked in a soft, revealing white dress that barely hid what was underneath it.

She wore a look of disgust, likely because she had been made to see what was behind Replicus' helmet the last time they met.

"More open?" she responded with a snort.

Replicus seemed thoroughly amused by the look on her face.

Just as he had imagined, aiming for the masked man when he was a target for a lot of Factions was a fool's errand. No one would let him and his group charge ahead. He had to kill or immobilize all his pursuers first.

Right then, the ship above him dispelled the umbrella-shaped shield over its inverted deck and three figures stormed down immediately!

"Allora," Replicus said calmly the instant the figures shot down.

The Unlimited who looked to have sunken in the feeling of her boundless mana so much that her eyes had become glazed, took a sharp breath, reined in a phenomenal amount of focus and gave a grunt of immense effort!

The coat of white surging around her shuddered and swiftly sank into the deck of the ship which shone magnificently!

At the same time, Replicus knelt down and touched the smooth surface of the deck.

A swift tracing of light different from the mana surging into the Mythical grade vessel crawled over the deck, and the hull of the ship.

From the moment Replicus returned to Deign from the Severed Union to find the great vessel already delivered, he had thought of skills he could apply to the sea locomotive with [Wealth of Spoils].

The particular one he added to the ship right now worked well with the surging mana flaring within the vessel, as well his own blend of unique abilities!

Over the hull of the ship, nine large ethereal cannons tinged with a soft turquoise hue emerged, their dark hollows pointed at Warding Pride's ship!

The female Faction leader frowned at the sight, dismissing it at first, but then...

Her eyes bulged and she attempted to recover the instant she let her hubris take over... yet to no avail!

The first shot was fired from one of the cannons, a brilliant radiance engulfing the surroundings for a furious second.

Warding Pride did not let the blinding light fool her. The real attack had already arrived.

It was barely visible, travelling as a blotch that neither had colour, nor proper distinction from the surroundings!

This attack, rather, shot, reached her jade barrier before she could mobilise her mana... and left a wide, clean spherical hole through it, undaunted and unrestrained in the least!

An instant later, a portion of the quarter deck to her ship was gone, deleted perfectly with a clean, curved edge, as though a circular character had passed through it at godly speed!

Donning the fiercest look she could muster, Warding Pride injected as much of her focus as she could before the second cannon fire, where it was aiming likely to reduce half of her crew to nothingness!

Mana poured from her genuine purple core to construct a grand gate as large as her ship was broad, its face decorated with four spindly, ugly humanoid figures dressed in hides, their upper torso converging in the middle of the gate to form a four-coloured swirl!

The moment the second shot was fired, it blasted against the gate.

The great, bizarre barrier held, but...

...!

It was pushed back by an overwhelming force that made it strike against Warding Pride's ship violently, almost capsizing it!

'What the hell are those cannons firing?!' Warding Pride thought in shock, as the remaining seven cannons fired as well, making her turn a little pale.

Unfortunately for her, while she was being held down by the cannons, Replicus wasn't paying her much focus at all.

Instead, he looked up.

The umbrella-shaped glow above the deck to his ship was flaring like the sun, charged with so much mana that the assailants that had fallen on it where unable to break it as easily as they had thought initially.

They stood over the glow, glaring at Replicus and his crew.

The Titan World Storm Penetrator narrowed the blaze from his sockets.

An additional figure fell from the inverted ship above and landed among her mates.

At the first sign of her, Replicus knew she was trouble.

She wasn't the Faction leader, but she was an Incandescent Stage expert... and one with a Hidden Class. How her mana flowed didn't conform to the patterns of normal and advanced classes.

She locked eyes with Replicus who remained focused on the cannons, more than a little condescension showing in her eyes.

Then she spoke.

"Majestic Territory..."

Chapter 864: Cryptic Axiom Chasm! (1)

A torrent of solid, dominant white energy rushed out of the feminine figure to join her three mates just above Replicus' ship. It engulfed everything in sight with such alacrity, and convincing permanence that lesser beings would have slumped down, drained of hope.

After all, a Territory was a personal, physically realised field of influence that an Incandescent Stager had full control over.

As the pristine shade of white curled over everything, Pherdanta, Grim, Allora and Baddan grew tense, their eyes set on the enemies standing over the shield.

Perhaps because the female Incandescent Stager responsible for erecting this Territory didn't have enough of a gut to try and challenge two Faction leaders at once, especially one certainly above her in status and strength, Warding Pride's vessel wobbled out of the blank white sheet of a world created around Replicus' vessel.

The unique barrier she had set up in order to block the assault from the cannons Replicus had materialised remained, and she, as most could see from her visage, was still rattled by the abnormal ammunition they released.

Seeming to be glad to be rid of Replicus – at least for now, as she thought, imagining that the foul, unknown creature probably had ways to at least avoid instant death – she gave him a last resentful look.

Pherdanta spared a moment from the enemy above her to look at Warding Pride's vessel. Coincidentally, she locked eyes with the person she hoped to see, but neither of them expressed a gesture to communicate their thoughts.

A call interrupted, Pherdanta's momentary thoughts, continuing the thread of speech from mere moments ago.

"...Cryptic Axiom Chasm!"

Then the brilliant white vanished, replaced by a contrasting dark scape that started out blank, before beginning to decorate itself frantically!

One could almost feel the weight of a sacrifice offered as the name of the Territory was called upon, bringing its fullness forth!

At once, Baddan's ferocious volumes of purple quality mana erupted savagely, before rapidly turning into harsh white flow that stroked boldly around the ship and those aboard it!

This seemed to have happened just in time, as the vessel was rocked vehemently when in the distance, a colossal mirror shaped like an arrowhead surged from the darkness below, its ascent causing the blank world to both shiver and change.

From where it emerged, the darkness became tainted with dots of light that marked what was the equivalent of the ground within this space; where Replicus' ship was somehow seated over. They lights looked like docile fireflies at first glance, and above them, covering much of the space, were large shards of mirrors floating about.

No.

They were standing extremely still, some of them shaped randomly, and others a bit more meaningfully, yet not in any way that would have made Replicus and his crew a lot more fond of this place.

The great arrow-shaped mirror in the distance reached its final height shortly, but aside from reflecting the dots of light and still mirror shards – and with Replicus' vessel somehow missing on its face – there didn't seem to be anything special about it.

It did point to everyone on Replicus' ship, however, that somewhere along the activation of the Territory, their opposition's ship had vanished mysteriously from above them, leaving a ghost of an image that disappeared only now.

Replicus remained with his hand planted on the deck's surface.

The glow in his sockets did not show a lack of composure or the abundance of strain.

In fact, he was... relieved.

He looked at the Territory's caster – a middle-aged looking woman with hair more red than it was black, tied into knots that looked like thick ropes. She had an annoying gaze that refused to blip from Replicus, and her tongue, as it turned out, was quite sharp.

