

# Undead 91

## Chapter 91: Answers From A Sympathetic Flame! (1)

Serenity?

Serenity.

Serenity!

Indeed, Skullius had heard this word before. This name that seemed to be the very representation of peacefulness and tranquility.

Even though he had spent the last 24 hours in his Discount Human form, being devoid of most of his Null Life traits, he was still aware of the many notifications he had seen about Serenity doing this... something, something done by Serenity when dealing with his Null Life based powers.

"I am the reason why you have access to this strange power, Skullius and I know you have a lot to say to me. About Null Life itself and about... yourself. Now is one of the few times when we can communicate because of your lacking connection to the world behind me. I can reach out to you whenever you touch upon this place right before evolution. So please.

Let's make the most of this," the voice from the flame spoke, its soothing yet somewhat apathetic tone giving Skullius a distant hint of comfort.

"Uhm..." Skullius indeed had many things to say to this.

However, he didn't know how to start. He was quite overwhelmed by what had happened so far. How was he to just start babbling out his thoughts after a roller coaster of emotion just minutes prior?

Skullius took some time to calm himself.

Serenity did not speak, waiting for Skullius to settle and begin probing for answers.

That was a given.

A few minutes later, Skullius finally spoke.

"So you created this power?"

"It would be inaccurate to claim sole ownership of it but on a technicality, that is indeed true," Serenity said, a bit of pride detectable in her voice.

"Gotcha. Why did you make it and why was it in Somanda's hands?" Skullius asked two questions that had been gnawing at his mind all this while.

Why was such a power in Somanda's hands in the first place?

Why hadn't he used it?

"Both of those are good questions," Serenity said. "You see, Somanda intercepted the carrier of those two skill books on their way to their designated location. After studying them, he found their unique properties compatible with his goal. His primary goal to be exact."

"Primary goal?"

"Indeed. There are many worlds out there. The undead society is one obsessed with taking life and turning it into undeath, amassing great numbers. However, some worlds have unique forms of protection that impede the bulk of undead from invading, especially Arch-Liches."

"Somanda found that this power was able to disguise him as a human in addition to giving him power that had the potential to transcend Undeath and was interested. His first thought was probably to use it to invade this world but... I imagine starting from scratch with a new power was something that caused him to weigh his choices carefully as thousands of years worth of research was at stake."

Skullius pondered over it. His mind recreated the scene from when he had been called by Somanda to the tower, seeing the magic circle that was lit up, ready for use.

What had that magic circle been for? Had the Lich truly intended to use both [Lifeless Evolution] and [Flesh It Like You Mean It]?

Skullius thought that perhaps Somanda has wanted to use the skill on its own and jump into Aigas, but that didn't seem to be a possibility as it was complementary to [Lifeless Evolution].

It was unlikely that [Flesh It Like You Mean It] would work without [Lifeless Evolution].

"So that's how it is."

"Yes. As for why this power was created, it's for war. There's no sugar-coating it. The existence of many worlds and the ability of many beings to be able to travel between them has cultivated great powers that need to be kept in check. It would be premature to mention this in detail as you barely remember enough for it to be of use to you," Serenity said with a sympathetic tone.

"It was never meant to be you in this position, but you have a strange tangle of Direction on you that draws certain events."

These sets of words grabbed Skullius' attention quite a bit.

Barely remembered enough?

There it was again. What was going on with him? What was the story with him before everything he currently remembered?

Then there was the thing with having events drawn to him.

Somanda had said something similar.

What exactly did this mean?

From where he stood, Skullius felt that it completely conflicted with what he thought he knew.

Atrocious luck.

Constant sprawls into dangerous situations and narrowly getting out alive.

Did it all have a meaning he didn't understand?

"Who am I?" Skullius asked with a serious tone that he rarely revealed. "I don't understand anything. Everything keeps moving around me like a blast of wind, dragging me here and there yet there's somehow always a way to drag myself out if I really try. What is this- URGHHHHH!"

Skullius suddenly screamed. His speech had changed for a few moments, words that expressed his emotions in a unique way to the norm coming from him. Yet... this had caused him pain.

Skullius felt a connection to somewhere else for a brief moment but there was an excruciating pain that crept up within him afterwards.

"I'm sorry."

The voice of Serenity sounded, bearing a deep sense of compassion for the lone existence that floated before it.

Skullius finally calmed down, his air returning to normal.

"Bro, that was intense! It felt so strange. Why did I feel that pain? What happened?" he asked.

"<Sigh>. Undeath is a powerful concept Skullius. It might be a failed version of what Null Life is, but it is undoubtedly powerful and cruel. You have lived in the lowest rungs, barely able to see what it can do which is why you have such a shallow understanding of it."

Beside the flame of Serenity, a white ball of light appeared. Serenity intended to demonstrate how Undeath worked at a premium level.

"There are creatures who are able to wield the power of Undeath, calling themselves Necromancers but that is a basic class of the power where the soul is released while the body is used as a tool for Undeath. However..."

The white ball of light beside Serenity split into two parts, one being three quarters of the whole.

"Say this is a soul, the higher and true form of Undeath binds the larger portion of the soul to the caster of the Undeath medium while the smaller portion is sent to a prepared vessel that is then at the mercy of the caster.

The caster can manipulate both pieces of the soul as they wish, with the more they insert Undeath energy being the stronger they make the vessel for the soul and soul itself for their own purpose."

The smaller portion of the white ball was sent a distance away from the larger portion, both pieces beginning to change from white to red.

"The longer these pieces remain apart, the more easily they get corrupted by Undeath. A full piece requires to remain whole. As both pieces are incomplete, they end up having to be pieced together by Undeath energy. That is the core of the power of the Undead. Powering broken souls into becoming weapons for war."

Skullius remained silent for a moment. Somehow, this lesson began to make him think deeply about Somanda's words and the things he saw in that hall of ice.

Those images he saw trapped in the ice!

Where they all the greater pieces of once whole souls?

One particular line spoken by Somanda made his consciousness shiver as he fully began to understand what it meant now.

'... your emotions carry more emotions and show the sorrow that your soul has through the camaraderie that you try to cultivate among yourselves as the dead!'

So that's what he meant.

The desperation the he and his friends felt. Their intense need to feel recognised and be part of something bigger was all just... a bunch of broken souls missing their fullness which was trapped by Somanda.

Serenity pitied Skullius, but there was limited time. She could tell him this much and let him digest it on his own later.

"A part of you is bound to Somanda and he is not some scrub in Deadmanland. He is a being close to Divinity. I cannot render help to rescue your other half from such a being, but you have the strength to save yourself," Serenity said.

"So that means..." Skullius said with a sullen voice.

"Yes... Doom Factor 2. It pertains to your soul being bound. Your memories are all tied to that part of your soul that Somanda has. He knows you need it and that's why you're bound to cross paths with him again in the future. The first Doom Factor shouldn't be too much of a problem after you evolve into Tier 1.

However, to solve the second Doom Factor, you'll need to search for a powerful expert to assist you in retrieving your soul before a year passes or..."

Skullius was already dreading the second option now despite the pompous declarations he had made when he was ignorant to the levels of power.

He saw the Arch-Lich in a different light now. A different red light.

"... you will need to grow stronger and take it from him on your own."

Chapter 92: Answers From A Sympathetic Flame! (2)

That's right.

It was at this moment that Skullius realised that he had fleshed up. Massively.

To stop Doom Factor 2 from catching up, he had to make sure he either found an expert to help him or to defeat Somanda within a year's worth of time.

Skullius almost laughed at himself, making fun of his own previous uninformed self of how ridiculous his thought process had been.

Turning Somanda into a Moronic Undead and torturing him for the same amount of time he had been an undead didn't seem like a possibility anymore.

Trying to steer his mind clear of the depressing topic, Skullius decided to ask about the other thing that he always wanted to know about. Serenity had even mentioned it just now.

"You already know about my atrocious luck, right? Where did it come from and why does it seem..."

"Inaccurate? Unsure?" Serenity finished Skullius' words.

"Yes, exactly... uhm Serenity... bro," Skullius said, unsure if that was the right term to use when addressing someone like Serenity who didn't have an appearance he was used to and also... didn't sound like a bro.

A deep sigh of resignation was heard from Serenity before she answered Skullius' question.

"Your atrocious luck is actually related to Somanda. As a being near Divinity and a powerful undead, he had certain traits that permanently scar organisms he comes into contact with, dictating their very makeup. Super debuffs so to speak. Curses. Atrocious luck is the first curse you received when Somanda toyed with your soul. You and every one of your...

bro, have your luck subdued. While it barely matters in Deadmanland, you can see how troublesome it can be here."