"You found yourself a pet capable of saving you from instant death, it seems. Good for you. At least you're resourceful, as a Faction leader should be," she said, which garnered her a fair amount of glares.

Replicus chuckled.

"I know stalling when I both hear and see it," he retorted confidently, his hand causing yet another fierce stream of light to run through his ship. "It will be a simple task to kill you and your goons before your Secondary attack is finished charging."

Right then, Replicus' vessel groaned and expanded in size. It grew to about four times its previous mass, and while it did, Allora took a deep breath and grunted, her fierce mana flooding into it.

The larger size, seemingly prompted by another skill Replicus imparted onto the vessel, created for a greater capacity to hold the surging mana and better utilise it!

The Incandescent Stager saw the umbrella-shaped glow below her feet adopt a greater, blinding shade of gold, and she snorted.

Her body erupted with fierce strength granted to her by her Territory, and she hammered fiercely into the barrier with her fist!

The now enormous vessel shook violently, and the umbrella-shaped glow cracked quite a bit!

Replicus was certainly impressed.

He didn't think it would be broken so easily.

WHAM!

The red haired woman smashed it again, and the web of cracks extended dangerously.

She pulled back her arm, her three partners backing away from her, and was about to launch the last, decisive punch when a gaping hollow appeared behind the golden barrier!

The pressure it released sent chills down her spine, and her wrathful punch quickly turned into a cross guard with both her arms!

A dark something that was so fast, and so huge, it made the already dark world turn dim for a moment, blasted past the shield, knocking into the woman and her fellow assailants!

Of course, they could only vanish from sight when the ethereal cannon – made larger by Replicus' skill – moved from the hull to the deck, and fired at point blank range!

It had been a wonder to Warding Pride what was being fired from Replicus' cannons, and she would never have guessed right what it was.

A combination of Stagnant Space and Distorted Gravity combined into large, dark orbs, was just that devastating, even with Replicus' mediocre current affinities for both!

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[<Affinities>]

[Distorted Gravity – C]

[Stagnant Space – D]

[Spatial Lightning – B]

[Grand Fire – S]

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However, as far as Replicus saw... it wasn't enough.

The enemies were still alive.

He hadn't counted on this latest attack taking them all down though.

The time it bought at least, was priceless.

He turned to Pherdanta who was looking up past several dozens of shattered glass into the darkness.

"I want you to operate the cannons. You only have nine shots. I doubt I'll be able to reload for you in the next few minutes," he said.

Baddan turned to him, a curious expression on his face. Replicus read what he meant to express immediately.

"No. I don't need your Territory yet. Just keep guarding against the Primary assault. They'll be worse Territories than this in the very near future. I promise you that," he said.

And he wasn't wrong.

Replicus didn't dread Territories. He dreaded Territories with Tertiary attack functions – Territories that manifested living beings in their Imaginary GeoScapes.

Those were the true menaces, after all, more often than not, what Baddan was doing now – shielding the rest from the Primary assault with his Nitros – would only happen when the caster's whims allowed it in a Territory of that calibre.

"Grim. That woman's goons are probably still alive too. If they get too close, handle them," Replicus told Grim while Pherdanta moved to the middle of the deck to take control of the ship and manage the cannons.

"What are you going to do?" Grim asked.

At his inquiry, a long, baggy dark blue robe of ghostly properties emerged over Replicus' starry armour, its half transparent quality partially exposing the twinkling spots on the Penetrator's armour. It matched very well with the black, blue and puce of it.

As it relaxedly swam in the air, Replicus filled its large sleeves this time.

It was no mere treasure or artefact, but a skill, one he had acquired after stealing an ability that interrupted skills from the Grand Flame Bringer's sword.

Previously, it had been known as the [Defiant Raiment of Perversion], but now...

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[Nullmancer's Royal Raiment of Acclimation | Lv. 5]

An ancient robe is summoned, one fitted with a unique type of Null Life Essence. The capabilities of the raiment are a bane that the Nullmancer wields against any form of magic grown in distant lands.

<Passive>

- Nullifies any normal low grade Super Skills and below
- +100,000 Mana with Absolute conversion
- +25,500 Intelligence with Absolute conversion
- +50,000 to Endurance with Absolute conversion

<Active>

Any skill or concepts the user understands with the use of <Epiphany> becomes ineffective depending on the degree of understanding achieved.

Mana Requirements: None

Duration: None

Cooldown: None

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Replicus then turned to Grim, his sockets growing bright.

"I'm going to learn as I fight," he said before jumping out of the ship, leaving the protective glow of Baddan's Nitros.

Chapter 865: Cryptic Axiom Chasm! (2)

As soon as Replicus leapt out, he felt himself drift off strangely, the pull of gravity down to what could only be called a sea of lights – which he had only half-expected – proving to have truly been a myth.

Replicus floated away into the mirror clustered darkness, away from the ship.

'I guess the caster of this Territory is the only one that can move naturally...' he thought, and looked up to where his enemies had been sent by the cannon shot.

The woman with the red hair was unharmed, and so were her three partners. They stood on a mirror shard a hundred meters into the sky, looking down at the ship, and Replicus.

'Even if we're in her Territory, that shot of Gravity and Stagnant Space should have done some damage at least. Did she heal?' Replicus thought.

The woman gave him a glare, and then a furious amount of mana fumed from her body. She looked to command the men by her side to draw closer to her, and...

Replicus' sockets flashed continuously.

What in the world...?

From the woman's body, three ghostly human figures, pale and with their features indistinguishable from the rest of their bodies, emerged, crawling out of her flesh seamlessly.

The clothes they donned had a peculiar lustre which might have inspired a cheerful feeling, if not for the horrible visages of their wearers, which assumed that there was nothing lively about them.

It was unnerving.

These three entities... could they be souls?

'No...' Replicus thought. He knew what a soul felt like. The appearance was similar, but the overall substance was different.

The ghostly summons – one adorned in a heavy royal garb, another in an excessively large armour that was made for someone twice his size, and the last in a long cloak that revealed only his face and feet – swam into the red-haired woman's three men, and they shook vivaciously.

From the distance, Replicus felt their presences change – sharpening and also... duplicating.

What kind of Hidden Class did this woman have?

If added to whatever he Territory could do, this could be a lot more problematic.

The three men had their eyes turn into wells of glowing silver that left sharp trails in the air at their slightest movement. The woman behind them smirked.

At once, two of them leapt from the mirror shard and hurtled towards Replicus' ship with immense speed. The Penetrator saw pale rings blast outwards as they flew, soon reaching their destination.

He couldn't afford to be distracted though.

'She's coming...' he thought.

And surely, the woman, along with the possessed that remained at her side darted towards Replicus and soon arrived just before him. Unlike the Penetrator, the woman seemed to be able to switch between succumbing to the lumpy space and moving as though it didn't exist without effort. Apparently, she could grant the same to anyone she chose.