'Of course. It's that socke-... guy again,' Skullius thought to himself while feeling enraged as the way Serenity had spoken about his soul made him want to grind his teeth.

"So why is it that I'm not always doomed? At some point, my status for luck changed too."

"Indeed. <Sigh>. It's hard to explain without overstepping boundaries. I can't explain it fully at the moment but as I said before, Direction seems to favour you in a way that it does very few. Even back in your mundane life, it was even more so.

Perhaps there's a greater reason for it which I do not know but it's this Direction that has started to counter this curse of atrocious luck with each leap you take, in direction, in mind and in strength. It's not omnipotent though, as your Null Life can be snuffed out easily."

"That... doesn't make much sense," Skullius said, recalling all the events where his atrocious luck had suddenly turned upside down.

It was all something to do with him? His mundane life?

This was all top peculiar.

'So atrocious luck is actually a curse, huh? The first. Another problem I have to fix. Along with that second one I received.'

Skullius' thought back to the other curse he had received from Somanda. UNCoddled.

He had yet to see what it could really do, but it was a curse for a reason. Bad things were bound to follow with it too.

It was all so overwhelming for Skullius' mind, especially when he heard bad news after bad news. How was he to tackle all this by his lonesome. He couldn't see a path where he didn't perish midway.

"Skullius..." Serenity said with a warm voice. "Adversity moulds individuals into their strongest forms. The greater the odds, the brighter the blazing light of polish you will show when you overcome everything."

"I believe you can make use of this strength to grow vastly stronger to help yourself and ultimately carry out the mission that must be undertaken with Null Life. I invested a lot into this but it all stumbled upon you. Whether there is a grander reason for that or not is no longer my concern. I am choosing to believe in you. Even the Voice of Worlds sees you favourably."

"Wait! VOW bro does?!" Skullius exclaimed, feeling a surge of reassurance.



"... Uh yes. One of him does at least. The point is that the Voice of Worlds is also a piece I managed to rope in for anyone who managed to attain this power. For now, I need you to focus on grooming your stretch. Both of your strengths.

Being able to literally live a double life is merely a dream for others. Null Life and Insurgency. Groom them to their most powerful forms."

"How do I do that?" Skill asked worriedly. He didn't have the best outline for how to grow. Mining yes, but fighting no.

"When you return, leave the Tremur Forest and explore the basics in Aigas. Learn from the humans and their counterparts the very foundations of magic. Absorb all the knowledge and experience you can with the time you have.

When you reach Tier 4, you will be a force to be reckoned with and only then will I disclose your purpose as a holder of Null Life as well as the beauty of the things behind me," Serenity said with a reassuring voice, moving her flame body to the side as if to make Skullius yearn to explore this vast world that was hidden behind an intense blur.

Skullius' vision depicted his interest. He really wanted to know what this was all about. Yet, he already had a lot on his plate.

'Tier 4? Benzard also said something about Tier 4 being when beasts start to truly become a problem. Oh right, there was Onumbasssss too,' Skullius thought, recalling the large snake that had seemingly seen through [Flesh It Like You Mean It] but he doubted it.

Perhaps he would meet another fiendish serpent like that again and learn more about these beasts.

Leaving the Tremur Forest to explore the human world would be extremely dangerous as he didn't know who recognised his disguising skill and who didn't.

Suddenly, Serenity's body began to flicker, beginning to disappear along with the vast blue world behind her.

"It seems our time together has come to an end. With an increase in your strength, there will be longer intervals for us to meet. I very much look forward to it," said Serenity.

Skullius didn't want to part so soon as he still needed more information, but it was no surprise that there was only a limited amount he could receive of it at a time.

"Well then, I guess I'll have to get stronger to get more answers," Skullius said.

"Indeed. Don't be too crestfallen. You'll see the benefits of your hardwork with each tier. They won't disappoint you," Serenity's voice sounded with a smug tone.

"I hope so."

Serenity's flame grew smaller and smaller, her thoughts of Skullius being left to her and her alone.

'Such a pure soul. I can see that he has been conditioned to be the reactionary type. Neither good nor evil. He simply responds to the treatment he receives. No wonder both of Fulgardt's powers readily accepted his control,' she thought. 'I wish you well, Skullius.'

I hope I can see you in person one day and impart my will just as the Immoral has with his.'

....

Skullius found himself lying on the ground and facing up at the bland ceiling of the room he had entered.

He rose and looked around, later on recalling his conversation with Serenity.

Even though there was just as much bad news as good news, Skullius felt a sense of reassurance at least.

Someone was looking out for him.

He wasn't naive enough to believe that it was simply because they had taken a liking to him but it was good to know that someone didn't want him to perish just yet, unlike a few socketholes he knew.

VOW bro was also there for support apparently, and Skullius didn't allow his pessimism to steal the twang of joy he felt at hearing the news.

Who knew that merely a few days could develop his character so much?

What was the need for a fast pace?

"Well, let's see what this evolution has in store for me first. Serenity said it won't disappoint and I hope that will be case. Enough strength to fight off the monsters outside would be great or even the power to escape at least. No one said I have to prove anything but fighting all those monsters!" Skullius said.

His guidance field flashed with a message that was a window for a myriad of data to be shared with Skullius concerning his first evolution.

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

"Flesh yeah! No wait... that's not right. Let's evolve bro! Show me the good stuff!" Skullius exclaimed.

[Loading possible evolution option for 'Null Lifeform (Boneman)'....]

[Possible evolution options available for Tier 1:]

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[Jabbing Junk Skellion]

Quickie! Quicks! Quick! Are you looking for speed? Are you desperately looking for that edge you need to last longer in prolonged activity? Then give the Jabbing Junk Skellion a try, getting the most out of every movement!

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[Fulgurant Bone Penetrator]

Penetrate! Penetrate! Penetrate! Only I shall penetrate the heavens! Only those that know the art of penetration are the honoured ones! Dump slash and blunt damage today!

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[Abominable Pelvis Man]

Pelvis Man! Pelvis Man! Does whatever a Pelvis can! A pillar of support? A streaking bolt? He's none of those but a hardbone dolt!

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Skullius was... dumbfounded. The marketing descriptions were back.

"...Here we go again. I'm already starting to regret this," Skullius said.

Chapter 93: Evolution! (1)

The names of the evolutions really made Skullius uncomfortable and he genuinely didn't know what to do or think for a few minutes. His memory took him back once again to the conversation he had with VOW bro, when the unseen force had told him that Null Life was a power that had unorthodox evolutions.

He still didn't know what the word meant but he sure as hell knew that it definitely meant stuff like this.

Outside the norm. Weird. Suckish. Mostly a black to grey area.

Perhaps they would be good and overpowered evolutions that gave him the power to trample the world and Somanda.

'Probably not. I want to believe it but my mind just refuses,' Skullius thought, the image of Somanda once more looming over his thoughts.

The Pelvis Man evolution got him a bit excited but he didn't want to judge before getting the full information on these evolutions.

"Let me see the actual descriptions damn it!" Skullius barked, prompting the guidance field to expand as it showed information about each evolution.

When that happened, Skullius reading through them bit by bit, he almost buckled down to the ground in shock!

"This is... this is... this really was totally worth it!" he exclaimed!

The numbers!

The grandeur!

It really was odd. Like really odd but who cared?!

Just these three choices flabbergasted him and Skullius almost kowtowed to Serenity in a humble expression of loyalty for doubting her words before.

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[Jabbing Junk Skellion]

A hyper fast advanced Bone variant that deals high speed attacks to opponents before they even know what hit them. Its structure is altered in order to facilitate rapid movements and at the same time use less energy as distribution of mana is focused on integral areas. While it has low defence with less dense bones, its attributes guarantee that it can see and dodge attacks efficiently.

(Due to its unique powers, the Jabbing Junk Skellion has inherited a flaw to balance its existence among the natives of different worlds.

The Jabbing Junk Skellion must run a hundred thousand mile distance everyday or else its skills and natural agility will be removed for two days)

—

<Stats>

+1500 Mana

+500 Health

+300 Agility

+100 Strength

+75 Intelligence

<Skills>

-Mad Rush

-Passive Rush

-Bone To Phase

-Flash Variant

-Flash Summon: Sixth Null Speed Deity

—

-If you choose this race, you will have multiple other evolution choices within this series all the way up go the "#%!\$%#!".

-Possibility of gaining a Veneration art with future evolutions.

-Possibility of gaining a Null Speed Aura in future.