"You have an interesting class..." Replicus said. In the time it had taken the woman to reach him, his four thought phantoms had made countless theories, reaching several likely conclusion that only needed a little more data for confirmation.

"You think you've figured it out?" the woman scoffed. "Do tell."

Replicus laughed.

"As I said, stalling."

"So what? You're left incapable of using your abilities, your mana, your treasures..." The woman said with a cruel grin. "I will enjoy getting rid of a subpar Faction leader like you."

The man beside her, his eyes aglow, churned and hurtled forward. He had been possessed by the ghostly figure which had been adorned in the bulky armour.

Halfway towards Replicus, his figure suddenly turned bloated, and pale, just like the ghost that was within him, elongating freakishly to become a half-man, half-serpent giant that donned the ghostly armour!

The mana... no, the Nitros this grotesque creature became coated with, obviously supplied by the red haired woman, caused the mirror shards around it to part, spin and reflect Replicus' figure!

The Penetrator looked to wonder about the mirrors, and why they suddenly changed like so.

The red-haired woman, her Nedalia, as gifted by her Faction leader whom she adored to a religious degree, was pleased to see that the Penetrator didn't seem to have accounted for this.

Was he foolish enough to have thought that the difficulty in mobility was the only aspect of the Primary functions of the Territory, and that the mirrors were more related to the Secondary functions?

Well, that would be foolish, not to mention wrong.

There was also-

...!!!

It had happened so fast...

Nedalia could have sworn she saw a flash of lightning and mist for a fraction of a moment just beyond the large ghostly body that had been about to smash into Replicus.

And then... a fraction of a moment later, a blurry fist decked in a stars was an inch away from the left side of her chest, nothing else visible beyond it!

If not for the fact that she could sense everything in her Territory with a sort of sixth sense, beyond her normal sensory abilities, she wouldn't have seen this attack!

Instinctively, she moving up her left arm to block, but was a little late!

The punch connected and...

There was a loud crack, an overbearing force that rolled outward with the howl of blaring wind.

The full figure of Replicus emerged, starry armour, robes and all.

'I see...' he thought with this sockets dimming.

Nedalia's chest had the appearance of a shard of a mirror that Replicus had just punched through, though to no avail, as the red-haired woman seemed just fine.

In fact, she looked thoroughly pleased. She looked up at Replicus' tall figure and a pompous grin stretched on her face.

"My, my. You're quite something. You can move freely here. How? Was that why you were so confident despite being in my Territory unguarded? Hahaha.

You're overestimating yourself, Bright Storm!" she said before grabbing Replicus' trapped arm and pulling him down.

Right above the Penetrator, the large arms of Nedalia's abomination locked together and came crashing down towards him!

The force that came from the attack was so great, it caused the dots of light below the trio to part and make waves of radiance!

Before the hammering force could connect, however, Replicus vanished from Nedalia's grasp, as though he had never been there. The red-haired woman wasn't so much disheartened as she was a little curious.

As soon as Replicus emerged a few meters behind the abomination, Nedalia popped out of a mirror shard behind Replicus, and slung her arm around his neck.

She squeezed with immense strength, holding Replicus tight, and once more, the other mirror shards around them spun and reflected Replicus' image!

"Let's see you escape this!" Nedalia screamed into Replicus ear – or what she thought was his ear.

Her ghostly abomination rushed towards them and threw its pale fist at Replicus' chest!

However, once again, Replicus vanished from Nedalia's grasp, and she saw him appear further away, drifting among the mirror shards high above.

Nedalia's grin receded, replaced by a light frown.

'Something is wrong here...' she thought. 'As soon as my mirrors reflect the image of my opponent, they should be paralyzed. I thought the first time he evaded, it was because he moved before the mirrors could take effect. This time...'

Odd.

This was too odd.

And what was up with that movement?

It wasn't too much of a surprise for Nedalia that high level experts could simply move as they wished in this space because of their immense physical prowess, but she refused to believe that Replicus was on that level.

'Let's try this then...' she thought.

Serenely, she held out her hand and began to draw in the air with two of her fingers.

As she did, a foggy line with a lazy glow was left along the path; straight erect, and without bend. Nedalia could see Replicus warily looking at this line.

She smirked... and then retrieved her fingers from the end of the straight, diagonal line of light.

WOOP!

...!!!

Before anyone knew it, Replicus had been crashed into by the glow, which lit his armour furiously after a loud whipping noise, imposing upon it a long strip along the chest!

The Penetrator was surprised.

The odd line of light had travelled so fast that he hadn't been able to react, and now...

Looking closely at his armour, where the stream of light had hit, Replicus was rendered aghast to see that tiny little mirror shards were forming, following the line of damage!

But that wasn't the worst of it.

Yonder, where the large, arrowhead shaped mirror stood, reflecting the general space within the Territory, a murky blotch appeared on it, revealing something different.

The image of a handsome man with auburn hair showed, his eyes completely white and his body draped in a leather jacket. Beside him, to Replicus' added surprise, was the figure of a wolf-like creature with thousands of threads spinning over its body to make what was its version of flesh...

The thought phantoms in Replicus' head went wild.

This Territory...

Replicus had to get rid of it quickly.

Chapter 866: Cryptic Axiom Chasm! (3)

Indeed, this Territory needed to be shut down immediately.

The assumptions that Replicus' thought phantoms conjured up from the effects he saw manifest just now from the seemingly impossible to dodge strip of foggy light, suggested that he needed to work faster.

What added even more fuel to his resolve, was the still image of him reflected on the giant mirror in the distance beginning to move, replicating scenes that occurred in his life months ago, and the look on Nedalia's face.

She was awestruck.

Her fingers lightly touched her temples as she seemed dazed, evidently absorbing information that was a lot more surprising than she had thought.

'I see. She has a lot of Primary functions attached to her Territory. The ability to travel through the scattered mirrors; the ability to perhaps damage someone who is reflected by the mirrors, or maybe stall them; and the ability to see a piece of information from someone who gets hit by that bizarre element...' Replicus thought and then chuckled.

'That last one may not be as beneficial to her as she might have thought...'

Surely, it didn't seem like Nedalia was quite able to use the information she got to use, at least right now. She still looked stunned. Replicus didn't know how much she got informed of from the last attack, but given what was displayed soundlessly on the arrowhead-shaped mirror, it was more about his Hybrid Luman form and Ferex.

'Let's pile on the pressure...'

While Nedalia was yet to fully comprehend what she had just seen, Replicus performed the same gesture as she had done moments before.

Two of his fingers traced the dark space before him, and then he flicked them up.

Nedalia regained her wits, but she didn't see the significance of Replicus' gesture.

...Until two vicious, incredibly deep scars appeared over her chest and face!

...!!!

Nedalia was alarmed.

Even though the parts of her body that had been attacked had merely changed into shards of mirrors, which meant no damage actually fell on her, much like Replicus' previous attack, she was still appalled.

Was that a skill?

No.

Impossible.

Her opponents, unless she allowed it, couldn't use their skills and mana in here. Also, she hadn't sensed anything rush her way just now.

"You've put in a lot of resources into making an effective set of Primary attack and support functions for your Territory. Impressive. However, I can't imagine the sheer the cost of it all. Can you keep up?" Replicus taunted.

Nedalia wore a frown, but she didn't utter a word.

Instead, she whipped her fingers across the empty space, and a foggy, vertical strip of erect light materialised, before shooting towards Replicus who got smacked by it like before, a vertical glow left from his helmet to his lower torso. Similarly, like before, bits of tiny mirrors traced the line of damage, and the grand mirror in the distance reflected another scene.

A tall, black skeleton standing with a woman with lime green hair, around them a series of dark creatures that manipulated fire!

Once again, Nedalia wore a dark expression, her eyes close to spilling out at this point.

Replicus chuckled, and his fingers whipped out again, and Nedalia's arm was sliced off by an unseen, astute, sharp force that came from the Penetrator!

At once, the red haired woman tore herself from her dazed state of disbelief, gazed at Replicus with an odd look of mild terror, and gripped her torn arm which immediately began to spot mirrors replacing what had been cut off!

Nedalia seemed to withhold what she wanted to say, and how she wanted to react. But she stubbornly attacked again!

She sent a strip of foggy light, then another, and another and another!

Dozens of strips smashed into Replicus with a furious force, appearing on his body with signs of travel. The sounds that came from them walloping his armour sounded more like human flesh being whipped by sjmabok!

Replicus didn't idle.

He returned every blow he received with another of his own.

His cruel attacks whizzed through the air as well, and the damage he sent towards Nedalia whose face grew more bestial and pale by the second, ruptured, tore, gouged and sliced through the red haired woman's features large chunk after large chunk!

The contest was epic in its own right, but a winner was close to being determined. At least Nedalia and Replicus thought so with separate reasoning!

By the thirtieth exchange, Nedalia was almost wholly an accessory of varying chunks of reflective glass while Replicus had been turned into something similar.

However, both couldn't care less.

After all, for Replicus, a wishful goal of his had been accomplished...

[High level concept detected. 'Lambent Phosphor'. To learn the lesser fundamentals, an investment of 18,500 Null Life Essence is required]

Without waiting a second more, Replicus paid the price immediately, and in the <Affinity> section of his status, 'Lambent Phosphor' appeared, ungraded!

At once, the tiny shards of mirror clinging to his armour fell to the sea of light below him bit by bit, and a pleased chuckle crawled from Replicus' mouth.

[Epiphany] was working well, and soon, [Nullmancer's Royal Raiment of Acclimation] would too.

Naturally, Replicus couldn't mobilise his mana in a Territory, and the same was true for all skills that required mana, and treasures made to rely on it.

However, much like Genuine Incarnations, even Territories couldn't stop Replicus from mobilising his Null Life Essence.

When it came to using skills related to the odd power, Replicus was restricted, as Null Life Essence skills that affected Nedalia with complex effects upon activation, like [Static Limbo], would be resisted by the Territory. However, Null Life Essence in its raw form, could reach and wreak Nedalia!

The Penetrator was extremely proficient in wielding Null Life Essence in a way that conjured horrendously damaging slashing attacks, though it was not without inspiration.

He swiped across, and the Null Life Essence that clung to his fingers travelled so quickly, unseen and unregistered by Nedalia and her Territory!

It cleaved her in two rapidly, the force behind it so overwhelming that it pulled the woman to the side!

...!!!

Nedalia gritted her teeth in desperation.

There was no pain.

There was no true loss from being harmed like this.

However, her mind was filled with too many unreasonable sets of information she had yet to process.

And to make matters worse...

The Penetrator had flashed before her in the time it took her gnash her teeth, his fist being the only thing that was vivid in the micro moment she managed to see it, and then take it to the face without resistance, which sent her flying off like a comet!

Replicus, upon dishing out the sharp blow, quickly looked upward where the large half-man, half-half-serpent creature in the bulky armour had appeared, its body circling him ominously.

A crude light, similar to Lambent Phosphor appeared in the gap created by its motion.

Replicus' sockets dimmed.

At this moment, his understanding of Nedalia's abilities finally reached its peak.

Chapter 867: Bring It!

"I knew it! Her Territory is based on her Hidden Class abilities! This Lambent Phosphor is like an element with many applications, probably the reason behind her Hidden Class properties!" one said with a scholarly tone.

"Of course it is! She has the ability to make ghosts, sockethole! These ghosts, which can probably be constructed in the likeness of anyone who has died recently, most likely possess the physical attributes of the dead, manifesting them in a body made from condensed Lambent Phosphor!" another said proudly, swirling around the Penetrator's face unseen by anyone other than Replicus.

"She can merge these ghosts with people too, it seems. What an oddball!"

"Wait! Wait! What are the properties of Lambent Phosphor then? It's registered as a high level concept right? But how is it responsible for the things within the Territory and this ability to create ghosts."

"Obviously, it has shown itself to be able to reveal the true nature of anything it touches or embodies. Ghosts are a form of that, or rather, they can be interpreted as such. I think this woman is stretching the interpretation of Lambent Phosphor with what her Territory allows her to do! That's quite genius!"

"Oooh! We need to get this concept fully deconstructed with [Epiphany]! All the things we could do with it..."

"Not quite yet... We only have a basic understanding of the concept. There's still the properties these ghosts gain, and whatever whoever they possess gains. I believe a single touch from them won't be pretty, especially if we haven't got a better affinity with Lambent Phosphor to resist yet..."

And indeed it was as the thought phantoms said.

Replicus had been avoiding hits from the possessed thrall of his opponent because he had a bad feeling about what it was capable of.

The ominous, hollow greyish light that was generated when the creature circled above him, was a prime example.

He wouldn't let it touch him without gaining a better affinity grade with Lamberent Phosphor.

Replicus' figure vanished right before the light could do what it intended, and he appeared a distance away.

The moment, he did, however, a mountainous force delivered with such precision it could have torn his head clean off, hammered into the right side of his helmet!

Protruding from the mirror beside Replicus, was Nedalia with a feral, pale look to her delicate features!

Her punch had been extremely well-timed and well-executed, the might behind it causing the still darkness around them to cry in a deep voice.

In that one moment, she had gotten the better of Replicus.

However...

The right side of her face exploded with a greater degree of thunderous shock than that which she had dished over to the Penetrator's face!

Though her own merely turned into fragments of glassy mirror, Nedalia grunted hoarsely, a strained look on what remained of her face.

For the first time, she felt pain, but she was more concerned with what had just happened.