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[Fulgurant Bone Penetrator]

This is a favoured Bone variant that has the unique affinity to an element that only resides within the world of "%^#%!", Silentburn Levin. It has quick reflexes and movement speed that stems from the Silentburn Levin as well as a ridiculous amount of penetration damage.

All movements with the intent to penetrate are given a 100% penetration damage this percentage also being included in movement speed. The Fulgurant Bone Penetrator has its structure adjusted for speed and massive power output. It is generally decent in defence but its manipulation of Silentburn Levin guarantees that it will block most forms of damage.

(Due to its unique powers, the Fulgurant Bone Penetrator has inherited a flaw to balance its existence among the natives of different worlds.

The Fulgurant Bone Penetrator CANNOT inflict any damage with the common forms of attacks. Only attacks with the intent to penetrate deal any damage)

—

<Stats>

+3000 Mana

+600 Health

+250 Strength

+175 Agility

+50 Intelligence

<Skills>

-Fulgurant Virulence

-Fulgurous Space Virulence

-Iridescent Levin Tempest

-Ful Discharge

-Silent Revelation of the Bright King

—

-If you choose this race, you will have multiple evolution choices within this series all the way up to the "#%^!".

-Possibility of gaining a Veneration art in future evolutions

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[Abominable Pelvis Man]

A powerful Bone variant whose main strength lies in sturdiness. The Pelvis Man has a powerful body that cannot be easily damaged. However, the bulk of its uniqueness lies in the fact that it has the traits of the pelvis actualised into attributes and qualities. All forms of damage are transmitted through its body and down to the ground, nullifying much of their effect.

It can naturally expand its bones as well as toughen them to protect itself. Its most unique trait is the ability to 'Balance'. The Pelvis Man can equalise an exchange with most opponents, bringing a fight to a more or less equal match up.



(Due to its unique powers, the Abominable Pelvis Man has inherited a flaw to balance its existence among the natives of different worlds.

The Abominable Pelvis Man MUST NOT harm innocents. Doing so will call upon The Anchor from "%#\$!"for judgement.)

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<Stats>

+1500 Mana

+800 Health

+290 Strength

+120 Agility

+50 Intelligence

<Skills>

-Cradle To The Graveyard

-Brilliant Balance Buckler

-Pelvis Man Majestic Attire

-Hero's Fist

-Hero's Hero

—

If you choose this race, you will have multiple evolution choices within this series all the way up to ""#%^!".

-Possibility of gaining a Supreme Skill in the next evolution.

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"Ridiculous! I can't believe all these stats!" Skullius said after reading the descriptions. What captured his attention more than the stats, were the texts explaining that he could gain a Veneration art in the future!

"Is Veneration a common thing?" Skullius asked himself. He scratched his head and reread the evolutions. They had their individual uniqueness which made his choice especially hard.

What could he choose?

What did he need the most?

Which one exactly?

Which path would allow him to merge his powers proficiently with his class, Vehement Bone Nullmancer?

Skullius pondered for quite a while, taking in all these options before his sockets brightened up with fierce flames.

It was always a matter of choice and Skullius didn't hate moments like this.

In fact, it brought up the memory of his thousand year captive life as well as his conversation with Dezrael.

The 'lesson' he had received about making a choice made him scoff and take this chance seriously.

A skeleton from the Deadmanland boonies getting a choice. Who knew?!

"Okay. I'll make a choice.

Chapter 94: Evolution! (2)

The Pelvis Man was the most attractive to Skullius solely based off of its ability to take a punch. It was greatly defensive and from the looks of it, it had a good amount of offense.

After being under constant pummeling from the creatures of this world, Skullius couldn't imagine being able to handle it when he faced stronger opponents like the man who had killed his host, Eldris when he had been using [Basic Evil Invasion].

Such instances made him want to bolster his defence, as now, he was no longer under the constant pressure of having to deal with Doom Factor 1. He didn't know the exact way in which Doom Factor 1 would respond to him becoming Tier 1 but he would find out soon enough.

The Pelvis Man had the future possibility of gaining a Supreme Skill which was attractive to Skullius to some degree but because he didn't know the intricacies of variation between the types of skills, he didn't feel all that hyped. Perhaps using [Flesh It Like You Mean It] and [Lifeless Evolution] as case studies would have helped but it wouldn't generate enough excitement for him.

On the other hand, Skullius wanted to bolster his offense because of the coming dangers, particularly, the immediate one that was lying in wait behind the door.

He was also more interested in the Jabbing Junk Skellion and Fulgurant Bone Penetrator because they had higher offensive potential plus, they offered Veneration arts.

Even without fully understanding what Veneration arts were, Skullius was all the more looking forward to it.

Fleshing people up was always a delight.

What really rubbed him the wrong way were the flaws.

"If I become a Pelvis Man, I'll have to restrict myself to not killing innocents. That's trash. How am I supposed to earn more experience then? Then again, the Skellion has to run 100,000 miles everyday. I'm not sure how far that is but it seems a little too long. The Penetrator can't do damage with actions that aren't penetration?

That's weird as flesh," Skullius said, voicing his thoughts.

The high stats were promising though. Skullius had initially thought with one of these, he could even contend with creatures he had seen the stats of like Onumbassssss, but then he recalled...

"Wait! There's the thing about cores. Onumbassssss had a blue core! I wonder how strong that makes you."

Skullius also remembered Eldris' stats. They were weak stats yet they had a boldened texts as if to reflect that these weren't your typical numbers. Skullius couldn't even see Eldris' core colour. This was another mystery he had to tackle.

His excitement died down as he thought to Benzard who had a blue core.

"I still have a white core. I don't think an increase in my stats like this will just make me bully the guy. I still have to play it smart," Skullius said before running through the descriptions again and finally making a choice.

There was just too much he wanted and a whole lot of weird stuff. He turned to elimination when all else failed, opting for what he thought compatible with him.

A great offense that's more or less balance with just enough uniqueness for him to pick it up.

"I choose... Fulgorant Bone Penetrator."

Skullius' core pulsed, the guidance field acknowledging his choice and beginning to allow for the changes necessary to take place.

[You have chosen 'Fulgorant Bone Penetrator' as your race]

[Your race is being upgraded, changes in progress]

Immediately after the notification assaulted Skillius' eyes, a tremendous wave of power slammed the Boneman to the ground!

It was heavy and overbearing yet silent.

Skullius didn't struggle, allowing himself to feel every change that would occur.

And changes came indeed!

A deep blue hue expanded from Skullius and receded back to his bony figure!

Right then, a spark flickered across the floor, followed by another and another.

The small sparks turned into arcs and then chains of lightning that roiled around the figure of the Boneman!

Even with all this, no sound came from this lightning that bore no resemblance to the natural element. It had a gradient of two colours in a harmonious mix; sky and navy blue!

When it scorched the floor with its power, one could not underestimate its brilliance and uniqueness.

Silentburn Levin!

Hundreds of arcs of this element burst from Skullius' body that began to float in the air, the space around him beginning to brighten up!

Skullius' armless shoulder was assaulted by the lightning heavily, a super bright flash emanating as shockingly, an bony arm began to form within the fulgrous flashes of lightning!

As this happened, Skullius' full body began to change.

An additional pair of sockets appeared on his skull, the pre-existing ones moving slightly below to accommodate the new ones and giving the appearance a more natural feel!

All four sockets, two on each side blazed with a fierce light blue flame that almost shot from the metamorphosing Boneman!

His bones became larger and thick, his height increasing by a bit to touch upon 2.3 meters!

A dark blue colour transitioned over the foggy grey of his bones, small bits of Silentburn Levin rushing along the surface of his form in extremely minute proportions constantly!

When these changes completed, the Silentburn Levin that was smashing together against his shoulder had fully formed a powerful new arm that matched the rest of Skullius' body!

Within Skullius' ribs, a large white core could be seen, flaring like a very bright torch through the cracks of the ArchLight Generation Keeper that was struggling to contain his shape.

A larger upper frame with thick arms and a broad chest, the full figure not making Skullius look like an upside down carrot, was the full outline of the new Fulgurant Bone Penetrator.

"Hoo...." Skullius opened his mouth, a burst of mana being released like a splotch of hot air.

He looked at himself, admiring his appearance with his four blazing sockets.

[Congratulations! You have evolved into Tier 1, becoming a 'Fulgurant Bone Penetrator']

[You have gained 3000 Mana]

[You have gained 600 Health]

[You have gained 250 Strength]

[You have gained 175 Agility]

[You have gained 50 Intelligence]

[You have acquired the 'Fulgurant Bone Penetrator' exclusive skills]

[All standard Null Lifeform skills have levelled up!]