Did the damage she intend for Replicus... emerge on her instead?

But the blow she received was much stronger!

Instead of enlightening her, Replicus gave the most condescending laugh he could pull while gazing at Nedalia's half a face.

"You're already reaching your limit, aren't you?" he said, his face drawing very close to hers.

The red haired woman turned vicious, her eyes becoming bloodshot.

"Don't you dare look down on me, you fucking monster. Just because you've managed to fool everyone by wearing a fake face, doesn't mean you aren't still an insignificant pest that has been at the mercy of humankind more than once..." she said with half-threatening, half-ridiculing tone.

"So you know that much, huh?" Replicus mused.

An instant later, his figure vanished just before a dozen mirrors finished reflecting his image within them.

Nedalia clicked her tongue.

Her possessed abomination swam through the air and began circling around her.

"I know several of your weaknesses," she said while glaring at Replicus.

The Penetrator seemed to ignore this statement, however.

"At the mercy of humans, you said? I'll admit, I hate that I have such a stain on my record. I'd like to give it a reverse..." he said.

...And Nedalia found her body gouged out by two vicious lean ribs that had clawed at her without witness.

...!

She belatedly saw Replicus' fingers propped before him.

Before she could regenerate where she had been damaged, a mighty force bashed into her chest, this time with an odd, inflated force that gave the impression that Replicus' fist was bigger than it actually looked!

As she stormed off involuntarily, breaking the version of a sound barrier in this space, Nedalia found to her utter astonishment, traces of lightning and mist that emerged beside her, and a starry fist bashed into her with the same force as the last blaring punch!

She spun, and somehow managed to dip herself into a mirror shard in order to emerge elsewhere, fleeing from the ungodly combo that had just begun.

However, the moment she showed herself from a separate exit in a distant mirror shard, the same silent spark of lightning and clot of mist danced around her and her heart almost stopped in shock.

'How—'

BAM!

Nedalia left a glowing trail as she smashed to bits tens of mirror shards, the velocity she travelled at making it hard to find a way to tug herself from this loop!

BAM! BAM! BAM!

Wrathful fists sent her bouncing all over the place and wondering...

How?

How was her opponent beating her in her own Territory where she had the edge in both supernatural abilities, and physical attributes?!

It didn't make sense!

Worse yet, even with her spatial awareness, it was impossible to discern where Replicus approached from.

It was almost as though... as though he didn't exist until right before he delivered his mighty blows!

This assessment was only half right.

Like Replicus' Endurance, his Agility had been subjected to an irrational change too after the use of [Unbound].

Instead of being termed 'AGILITY', it was now called 'ASTRAL BLIZZARD MOTION'.

Every time Replicus intended to make a meaningful motion, his body would cease to exist in Aigas, and would swiftly transition into a spatial corridor tailor made for his dextrous motion, the Astral Blizzard corridor – a space that only existed in the miniscule periods that Replicus took to move from place to place.

This corridor looked very convoluted – with a heavy mist, a flood of white cold and lightning – though passing through it accelerated Replicus' speed as he moved. Most of the times, he retained the ethereal aspects of this corridor right after exiting, which is why Nedalia sometimes saw sparks of lightning, or failed to see the rest of his body.

As for the cost of this, there was none.

It was simply Replicus' physique.

But Nedalia didn't know all this. She would have lost a part of her soul if she did.

She was busy agonising over the prospect of failure.

'I'm losing a lot of mana by regenerating from the damage I take. If this keeps up...' she thought begrudgingly.

Her summoned apparitions had yet to achieve a single thing since she merged them with her fellow Faction members.

Even against Replicus' subordinates, one of them had already fallen.

Nedalia took another hit from Replicus and for the first time, blood spilled from the corner of her mouth.

'Looks like I have no other choice...' she thought.

Replicus would soon accomplish what he said he would do if everything went on like this.

She couldn't allow it.

Thus...

"This is my Creed..." Nedalia whispered, feeling the many colourful blobs of alluring light within her soul, "... Rage of Truths is replenished!"

A savage presence blasted from all around the unseen edges of the Territory as Nedalia declared.

Replicus who had been halfway through the Astral Blizzard corridor suddenly came to a stop, and it vanished from around him.

He felt the essences within the Territory groan.

His sockets flashed intensely.

It was coming.

The Secondary attack function was coming!

It was coming sooner than he had thought!

Yet... he couldn't help but get excited.

"Bring it!" he called.

Chapter 868: The Side Clash

Right when Replicus leapt off the ship, the only one to show some manner of concern was Allora who wore an anxious face over her visible strain and asked the others:

"Is that really alright? Jumping head first into someone's Territory..."

Grim looked at her and grinned in a reassuring manner – however that was possible.

"Don't worry about it. The boss has faced many Territory users. Well, I guess the majority of them were Cluster beasts, but that doesn't matter. I haven't been trapped in one with him like this, but I know he always comes out alive," he said.

"Really? Does he some critical last resort attacks that work in a Territory, like that storm from earlier?" Allora asked.

"Last resort? Hahaha. I think you've got the wrong idea," Grim chuckled. "I'll admit I've never seen him use that storm attack before, but as far as I'm concerned it's not nearly as effective as the heavier attacks he uses when he really wants to kill someone."

Allora was flabbergasted. She wanted to imagine that Grim simply chose his words poorly with the phrasing 'not nearly as effective'. That storm had almost the guts of her.

"You two, focus. They are coming," Pherdanta said tartly with her head up.

Surely, two enemies were diving towards them with immense speed, and midway in their descent, their forms changed.

One eerily shed its human form and became what looked like a pale, glowing sheet of silk that spotted an innumerable number of eyes that all focused on the crew aboard the vessel and shone intensely.

The other merely transitioned into a sickly mummy, a pale, broken crown over his head, and as he reached close to the ship, he shot his hand forward, and let loose a twin torrent of searing blue flame that bashed against the ship heavily, rocking it heavily!

The former flew silently towards the front end of the ship and with its large cloth-like form, began to spin around viciously, generating a controlled typhoon that made the ship even more unstable!

Pherdanta, Grim, Allora, and Araeyn – who did nothing but spectate – were almost made to lose their footing and plunge into the dark space littered with mirrors, away from the protection around the ship!

The fact that just these attacks did so much to the ship was astounding. Its size right now, courtesy of Replicus' skills, was not just for show after all, not to mention the fact that it was flooded with unending mana.

Allora did her best to keep herself connected to the ship, supplying it with mana. Grim and Pherdanta did the same, with the latter doing the best she could to keep the vessel steady, which wasn't an easy feat considering that there was practically no sea or ground to use as leverage.

Unfortunately, only Replicus could activate skills embedded into the ship, like the one he had used before to make this ship fly.

Left with no choice, Pherdanta decided to have the vessel blast forward, the thorns at its back with runic ends firing off a fierce heat to make it barrel forward!

The sheet-like entity immediately got out of the way when the vessel spilled ahead. Its body expanded and blanketed over the deck, seemingly hesitant to come into contact with Baddan's Nitros.

...!

Suddenly, Grim's canine instincts flared.

"Everyone close your eyes!" he screamed.

Without question, all except Araeyn quickly obeyed.

Pherdanta was the first besides Grim to feel it.

An ominous pressure bore down on her, and its source was apparent.

The many eyes on the sheet-like existence were staring down at them, their size now magnified.

The pressure that came from them originated from the light they spewed, which was foggy, and soft, raining on everyone on the ship.

Grim's hardened.

While he felt danger from looking into those eyes, he also felt a threat from staying under their gaze for too long.

It seemed that Pherdanta felt the same, as the two spurned into action at the exact same time.

Grim whipped out his finger up without looking, while Pherdanta forced one of the massive ethereal cannons to roll from the side, traveling over the hull and onto the deck like an apparition.

At once, a starkly bright beam fired from Grim's finger while a dark ball whizzed up at a much faster speed, tearing out a colossal hole in the sheet-like entity as it passed!

Grim's Singlefold Aggrante managed to strike what would be the hem of the large creature as it began to dart away after the first atrocious hit. The effectiveness of the hit seemed to be what finished off the creature though.

Aggrante had an incredibly potent corrosive property that spread alarmingly quickly over what remained of the creature, which flew erratically in the dark space!

Grim and the others opened their eyes.

"That's it?" he wondered, a little disappointed.

Pherdanta on the other hand set her eyes on the other enemy who was hovering rapidly over the deck, another stream of fire building up in its palm.

"What is up with these things?" Allora said while trying her best to remain still. "What even are they?"

"Does it matter?" Grim asked with a bit of a furious tone just when a jet spray of flame rushed towards him. He dodged and sent an Aggrante which the mummy-like creature shockingly dodged while in the air, and summoned a wall of red fire that fell over the Unlimited who merely grunted, not seeing how this was worth his time.

He leaped up from the deck, soaring higher than the mummy figure, and made a gesture with his finger down at it.

However, before he fired, he noticed the mirror shards around him begin to rise rapidly, flocking high up into the distance.

"What?"

Right when he saw it, Pherdanta saw it, but both got the impression that perhaps they weren't seeing right.

The image was just absurd.

How could at least five thousand people, all living and panicking, suddenly appear out of nowhere, all falling from the dark space above – the sky of this Territory – plummeting towards a singular feminine figure standing on a mirror shard?!

Chapter 869: Rage of Truths! (1)

Replicus' keen sockets watched as Nedalia sacrificed Creeds in order to make the Secondary assault function of Cryptic Axiom Chasm charge faster and become ready for use instantly.

Replicus had caught a whiff of the possibility of something like this when he initially declared that he would kill Nedalia before she could use her Secondary assault function.

He hadn't believed that she'd waste Creeds on him, given that the voyage was only just beginning, and there were larger threats than him out there, but the reality was manifesting before him right now.

Nedalia's opinion of him had changed a lot more than he expected during the course of their exchange.

The pseudo redhead managed to break out of the loop of his attacks and darted high into the sky through her mirror shards. Her body, made of battered and torn mirrors forming a shapely figure, didn't repair itself. Nedalia didn't give herself the time.

The moment she caught a breather, she locked her fingers together, and the howling of energy throughout the Territory intensified, finally becoming more apparent to even those aboard the colossal ship in the distance.

Replicus prepared to counter whatever she was about to throw, but even he didn't anticipate what Nedalia did next.

"This is my Creed!" she screamed. "Let THEM be brought here!"

...!

At once, the mirror shards through the entire Territory hurtled upwards towards the unseen upper edge of this dark space!

Almost at the same time, from the blank black above, thousands of figures appeared out of nowhere, falling with shocked faces towards the crowded mirrors which seemed to be rushing to receive them.

With a glance, Replicus could tell that all these people were real, and though they were adorned in regular clothing, they were anything but regular themselves. Among them were Advancement Stagers and Masters of differing varieties, with the occasional Foundation Stager!

'What does she intend to...' Replicus thought, before the answer was quickly brought to his attention. His desire to act now was stifled immediately. The outcome would be uncertain if he did.

Half an instant after he thought about what this was all about, the mirrors that flew up to play host to the newly arrived did the unthinkable.

Each allocated itself to one of the men and women dropping down, and emitted an ominous foggy light that devoured the figure of the target!

The space above became too brilliant to look at for several moments, and when it finally returned to normal, the number of figures above... had doubled.

Each of the previously seen men and women was now a corpse, and just beside them, was a ghost of them, dull and docile!

Oddly, each of these ghosts wore ridiculous sets of clothing, some more comical than the others – more often than not featuring unrealistic proportions.

Replicus didn't know what to make of this.

Did it represent something?

Just as he wondered, Nedalia stared down at him and regained her mirth.

He snorted and with what was likely a mental command, she drew on a portion of the thousands of ghosts towards her and they turned into streams of pale grey energy that dissolved into her rapidly!

Nedalia let out a loud, blissful moan.

It was apparent that she was giving herself a tremendous boost in strength. If she could allow the ghosts to possess others and morph their figures, then the same should be possible for herself, right?

"She only used three ghosts before? Does that mean that she can't store more ghosts on her person?!" one Replicus' thought phantoms questioned.

"I think so! So she must keep live people, captives, that she can then kill to fuel her powers since she can't store many ghosts at once! She used a Creed to drag all these people from a storage prison somewhere and brought them into the Territory! Crafty sockethole!"

Replicus thought it checked out.

The absorption process he saw only grew more aggressive, and midway through, the Penetrator watched as several hundred of the ghosts were funnelled into the half-man, half-serpent figure that had been fighting with Nedalia.

It too began to change too.

"Ah! We should have thought of this! The greatest strength of this woman's Hidden Class is strengthening a single body with more than one ghost! That's why they seemed so weak before. Now..." a thought phantom called from above Replicus' head.

...!

Replicus was suddenly smitten by a thick column of foggy light with a degree of force so enormous that sent him whirling away rapidly!

Before he shuttled even ten meters from his original position, however, he felt a massive presence appear somewhere near him, and grant a particular nasty blow that felt more like the strike from Lambent Phosphor than a physical hit!

He sped like a shooting star in another direction and felt the same presence waiting for him along the path to his destination!

Thankfully, using the Astral Blizzard corridor, Replicus crossed into another plane, shifted the course of his movement and appeared in an alternate direction before he could be hit!

His momentum died down, but just when he thought he got a second of reprieve, he felt the same hostile presence behind him.

It was Nedalia, her whole body other than her face made from mirrors that revolved in several different directions, making her look like a bland kaleidoscope.

Her hair had adopted the same reflective look, as well as her eyes which reflected Replicus' starry armour as she gazed him.