"Hehe..." Skullius cackled with a slightly deeper voice. "Oh....even my voice has changed. Great! Clacking my teeth wasn't cutting it for me anymore anyway."

"My stats are ridiculous! I could kill all the goblins I want with this! My other skills levelled up too?"

Skullius checked his status and cackled bitterly upon seeing its entirety.

His Discount Human form and Boneman form really were two different existences. There was no [Evil Darkness] or [Just Light] in his panel anymore.

It was a bummer but he didn't feel too down.

[Congratulations, you have attained a unique element from your race]

[As a 'Fulgurant Bone Penetrator', you possess Silentburn Levin, an element from "#%^@!". With it, you are able to use Serenity damage to slaughter their your foes]

"Serenity damage, huh? I wonder what it does," Skullius said.

His core bled mana as he thought of the other races he couldn't pick but this one didn't seem to disappoint.

[You have reached Tier 1. Your mana reserves have vastly increased. Doom Factor 1 demands a total of 2000 Mana Points for a three day exemption period]

"Huh?"

Skullius didn't understand what this notification meant.

He scratched his head as read it again, trying to get a feel of what it was trying to say.

"Hmm. Does it mean that if I give this amount, it won't bother me for 3 days? If that's the case then fine! Better than having to deal with this every time," Skullius said before consenting.

He felt a portion of his mana from his large mana core vanish as it was used up for Doom Factor 1.

It felt good to have so much mana and better yet, have it be refilled by the ArchLight Generation Keeper immediately!

[Doom Factor 1 is temporarily cured. Resuming pursuit in 72 hours]

"... okay I guess."

Skullius couldn't express it but he was extremely confused and irritated. Doom Factor 1 would return. He had thought that he would have to sustain himself by having [Basic Mana Manipulation] infinitely but that didn't seem to be case.

Or rather, it wasn't his only option.

With that out of the way, Skullius analysed every aspect of his body, finding the running arcs of Silentburn Levin continuously racing along the fibre of his strong bones.

His hope was reignited.

As he looked at his figure, the sorry state of the ArchLight Generation Keeper didn't sit right with him.

This masterpiece was merely a few hits away from destruction and he would lose his long standing benefit if he didn't do something about it. Maybe he could find another one to use for now and store this one safely?



Could there truly be a stronger plot armour? Scratch that 'armour'?

His sockets turned to the two wooden chests that were within the room.

'I still have to see what's in those. Maybe there's something really good but...' Skullius thought as he placed his bony hand on the chest plate of the ArchLight Generation Keeper where the strange insignia was carved.

"Let me upgrade this real quick."

Chapter 95: Grand Appearance!

A stare down was continuing behind the spiral grove doors, Sause vigilantly eyeing the remains of Fulgardt.

Many thoughts sprawled within his mind. He wanted to investigate the door and try to find out anything significant but the skeleton before him didn't back down.

It continuously held him down, blocking him off each time he showed the faintest intent to move over to another position.

There was a way to bypass this, but it would probably flop because the method to do so would lead to Fulgardt killing his investment, Benzard.

Just like when Sause had told Benzard and Reon to kill Skullius, Fulgardt's remains stopping Reon's blade when it was about to decapitate Skullius afterwards, it became evident that this corpse reacted vigorously to stronger energy signatures within its range.

Sause, who had subdued his powers the whole time had let loose in order to attract Fulgardt's attention and to allow Benzard and Reon to kill Skullius.

Unfortunately, that hadn't gone as he thought it would.

His prized investment had almost died along with his primary pawn. If he hadn't sacrificed a huge chunk of his powers to make Benzard stronger through the link they shared through the class he had given the man...

The thought caused the naked giant to grind his teeth, showing a fierce agitation. He gave a wary glance to the large claymore that was in Fulgardt's hand, gusts of darkness like smoke leaking from it.

'That young challenger...' he thought, his gaze shifting to Fulgardt's arm where strange flesh was creeping up to a stop at the chest. 'Fulgardt really was looking for a successor to his power but had a failsafe in case it took too long. Endless challengers being given a portion of his power for free only to cultivate it and lose it to Fulgardt when it had grown within them.'

It was such a tragic concept. No matter how long it took, Fulgardt was willing to go through with it.

Given how much time had passed, it seemed like the process wasn't so simple. Was it even possible to bring one from the dead?

'I'm not sure if those that die in the Labyrinth in general have the power sapped and given back to Fulgardt too or if its only those that manage to reach this place. <Sigh>. What's the use in thinking about this?'

Sause transitioned to thinking about how to deal with Skullius instead of hypothesising over something he clearly wouldn't learn of fully in the short run.

'Killing him as I intended would be ideal as he is an anomaly.'

Sause thought back to how such a weak human had reached a place where powerful experts failed, even gaining the protection of Fulgardt from his compulsion earlier.

This made Sause want to kill him so badly yet...

Sause's eyes gazed at the bloody remains of Reon and he grimaced.

'Since my other plan was not successful, I'll need that boy's Key to escape this place. Tsk, back to square one.'

The figure of Benzard stood by the doors, a resolute look planted on his face. He didn't forget the fear he had experienced when Skullius had used [Pseudo Evil Veneration]!

How Reon had died so easily!

How he had even been gotten the better of when he was using Full Body Aura!

Was this weak Foundation Stage human actually strong the whole time? That didn't make sense!

That darkness that spewed from Skullius' mouth was definitely the same as the darkness he had been using after he passed through that strange dark and light path!

Still, he couldn't do something so incredible with it even after those tough battles.

Benzard squeezed the sword's hilt as he awaited for Skullius to come out.

Even if Skullius gained Fulgardt's power, as a lower level being, he would probably not be able to use it or defend if attacked the moment he set foot out of the spiral groves door.

'Come on, I'm strong! I can't falter now. I just have to withstand this for a bit longer. How can I be afraid of a Foundation Stage boy with what I can do now? I just need to get this over with,' Benzard thought, pushing away the remnants of shock within him.

He turned to Sause who was pinned down by Fulgardt and recalled what he had been told after Skullius entered.

He was to remain vigilant and wait for Skullius to come out.

It had been a quite a while since Skullius vanished into the door. No one knew when he would appear or if he would.

Perhaps there was another trial inside that he had fallen prey to.

That was a good assumption but unfortunately...

GURRR!

Suddenly, the large spiral groves doors began to open up!

They made a rumbling noise that signalled the return of a certain being, their image as they opened as if of reverence to the one who exited.

Thick bursts of [Evil Darkness] and [Just Light] jutted out, blinding everyone from the view of the new being that would shock the world!

Sause frowned as he saw doors opening. The scene made him reconsider what he had to do with this being who wasn't yet visible.

This marvellous grandeur must mean that the young challenger had succeeded.

But what on earth had he gained for such a procession to laid for him?

TNK! TNK! TNK!

CLINK! CLINK!

Heavy metallic footsteps and heavy chain clashes were heard, with Benzard being the first one to see the unclear image of an individual that came from the door, leaving the veil of the two elements.

Then... this figure came into view, Benzard noticing the tall structure and four bursts of light that came from his face!

....!

"What.... what.." Benzard's expression turned unsightly when he saw fully the head of this creature... and its thick, domineering armour that made him tremble.

"Hmmm..." Sause hummed out loud with a deep frown of disgust while Fulgardt's remains turned to Skullius expressionlessly (obviously) but didn't show much of reaction.

A bald skeleton with four sockets that spewed a bright flame, small sparks appearing on its skull from time to time walked out for all to see.

A slightly bulky armour adorned its body, looking like a cross between a scale mail and full plate armour. A beautiful bluish black pervaded on its surface, a shiny silver insignia visible on the chest plate of a rather ominous horned demon face with three eyes and an unrealistic grin.

The shoulder pieces and knee caps were of the same design, except being like carefully crafted heads of the insignia with beams of light coming from the demon's eyes!

The touch that made this armour even more extravagant was the long, black chains that wrapped around the it in an strange, disorderly fashion.

They had small, but numerous bright blue runes etched over each one of their segments.

Benzard couldn't help but stare at the grinning demon etched to the skeletons armour, each passing second making him feel like the demon's face would jump out and devour him!

He questioned this odd occurrence with a sweaty face.

Where was that guy who had entered just now?

Just what had happened in there?!

"What's an undead doing?!" he barked, his hands never loosening their grip over his sword.

Skullius head tilted to the side as he heard Benzard's words.

"Heh.... Bro.." Skullius said with an eerie deep voice.

"I'm not an undead."

Chapter 96: Clash Of Flash (1)

'I feel like I'm going to have to say that a lot in the future,' Skullius thought.

He had never felt so good inside in his entire death and Null Life

The look on Benzard's face was priceless. He looked to be confused and wary, Skullius' declaractipn having made him even more unsettled.

Not an undead?

What did that even mean coming from a skeleton donning armour?!

Skullius took into the account the fact that this guy didn't lessen his vigilance one bit. He was a warrior for sure. He didn't drop his guard.

'Heh... I'm not the same as I was some minutes ago bro.'

The armour that Skullius donned was the result of him using 2000 Null Life Essence Points to upgrade the ArchLight Generation Keeper.

The more points he inputted, the better the random upgrade, which was why he had opted to use double the amount needed for a [Permanent Random Upgrade].

Unfortunately, it didn't seem like Skullius could obtain anything higher than a rare item with his previous limit of Null Life Essence. But now it was possible. He just needed the Null Life Essence for it.

During the process of upgrading, Skullius had tried to consciously manipulate what he wanted to keep from the armour but found it extremely difficult. High level features of all items were hard to keep, but not impossible. At the very least, he got to keep two features. One by his own actions and the other was more like a by-product of using [Unbound] on such a unique effect of the armour.

~~~

[Null Devil's Aegis of Damnation]

<Rare>

This a unique armour created on the mountains of "#%^@!" by the second Null Devil King to make his kin obey and fear him. It is complemented by the Chains of Damnation. It is made of five special ores that improve the armour's toughness and strength by great deal but reduces its flexibility.

-Defense-

1200

-Durability-

2000/2000

-Special Effects-

- Can store objects of various kinds.

Currently stored – Helmet, Chest, Voiding Key...

- Increases Mana by 1500.

- Increases Mana Regeneration by 100%

- +30% Strength

-

[Skill: Fear Me]

The armour constantly releases an aura that causes weaker beings to fear the user and become docile.

[Skill: The Forge]

Whenever an enemy approaches the user, they are subjected to a glimpse of the hellscape from which the armour was forged which can cause physical and mental harm depending on how strong their mental strength is.

---

[Sub: Chains of Damnation]

-Damage-

800-990

-Durability-

1500/1500

-Special Effects-

- Can induce terror and weakness when binding a target.
- Causes all living things excruciating pain when it makes contact.
- Can be used to block physical damage.
- Does anything the will of the user commands.

-

[Skill: Damnation]

Using the Chains of Damnation, drag a target down below to the Null Devil's Dungeon where millions of souls wail under the torture of the King's Inferno.



Mana Requirements: 1000 Mana Points

Duration: 1 minute

Cooldown: 1 day

~~~

Skullius had managed to save the storage effect of the armour while [Unbound] took the mana storage skill and made it into an additional effect to bolster his mana capacity and regeneration.

Skullius couldn't complain at all. This was really good.

He had stored one of the chests within the room where Fulgardt's legacy was, the Voiding Key, armour helmet and a few other things after rummaging.

Yes.

The space for storage within the armour wasn't too big, but it could store quite a lot!

The Fulgurant Bone Penetrator had put everything he had found within, including the Voiding Key which he was ready to use at any time!

'Right! What kind of a Bonem- I mean Penetrator would I be if I ran away from a challenge. I have to see what I can do in this new form anyway. If it gets problematic, I'll just escape with the Voiding Key.'

This is what Skullius had decided to do after he was done rummaging through the room for anything important. He had gained quite a lot from the first chest he opened, which gave him to confidence but caution wasn't thrown out the window.

'Heh... I can't wait to test it all out,' Skullius thought.

There was an immense risk, but seeing as the situation was the same as when he had left, Sause being held by Fulgardt, Skullius didn't think that he would be in too much danger, not that he underestimated Benzard though.

Sause couldn't tear his eyes off Skullius. He couldn't imagine what exactly was going on at all.

'Does Fulgardt's legacy turn someone into an undead? No that's impossible. Fulgardt wouldn't collude with those bastards... in this way at least. Is this another guardian then?' Sause hypothesised.

He gazed intently at Skullius, and as he focused his senses, he found that this navy blue skeleton in front of him... didn't emit any Undeath energy!

'What?' Sause frowned even more deeply.

This didn't make sense.

The armour that the skeleton donned did have a peculiar effect that sought to make him fear Skullius but that didn't work on him.

Just what was going on? Everything to do with that young challenger had not turned out as he thought it would!

Benzard also couldn't comprehend what he was about to face. There was barely any presence from this skeleton with blazing blue flames coming from its four sockets.

Skullius scoffed.

He would not make any sudden moves yet. Not until he verified something.

'Let's see if it works now.'

His guidance field popped up as he looked at Benzard, a status finally showing up of the brown haired man.

~~~

[ Name : Benzard Astin ]

[ Level : 15 ]

[ Class : Perpetual Colossus (Incomplete) ]

[ Core : Blue ]

[ Race : Human ]

[ Inv. Status : Vigilant ]

-----

[ Stats ]

[ STRENGTH (I) : 34 ]

[AGILITY (I) : 21 ]

[ INTELLIGENCE (I) : 18 ]

[ ENDURANCE (I) : 20 ]

[ LUCK : 13 ]

-----

[ HEALTH : 2340/2340 ]

-----

[ MANA (I) : 905/905 ]

~~~

'I see... it's like how Eldris' stats looked like. I wonder what it means exactly,' Skullius thought. 'I can see the core colour now too.'

Skullius held the chain around his armour, pulled on it and watched it rush out to his side as if it had a mind of its own!

The chain wrapped around the [Baleful Gale Reaper] which was lying on the ground and reeled it in on its own, bringing the wind elemental sword to Skullius!

As soon as the sword reached Skullius hand, he felt a shudder in the mana around the spacious room, Benzard already appearing before him with his sword crackling with lightning!

Skullius wasn't flustered this time as he could see it now, even though it was a rushing blur that he couldn't keep up with, he could still see the figure assaulting close in!

Benzard's sword cleaved its way down at Skullius' head, red lightning fiercely radiating the power of the Perpetual Colossus and aiming to split Skullius in half!

Yet...

Around the figure of Skullius where he stood with the chains around him, his four sockets gleaming as they focused on the enemy, the scenery suddenly changed!

A burst of ferocious heat surrounded Skullius, bright red lava oozing with carefree movement sliding under his armoured feet!

...!

A series of vast mountains under an unclear sky also appeared, spewing the heated rock everywhere as if an apocalypse was set upon this unidentified world!

The heat caught Benzard by surprise and as he ceased his attack, his thoughts switching to wondering where he was to stand when there was lava all around messing up his rhythm!

His bright red lightning was devoured under the image of the dancing, heated air and orange hue within the area!

He was distracted!

He was frightened!

He took his opponent too lightly in this moment while focusing on the changed landscape, leaving himself wide open for his opponent to attack freely!

'Check this one out...' Skullius thought, extending his hand towards the flustered Benzard while pumping mana into it!

"Ful Discharge!"

There was no sound.

No prelude.

Just a bright flash of light as a streak of silent lightning... of Silentburn Levin left Skullius' armoured fingers with a gradient of different shades of blue, hurtling towards Benzard!

Chapter 97: Clash Of Flash (2)

An exquisite flash of lightning blasted onto Benzard who didn't realise it until he felt the heavy and scorching sensation that assaulted his back!

It was much more fierce than the heat than he had experienced when he had been caught up in the skill of Skullius' armour, [The Forge], which had introduced him to the place where it was made!

Benzard flew, carried by the lightning as it ate away at his skin and attempted to penetrate his very being!

He hurriedly coated himself in mana to mitigate the rest of the attack as he then fell down, billows of smoke coming from the portion of his unprotected body that had been burnt by this new element that Skullius wielded.

Silentburn Levin!

'Heh! It's really effective. I finally have something to fight this sockethole with,' Skullius thought.

When he had read the description to the skill [Ful Discharge], he had been itching to test it out. But it wasn't the only thing. Far from it.

~~~

[Ful Discharge | Lv.1]

A concentrated streak of Silentburn Levin that can burn the target. It deals 10% Serenity damage.

Mana Requirements: 250 Mana Points

Duration: None

Cooldown: 5 seconds

~~~

Benzard stood up, his hand still firmly gripping his sword.

He couldn't believe the subsequent blows he had suffered from Skullius much less how he had suffered them.

He gritted his teeth.

Sparks of red started to come from his body as he prepared to attack with a direction approach.

However...

He suddenly felt drowsy.

A shallow sense of weakness overtook him and Benzard almost dropped his sword, his strength beginning to fade.