"How does it feel to be on the receiving end now?" she said with grin, and her fist, covered with a bulbous flow of Lambent Phosphor smashed into Replicus face!

There was a spectacular shockwave that shattered the mirrors close to the two, but this time, Replicus wasn't sent flying.

He weathered the force of the blow, and remained floating in the space, much to Nedalia's displeasure.

The face of his helmet began to turn into a mirror though, much like the rest of his armour had been when Nedalia had been using Lambent Phosphor like an unavoidable whip.

"I see..." he said as he gripped Nedalia's wrist. "You're using Lambent Phosphor to avoid hitting me directly. Are you scared that your physical hits will rebound like last time?"

Nedalia's eyes narrowed a little.

"How do you know that name?" she asked in a serious, startled tone.

Replicus merely chuckled.

His figure vanished just in time to avoid the massive fist that came crashing down where he had been before.

The half-man, half-serpent creature had grown twice as large, and the armour it had wore, pale and lifeless as it looked, now decked its entire body to the tip of its tail!

A foggy light oozed off its large mass, the very thing Replicus had dreaded last time.

'That light. I think it is capable of turning anyone hit by it enough into a ghost. It's an instant kill mechanism for weaker opponents. Ghosts must use it differently. Perhaps this woman is the only one with the ability to kill someone simply by directly exposing them to the light,' Replicus thought.

Again, a large column of light smashed into him with a staggering force, but he darted into the Astral Blizzard corridor right after, avoiding Nedalia who had hurtled forward to bash into him again!

However, even though he changed course, she had become so fast that there was only a momentary delay before she whizzed like a demonic wind behind him, and sent a blow livid with Lambent Phosphor!

Replicus took the attack to the back, heavy as it was, but with Astral Blizzard Motion, he performed an incredibly intricate micro-motion, turning behind him, and slamming a right hook into Nedalia's jaw!

The force to the woman once again felt otherworldly, as though the surface area of Replicus' punch was larger than it looked, and sharper than it should be! Fragments exploded from her face, but she sent another blow to Replicus which he ate, and returned one of his own!

'He's still able to keep up with me physically?!' Nedalia thought in mounds of Hidden surprise.

For a full three seconds, the two hammered each other with dozens of blows strong enough to level a small city each, and then Nedalia dashed back and whipped with her fingers across Replicus' image before her!

A bright pillar of Lambent Phosphor smashed heavily against Replicus' armour, and it finally caved in, breaking apart across the chest, having been turned into mirrors beforehand!

'She got me...' Replicus thought, half-amused and half-annoyed.

A split of a split moment later, a heavy fist larger than his head crashed into the side of his helmet with mountainous might!

...!

The half-man, half-serpent possessed had finally landed a hit, and just as Replicus expected...

[PRIME PERPETUATION : 24,478/60,750]

His Health, known now as Prime Perpetuation had dropped viciously!

'Heh! If I hadn't gotten an affinity towards Lambent Phosphor, I would have probably been brought close to death by that attack,' he thought as he flew like a comet downward, clouds billowing from the gap in his armour.

He felt his assailants soar rapidly towards him.

The situation was terrible.

With only Null Life Essence, and Null Life skills that applied to him alone, Replicus was at a heavy disadvantage.

However, he, like Nedalia, had been stalling for time as well.

[High level concept detected. 'Lambent Phosphor'. To learn the greater fundamentals, an investment of 29,340 Null Life Essence is required]

There it was!

Different from Distorted Gravity, Spatial Lightning and Stagnant Space which were constantly absorbed by the Kindling Heath back on Deign, it took several hits for [Epiphany] to grant him access to higher degrees of affinity with Lambent Phosphor!

The price to learn was higher than his current capacity of Null Life Essence, but there was a lot in reserve on the ship, and he drew it into his body!

In an instant, Replicus paid the price while replenishing his supply, and the affinity for Lambent Phosphor turned from ungraded to C completely bypassing D!

Replicus chuckled. Even if Lambent Phosphor was a high level concept, it likely wasn't as complex as Distorted Gravity and Stagnant Space!

At once, a major portion of his armour turned into mirrors before, reverted back to normal, though the gap over the chest remained!

Nedalia didn't miss this detail, and Replicus saw it when he changed his course via Astral Blizzard Motion.

She looked wary, her anxiousness carrying over from Replicus' inexplicable knowledge of the name of the foggy light she could create.

As such, that was when she decided to put her ready-to-use Secondary assault to work!

"Rage of Truths!" she called suddenly.

Instantly, the entire Territory was dyed with a foggy light so brilliant, it threw Replicus off, stalling his thoughts for a moment!

It seemed to have washed out from the glowing arrowhead mirror in the distance, spreading out like the initial coat of Nitros when a Territory was projected!

Then...

Replicus found himself lost for a moment.

Odd. How odd.

He was back in his weaker, less impressive Fulgurant Bone Penetrator body.

He was standing on a firm ground, overlooking the image of a hot, charred-looking scape with strange vegetation of its own – dark trees with wisps of flame as their leaves. Behind him was a cliff, with a pool of orange-pink lava, and to his side, was a familiar young lady.

Replicus' body quivered at the sight of her.

She had strangely unclear features, but he found himself uttering...

"Camilla?"

She anxiously looked up at him. She was very scared.

He felt sorry for her, thought many doubts kept springing through his head.

They were offset by the scorching wind about, which immersed him into the present.

"What should we do, master?" she asked with a tremble.

Replicus' spirits lifted at her vulnerability and he was about to answer, as he should, given where he was...

But did he know?

He was in a Cluster, right?

This was a mission he chose from the Guilds Association, but he had decided to tackle it with his Penetrator form in order to reduce the gap between it and the newly acquired Hybrid Luman.

That's right.

That's right!

So now...

All he had to do, was get on with it, with his sister Camilla!

Chapter 870: Rage of Truths! (2)

Time passed extraordinarily quickly for Replicus. Before he knew it, he had outsmarted the Grand Flame Bringer and his Fire Breeders, and had made a deal with them. In exchange for being spared, he would help them navigate the world outside their Cluster.

Thankfully, the mighty Cluster General had been anxious enough to belief Replicus, otherwise he would have been done for. Thus, he had spent two days as a captive, awaiting the day when the Cluster was supposed to finally allow the Cluster beasts to leave, spilling them into Aigas.

In that time though, he found several things strange.

Camilla.

She seemed... off.

He could tell it was her, but she also seemed like a template of someone else. Someone he knew very well.

Strange.

Did he really have a sister, while looking like this?

A part of him heavily rebuked him whenever he doubted the fact. Of course he had a sister, and her name was Camilla!

How could he doubt that?

But...

Had she really been with him all this time? If so, how come she felt both extremely familiar when she talked, but extremely vague he tried to process her face?