'What's going on... Why do I feel weak all of.. a sudden...'

He staggered and stumbled but pulled himself together just enough so that he wouldn't fall over.

The urge to close his eyes and just sleep came in very strong, trying to put him down.

A sense of weightlessness embraced him. For a few moments, it was like he didn't have a body and the bliss that came with that sensation caused him to relax.

'Ah....' Benzard sighed, his sword beginning to slip from his fingers.

Sause who was watching from a distance frowned.

"Heh... so this is Serenity damage," Skullius mumbled to himself, seeing the odd movements of Benzard. It was more effective than he had thought and he didn't waste the chance.

Skullius held on tight to the Baleful Gale Reaper and shot forward!

As he did, streaks of Silentburn Levin flickered on his body fiercely, amplifying his movement speed!

Before even Skullius knew it himself, he was already facing the temporarily incapacitated Benzard with his sword ready to strike, fierce winds gushing around its blade eagerly!

The sword's special effect was activated as the winds promised to shred Benzard's skin!

Benzard gritted his teeth as he tried to free his body and mind from the strange feeling of weightlessness but it was too late!

Skullius cackled as he slashed down with his sword, his many points of Strength causing the rock on the floor which was under Benzard's feet to tremble and part!

SLASH!

The sword slashed from Benzard's shoulder to side ferociously, the man who had eaten the attack opening his eyes wide in shock.

However...

Skullius' sockets also blazed with a shocked light!

"Huh?"

Where Benzard should have had a deep gash across his body was... no sign of an injury at all!

This shock gave Benzard the little push he needed to snap out of his stupor.

Skullius leapt back and analysed Benzard warily.

'Why didn't it work? I put my back into it, dammit!'

On the other side, Benzard finally felt the feeling in his limbs get restored, his weight being something that he was quite aware of now.



He was about to sigh in relief when his body suddenly jerked and he felt an immense wave of pain from his insides!

He vomited mouthfuls of blood, feeling the damage he had received to his organs somehow to be extensive!

'What happened?! That last sword attack didn't do anything to me. Then what could it be...'

It then hit Benzard.

That lightning blast!

As soon as he had been hit by it, he had felt drowsy and weightless. When he was in that confused state, was it possible that his body was receiving continuous damage while he was in a reverie, unable to respond or feel it?!

He only acknowledged this damage after he regained its senses.

Benzard's eyes looked to Skullius who was also looking at him, a myriad of thoughts racing through his head.

'This thing! I can't attack up close and it can deal this strange yet devastating level of damage. What a tricky opponent. However, I won't be losing this fight...' he thought.

Skullius on the other, other hand had come to know why his attack didn't work after scrolling through the description of his race.

Apparently, he had forgotten the flaw of the Fulgurant Bone Penetrator.

He could not inflict damage to opponents by normal means. Only attacks meant to penetrate could do damage!

Slashing, swiping, sweeping.

All those would LITERALLY deal no damage!

'I underestimated that flaw I guess. At least now, I understand it better. It even affects the weapon I'm using. Kek... But still... that's not enough for me to lose,' Skullius thought.

BOOOOM!

BZZZT! BZZZT!

The floor shuddered under the explosive power of Benzard who radiated thick bolts of red lightning.

His brown hair became laced in squirming streaks, his body becoming a bit more muscular and ripped, the damage he had received internally healing at a quick rate.

The red tattoos on his face gleamed as they suddenly turned black, Benzard's eyes turning golden from their usual grey and their ferocity taunting Skullius to approach if he dared.

'Passively increasing my strength won't work anymore. I might as well use my trump card and see what it's all about.'

The Penetrator was shocked by this display of strength.

Red bursts of lightning from Benzard graced his armour even from his distance.

'There it is again. His power increased. What happened to this guy?' Skullius thought.

Benzard had received the class of 'Perpetual Colossus' from Sause just hours ago.

As Benzard had said before. It was a simple class.

It increased his strength passively the more he used it, dying all of his traits with a red tint.

Strength, speed, agility, skills, recovery and all other aspects of his power would be increased.

With each passing day, he would experience a 3% growth to EVERY aspect of his strength individually, which he was continuing to receive as time went by for the current day.

The tattoo on his face represented the fact that he was using the powers of his class, and when they turned black, it meant that he was using his trump card.

With it, Benzard could summon a power increase of up to 5 days, which was 15% and apply it to one day, however the effect was temporary and he wouldn't gain any increase in strength for the days he had used up.

Even with all this, it wasn't complete as Sause... was still alive.

Benzard glared at Skullius and did something that was known to be impossible for someone in his Stage.

"Full Body Aura!" he roared, the entire area becoming drenched in bright and destructive bolts of lightning that stormed the entire place, causing a rumbling!

Skullius cackled.

He was not afraid.

He was excited.

He could have easily run away but this is what he needed.

A strong opponent to fight after his growth in strength.

Even as he felt the overbearing energy of the Aura from Benzard, he wasn't fazed, pumping out mana to cause a burst of Silentburn Levin to storm out of his body and compete with Benzard's lightning.

A glorious clash of light had officially begun.

## Chapter 98: Clash Of Flash (3)

~~~

[ Name : Skullius ]

[ Tier : 1 ]

[ Class : Vehement Bone Nullmancer ]

[ Level : 1 ]

[ Core : White ]

[ Race : Fulgurant Bone Penetrator ]

[ Inv. Status : Doomed (Adverse) x2, Cursed ]

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[ Stats ]

[ Strength : 310 ]

[Agility : 205 ]

[ Intelligence : 125 ]

[ Endurance : Infinite ]

[ Luck : Atrocious? ]

-----

[ Health : 670/670 ]

-----

[ Mana : 3120/3320 ]

-----

[ Null Life Essence : 1000/6000 ]

-----

[ Skills ]

[ Basic Mana Manipulation | Lv. 14 ]

[ Flesh It Like You Mean It | Lv. 2]

[ Static Limbo ]

[ Null Extraction ]

[ Unbound | Lv. 2 ]

[ Null Life Aura | Lv. 2 ]

[ Greater Communication | Lv. 2 ]

[ Artless Dodger | Lv.1 ]

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

[ Mana Bolt | Lv. 4 ]

[ Luminous Healing | Lv.1 ]

<Class>

[ Apostle Summon | Lv.2 ]

[ Apostle Armament | Lv.2 ]

[ Depths of Core | Lv. 2 ]

[ Bringer of All | Lv.1 ] NEW

<Racial>

[ Fulgurant Virulence | Lv. 1 ]

[ Fulgurous Space Virulence | Lv. 1]

[ Iridescent Levin Tempest | Lv. 1]

[ Ful Discharge | Lv. 1 ]

[ Silent Revelation of the Bright King | Lv. 1 ]

~~~

Skullius streaked across the room, dodging incoming bolts of lightning while feeling like he was going to be trampled by Benzard's Aura which stretched further than when he had used it before!

Benzard narrowed his eyes and drew back, mindful of being dragged back into that strange world by Skullius.

He chose to attack from a distance as the red, lightning filled Aura of his supported his attacks.

He swiped through the air with his sword, a visible slash with lightning that vibrated like static firing towards Skullius with immense speed!

Skullius couldn't react to such a profound speed as the only thing he saw was a bright red light zipping towards him!

However, something else could react in time!

The long chain around him sensed his distress and whipped itself against the incoming lightning!

TZAAAP!

The clash between the thick chain and the lightning rocked the ground, shattering a huge crater under, at the moment of impact!

However, Benzard didn't stop to gawk, launching several more attacks of the same level that blitzed their way to Skullius ferociously with earth shaking noises!

Skullius focused his mana into the chain, his passive generation of Silentburn Levin causing for the thick chain to become laced in the thick bolts of it as it went on to turn into a blur that shattered the lightning attacks thrown its master's way!

TZAAAP! TZAAP! BOOM!

The Chain of Damnation could move on its own reacting to situations by sensing its master's thoughts and intentions. It could also move decisively of its own accord.

It was roughly seven meters long and its ability to tank high powered attacks was just as powerful as the armour.

Skullius didn't back away, becoming covered in Levin as he dashed forward, his vision becoming like tunnelled as he hurtled towards the constantly retreating Benzard!

Benzard, lowered his stance as red lightning built around his body too!

He then thrust his sword forward, a terrifying blast of lightning as thick as a full grown man barrelling towards Skullius with a horrendous noise!

The bolt illuminated the entire space with a blinding bloody hue that signalled an end!

Skullius couldn't dodge such a quick attack.

It was only natural.

He refused to have the chains clash against the thick bolt either as he feared they would sustain damage and thus he decided to meet the attack head on with his own!

He thrust the Baleful Gale Reaper directly towards the attack the massive bolt, the Levin he produced covering the sword in a magnificent light!

When the two clashed, sparks flew along with a ridiculous noise as if a mad screech erupting!

BOOOM! SHCREEEE!

...!

Benzard couldn't help but be shocked when he saw what was before him!

The Baleful Gale Reaper tore through the bolt of lightning that he had sent Skullius way even though one could see it being broken down!

100% penetration damage!



Whenever an action of Skullius was sent with the intent to break through, to penetrate, 100% penetration damage would be added!

The red bolt was seamlessly cut through, Skullius laughing at how he had finally seen the correct way to do it!

To penetrate!

He zipped forward, arriving in front of Benzard for a head on clash!

As he approached, Benzard noticed that he wasn't dragged into that hellscape again!

'Does it only work when I approach it instead?' he thought, bringing his sword in a quick motion to parry Skullius' which stabbed forward with all his might packed behind it!

TIING!

Skullius' sword was blown back, the Penetrator staggering as he felt the immense strength coming from Benzard's hand.

'Damn! He's stronger than me!' Skullius complained.

Benzard gracefully whipped his sword tens of times against Skullius, the speed with which he made the movements not being discernible to Skullius at all!

The Chains of Damnation responded, but could only block so many of the slashes before a whole bunch of the high powered attacks reached Skullius!

SLASH! SLASH! SLASH...

Skullius barely felt anything as the armour protected him, merely having shallow gashes from the onslaught!

'That's one strong armour. That thing itself is terrible at using its weapon, though. What if I switch to this...' Benzard remarked internally before he switched his sword to his left hand and launched a straight punch towards Skullius!

Once again, Skullius couldn't even see the attack coming, but he felt the danger!

He drew mana from his core to incite his body to produce more Levin which gathered into his eyes without him commanding it!

Skullius' sockets brightened up just as they had when he had evolved, lightning threatening to spill out and this time... it did!

TZUUM!

A gradient of light and dark blue poured out of Skullius sockets in the form of two lightning beams stormed towards Benzard!

..!

Having already been in the middle of flinging his fist, Benzard could only do so much in the way of dodging the frightful beams as he recalled what one bolt had done to him before!

He withdrew his punch and opted to dodge, but the tangling burst of Levin grazed his shoulder, roasting his flesh and causing him serious pain that made him emit a low grunt!

Yet... Benzard didn't let this impede his goal.

He swiped with his sword towards Skullius' unguarded head with his left hand, the blade reaching the Penetrator in an instant as eager and red hot gale sought to obliterate it in one blow!

The faithful Chains of Damnation came to the rescue again, wrapping themselves around Benzard's sword and pulling it in the opposite direction to reduce its momentum!

Benzard was a little surprised by how fast these chains were but he didn't relent, flinging his right hand in the form of fist into Skullius' armoured chest while rings of lightning powered his attack!

BOOM!

A red shockwave emerged on impact along with the sound of collision akin to two hunks of metal knocking against each other!

The Penetrator flew and smashed the wall on the other side!

His large figure had been flung by the much shorter Benzard which looked comical from the side!

As soon as Skullius was planted against the wall, the figure of Benzard appeared in the air, 3 meters away, wary of being affected by [The Forge]!

He flung his sword which was tinged with a bloody red, the weapon piercing through the air like a genuine bolt of lightning from the thick hand of Benzard who was airborne!

Skullius felt the crushing pressure from the approaching sword and his four sockets blazed with fierce flame!

'It doesn't seem like I can win this by using my fighting skills. I'm a sockethole when it comes to combat after all. So...' Skullius thought to himself, before he inserted mana into the armour, its storage function spewing something he had salvaged from the first chest...

A shadow loomed in front of him with a grand image, its appearance causing everyone to gawk in shock...

Chapter 99: Red Or Blue?

'For this creature to possess such a thing...' Sause who had been paying attention to the fight thought. Ever since Skullius used a Veneration art, he hadn't made any sudden moves as he wanted to assure that Benzard wasn't attacked by Fulgardt's remains instead.

Looking at Fulgardt's hollow eyes made Sause twitch and shuddered but he had to.

Therefore, he and the corpse had been stationary while he continued to release stronger bursts of strength to keep the skeleton's attention. This ultimately helped that skeleton which Benzard was fighting too, but he had no choice. Not when his powers were suppressed within this Labyrinth.

He could only observe and be surprised by Benzard's opponent and his skillset. The skeleton, as he could only call it, was definitely weaker but tenacious.

He had thought that this was the younger challenger who had walked into the spiral grove doors, turning this way somehow, but the way the armoured skeleton fought was so different from the desperate young man whose every movement looked to be a pitiful try at clawing at a brutal destiny.

The thing it had pulled out now was an item only a few knew about, especially from his time. He could choose to warn Benzard about it but he decided not to.

After all... he had been wanting to see how the brown-haired man performed with his newfound power which would never be complete until he died. This was no longer a simple investment anymore. It was a legacy that he had to groom.

A quick sword decked in glorious and bright lightning razed through the air as it hurtled towards Skullius who had a faint shadow looming over his body from the item he had taken out.

All items he withdrew from storage would appear anywhere he wanted them to within a one meter radius of him with a thought, which was very convenient.

A large scroll was unfurled before the Penetrator, having a dark green colour and sentences of bright golden text that were overplayed by a complicated magic structure!

The scroll stood between him and the sword and when the weapon reached it, it... sunk into the scroll!

The bright golden texts over the surface of the scroll glowed as the entire item actually absorbed Benzard's sword and dancing red lightning.

Benzard wore a shocked appearance as the attack he expected to do damage was actually thwarted so easily!

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[All Eater]

<Legendary>

A scroll created by an ancient group of mages who thought of cultivating their own magic to be a taboo towards their favoured Deity, Suzamete. They chose to master inscription of the highest order, in their years managing to create a sequence of runes that could store any form of attack at the Incandescent Stage and below.

-Special Effect-

Stored attacks are kept in Stagnant Space and released at the user's discretion at 10 times the power and speed with a 10% chance to incorporate any of the user's attributes and traits over said attack at the moment of release.

<Currently stored attacks - 1/2>

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Skullius looked at this with his socket flames flaring and he released an eerie cackle, his mind sending his command to the Chains of Damnation to storm towards his opponent!

In a flash, Benzard who was in mid-air found himself bound by the chains and in the next moment, he was reeled in at tremendous speeds!

The Chains of Damnation caused a cold and nerve wrecking pain to assault Benzard the moment they touched his skin!

It was like a seeping winter chill combined with constant beatings, just on the inside!

He screamed and momentarily lost his cool as this pain had been unexpected!

Skullius pumped Silentburn Levin into the Chains of Damnation, the entire area becoming dyed in a blue light as thick bolts visibly ran through the chains intending to incinerate Benzard!

Benzard's memory of this lightning made him frown on top of the ugly expression he wore from the terrible pain but he had no intention of getting struck by it!

"Don't underestimate me!" Benzard bellowed as his body pulled in the aimlessly wandering lightning and contained it in his body!

The veins in his body became visible from his skin as they carried bursts of lightning within them!

In the next moment, a radiant expulsion of light exploded outwards and his figure vanished from the captivity of the chains!

Before Skullius could even wonder where Benzard had flitted off to, a terrible pounding came from the back of his skull!

A fist charged with horrendous, condensed lightning struck him in the skull and he unceremoniously smashed into the ground with the same impact as that of a cannonball launching point blank into the hard earth!

BOOOOM!

Skullius felt his skull break apart, a portion of it being left open as the void that was within it was revealed!

"This man actually shattered my dome! This is bad!" Skullius thought as he tried to get back up but Benzard immediately pinned him down with his knee and his radiant arm flashing with red lightning above his bright look!

"This guy will really kill me at this point!" Skullius thought. He knew what he needed to do but he hesitated.

HE JUST HAD TO PUT ON THE GODDAMN HELMET!

But...

He hesitated.

The helmet... was atrocious!

It was ugly!

It was horrendous!

Yet... he had no choice.

He didn't know who the Null Devil was, but Skullius put meeting this guy as a priority and having a serious bro to bro discussion!

Let with no choice, Skullius summoned the helmet which immediately covered his head just in time to block the thunderous fist which came down to finish him!

BANG!

Benzard was once again shocked!

This tall undead or whatever managed to react to his deadly moves each time!

He had been too shaken to use his stronger moves before as it involved getting closer to Skullius which passively dealt him damage through [The Forge] but now, he had decided to go with a speedy attack in hopes that it would work better.