Well, that didn't matter now, the majority of the Fire Breeders were gathered around the cracks in the Cluster now, ready to leave. Their skinny frames with white horns, numbering in the thousands seemed eager, especially with their Cluster General among them.

They were wary, but Replicus was ready.

Now was the time.

Replicus had formed an elaborate plan to give himself and Camilla a chance to survive before they left the Cluster.

That plan required Camilla to use his sword, Demion's Dance, in order to kill as many of the Fire Breeders as possible. Of course, he had faith in her to use it properly – if he could do anything other than penetrative attacks, he would have done this himself, but oh well.

Camilla was just as good of a candidate. She had a Hidden Class that made her immortal. She wasn't afraid of death, much like Replicus who had shed that fear a long time ago in the Temple of Unlusted Tears. If she could resonate with the green-bladed sword, much like him, she should be able to use it properly!

Quickly, Replicus passed Demion's Dance to Camilla who was at first disheartened. Then he gave her words of encouragement to inspire her spirit.

"Hey, Camilla. It's alright. Just as you've had the strength to forgive me for what I did back then, I'm confident that you can use that sword as well as me. Better even! Come on! Just swing it!"

Camilla looked invigorated.

She looked at the Fire Breeders who shouted and rushed at her after seeing her wield a sword from out of nowhere, and she gritted her teeth and swung the sword as hard as she could!

SHIIIIII—

But then...

"Wait," Replicus suddenly said. His sockets blazing furiously. "This is all wrong."

Indeed. This was all wrong.

It really was all wrong.

This is not how it happened!

So many details were missing!

This had happened before!

[High level concept detected. 'Lambent Phosphor'. To learn the lesser essentials, an investment of 45,180 is required]

Replicus looked at this notification and something deep within him clicked.

Right!

This was what he had been stalling for before, right?!

Subconsciously, he commanded enough Null Life Essence to be drawn, like before, and invested into the proposal [Epiphany] presented!

Immediately, his affinity with Lambent Phosphor rose to B!

...!

Like clockwork, everything around Replicus instantly began to break apart or turn illusory.

That's right! That's right!

His mind caught on after he had taken action!

He was fighting Nedalia when she used her Secondary assault function!

Replicus' thoughts exploded into action and he quickly judged the situation according to what he had seen!

Of course, the light which surged around the Territory had come from the large arrowhead which had been playing inaudible scenes from Replicus' life!

'The Secondary assault function, Rage of Truths must be an attack that uses all that knowledge to construct a realistic world that traps the target!' Replicus thought.

That was terrifying!

To think Nedalia knew enough about him to conjure...

Replicus' sockets blazed fiercely.

Camilla.

So that's what Nedalia had meant when she said she knew his weaknesses.

The Penetrator scoffed.

Weakness was a stretch. He barely knew Camilla. The last he had seen of her, was when the ascended Somanda had shown him her likeness trapped in that hall which housed all of the Lich's imprisoned souls.

Even then he hadn't felt to strongly towards her!

'Looks like she didn't know much after all.'

Indeed, Nedalia didn't. She pieced together what limited information she had to construct a convincing world around the weakness she thought Replicus to have, and it failed in the end!

Be that as it may, Replicus realised that he was likely in trouble right now. Perhaps two days hadn't passed, like in the Imaginary world just yet, but Nedalia must have had ample time to inflict serious damage while he was stunned!

As the world around him shattered, he saw the brilliant glow all around, which was rendered less effective by his higher affinity with Lambent Phosphor, but not entirely.

He could still feel a suffocating pressure around his body, his armour and the robe.

He could still even see the floating illusion of Camilla.

Ignoring it, Replicus' sight shot towards the figures close to him.

He was perplexed with what he saw.

The massive half-man, half-serpent creature had had its torso blown off, and was drifting slowly beside Nedalia who looked to have had a decent chunk of her left side shaved off by something perfectly circular!

She had an agitated look on her face, which turned ugly when she saw Replicus' glowing sight directed towards her!

...!!!

"How—" she began in horror when an enormous, dark something, decked in a solid white hue of Nitros sped towards her, narrowly missing her figure which likely dove through a mirror shard that Replicus and the others couldn't see because of the bright highlights!

'I see,' Replicus thought, elated.

Looking into the distance, he saw one of the ethereal cannons on his ship facing in this direction. Pherdanta had a determined look as she faced the Penetrator.

Replicus was pleasantly surprised, though it had been his hope.

Baddan's Nitros weathered through even the Secondary assault of Cryptic Axiom Chasm!

Replicus could see the Sky Watcher straining under the conditions. He imagined Baddan's situation was even worse than it looked, considering that he was also supplying Nitros to attacks launched from the cannons, after all, without it, they would be cancelled out by the Territory!

'What a well-timed intervention...' Replicus thought with a silent chuckle.

His crew had proven more useful than he thought even in these unfavourable conditions.

They deserved some manner of reward after this.

Replicus felt his armour start to return to normal. It had been turning into shards of mirrors though resisting the effect little by little the more his affinity to Lambent Phosphor grew.

Now, he had acquired enough of an affinity to not only resist the no doubt more advanced application of Lambent Phosphor in Rage of Truths – though just barely – but to also heal his armour, as like Granted Armament, it restored itself with Null Life Essence.

As surprising as it may be to discover, Replicus' armour had a unique quality added in order to accommodate his skill [Epiphany]'s abilities.

With the name Hollow Dusk's Prison, the armour, at Replicus' command, could become project him onto itself. In order to successfully expose him to concepts, it would bear the attacks while transferring their effects and the pattern of their constitution to Replicus. This was the reason why attacking the armour was the same as attacking Replicus... but without harming him.

Replicus quickly searched for Nedalia's figure. She emerged elsewhere, her face turned feral once more at the spectacular failure she hadn't foreseen.

She whipped her finger across the air, and the largest erect and slanted column of Lambent Phosphor yet, smashed into Replicus.

However, this time, there was barely an effect to his armour.

Nedalia gritted her teeth.

"What is going on...?" she murmured fiercely.

She began to mobilise the souls she had reserved, perhaps to give herself another ample boost.

Replicus wouldn't allow it.

He was done stalling.

With Lambent Phosphor now less effective against him, courtesy of [Epiphany] and [Nullmancer's Royal Raiment of Acclimation], he could now apply the final set piece to end his opponent, who was laughably basic, after all was said and done.

Without warning, a very long object appeared in his hand, crackling with a light, pristine, royal blue hue.

Its shape was crooked, like a bolt of lightning – excessively so – a single edged pointed tip at its end.

Its nine metre length that was silent and pulsing with unnatural brightness at intervals, caught the attention of everything in the Territory.

Like the [Nullmancer's Royal Raiment of Acclimation], this weapon, was in fact, a skill.

One that worked hand-in-hand with the other two Nullmancer exclusive skills.

[The Nullmancer's Unforgiving Lancet]!