Without his sword, he didn't have much of his move set and worse yet...

The sweat and burns that were continuously appearing on his body were a testament to the fact the skill, [The Forge] was biting at him still!

Despite his speed!

Despite his ferocity!

The moment he had taken the opportunity to appear behind Skullius, the view of the volcanic hellscape had appeared, the intense heat not showing mercy to him at all!

'I'll finish it! I can't be defeated by mere heat and stand proud as a warrior!' he thought as he punched into Skullius again, his mind conjuring the image of a burning settlement that he was all too familiar with!

BOOOM!

Skullius' armoured skull which was facing downwards, dug into the shattered floor!

Benzard punched into him again, the ground rippling, trails of lightning racing outwards while the helmet started showing signs of damage!

As he raised his fist to deliver another blow, a thick coagulation of mana in the air stopped him!

He looked up and saw a massive, dark thundercloud swirling above him with a bursts of lightning that had a gradient of two shades of blue squirming within it!

In that instance where he looked up, the thick Chains of Damnation wrapped around his body firmly while the figure of Skullius suddenly turned and gripped him tight, with its armoured arms!

...!

When Benzard looked at Skullius' face, he couldn't help but shudder!

The hideousness!

The atrocity!

Even he emitted a perturbed 'urgh'!



A deformed face design lay at front of the helmet; two eyes that were in no way symmetrical or aligned swirling on the face of the armour in circles constantly like leaves in water while emitting a dull blue light, a sickeningly grinning mouth with razor sharp teeth at the bottom remaining in its spot!

The final touches were a soft smoky vortex and two horns that were on either side of the helmet, in different asymmetrical positions!

This is what Skullius feared about the helmet. There was a way to make it look better but it was too much of a hassle!

Benzard tore himself out of his stupor and started to generate more red lightning, but unfortunately, his opponent wasn't fazed!

The billows of clouds above gathered the Silentburn Levin at the very centre, Benzard beginning to lose his cool as he found that getting out of this hold in the short run was impossible!

Skullius brought his armoured face up to Benzard's and cackled loudly with pure joy.

"You're about to die, just like Reon and Denille," he said, having remembered the names of the people who wanted to use him and throw him away. "I enjoyed fleshing them up but you... I'm going to enjoy killing a sockethole like you the most!"

...!

Benzard was shocked!

Was this?!

No way! It couldn't be!

The last part to what Skullius said wasn't true as he didn't hate Benzard the most but it would do well to strike a final dash of fear. At least he thought it would.

At that moment, a powerful skill was unleashed, packing tremendous bursts of Silentburn Levin and bringing them down with true penetratory intent over the two bodies below!

Fulgurous Space Virulence!

Chapter 100: A Deal

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[Fulgurous Space Virulence | Lv.1]

Infect the surrounding space with your mana to generate thunderclouds that produce and build up highly concentrated Silentburn Levin which can incinerate the target. Deals 40% Serenity damage.

Mana Requirements: 2000 Mana Points

Duration: ---

Cooldown: 1 hour

~~~

BOOOOM!

On impact, the vibrant Levin rocked the ground with an especially bright and powerful intensity that made a large section of the Labyrinth tremble.

The heat produced in this moment was so intense that the floor instantly melted, a crater that was roughly 7 meters opening up on the ground!

"ARRRRGHHHH!"

As the thundercloud discharged all of the lightning it had stored, Benzard roared as he used all his remaining mana which had been amplified by him sacrificing the energy increase he was to receive in the next five days!

A thick layer of Aura which he had been using offensively this whole time was coating around him, shining brightly as it tried to fend off the thick, continuous bolts that fell on his back!

Unfortunately for him, his red lightning was being overpowered!

In a matter of seconds, he felt the Levin penetrate his coating and start to burn at his skin with a voracious greed!

To some, it would seem that Benzard wasn't as strong as he was supposed to be.

Which was true.

Receiving a 3% boost to every aspect of your abilities which created a stacking effect would normally make someone into an absolute monster, especially if the source of the power was a hidden class, but...

When it came to switching classes, hidden ones could overwrite advanced and normal classes but the transition from what someone already knew could affect one's ability to use their newfound powers.

Thus, it usually took even the greatest prodigies a few months to effectively gain a better grasp over their new abilities after a switch and getting their bodies to adjust and use the full benefits offered.

This was different from Skullius' case where he didn't have a class in his Discount Human form was essentially hand held through the process of using this new power by the Labyrinth.

CRACKLE! BOOOM!

The contest between red and blue ended after the red couldn't keep up and was penetrated by the blue, Benzard feeling the full force of the Silentburn Levin utterly destroy his back!

He roared in pain as the Levin dug into his flesh and set it ablaze!

Thoughts sprang into his mind one by one, being those of regret and rage. As someone who had seen a tragic event and held such bitterness after he had watched the people he loved die, that darkness had never truly left him.

Even when he was taught to be honourable by the Knights, a dark side of him would emerge from him from time to time like when he had threatened both Reon and Denille with a character that was diametrically opposed to what he usually was like.

When his ideals were challenged or trampled, his temper would flare.

Yet... in this moment, he could only get incinerated as Silentburn Levin not only burnt him up but doused him with a stronger dose of Serenity damage that took away his reason and offered peace while vicious damage ensued within him.

Skullius had been relentless.

He had only withdrawn the Chains of Damnation when the thunderclouds dropped the Levin.

Benzard was taking the damage while his armour was.... completely unaffected!

The Penetrator had imagined that it would get damaged even a little bit but it seemed to be completely fine.

This led Skullius to question.

'Where do these items that he received from [Unbound] come from again?'

The Levin finally stopped and Skullius rose with the half charred body of Benzard which he tossed aside on the searing hot ground.

He didn't waste time or prepare to monologue, wielding the Baleful Gale Reaper and stabbing at Benzard without hesitation!

"Stop!" A thunderous voice boomed from the distance.

It was Sause who had watched the exchange. He gazed at Benzard's body which was no longer buff and was only slightly disappointed.

'His body isn't used to such power yet I suppose. This class is probably more suited to those that are more strength oriented. He doesn't exactly fit the bill. He wasn't even able to fully absorb 1% of the power. <Sigh>.'

Skullius gazed at Sause from behind his helmet which allowed him to see properly regardless of the constantly swirling eye holes.

"I'm in the middle of something here, bro," Skullius said in response.

"I can't let you kill him, unfortunately. He's quite important to me aha ha," Sause said with playfulness returning to his speech.

If only he could just make a quick movement without Fulgardt interfering, he could save Benzard who was at death's door and kill Skullius.

He wondered if Fulgardt would defend this creature too though. He took a step forward but Fulgardt responded by also drawing in closer.

Sigh.

'Why does he get a free pass?'

"Well.. he's not important to me, large bro." Skullius said.

"Hmm?" Sause raised a brow. "Is it as I surmised before? Are you the same young challenger who entered those doors?"

Sause recalled the name he had been called by Skullius before. The frail human who had been facing Fulgardt had too used the term 'large bro' to refer to him.

"So what if I am?" Skullius said while preparing to summon the Voiding Key at any moment.

'I see.' Sause thought. 'If that is the case, then I'm sure he has some means to escape this place. I doubt he entered and failed to obtain something important in there. Though, he probably didn't get the legacy of Fulgardt what with him not being human. He shouldn't have been able to enter here in the first place. What trickery did he use?

Hmmm. Still, given that he had the All Eater scroll...'

"The power you wield is far from what Fulgardt had. What is it? Were you... this, from the very beginning?" Sause questioned.

"Look bro, I don't have to answer your questions, you know? If you don't mind, let me finish my business," Skullius said as he once more tried to plunge his sword into Benzard.

"Wait! I have proposition for you. It might benefit us both," Sause said with a drop of sweat trickling down the side of his face. If Benzard died it wouldn't matter even if he managed to get out of here. "I am quite the legendary figure in my home. I can command vast amounts of anything you want to be given to you.

I will honour my promise if you get me out of this place. Me and that boy."

Skullius halted.

That was quite the grand proposal. However, to Skullius it didnt mean much as he didn't have much of an appreciation of material things with the most he had of such a quality being his growing love for weapons.

"What makes you think I can do something like that bro?" Skullius asked, feigning ignorance.

Sause narrowed his eyes.

"Because you entered into a place where an important legacy was stored and came out with confidence still, aha ha. You do have a means to escape this place."

Skullius didn't have much to say to that. He couldn't find the words to refute but there was simply no reason for him to indulge this giant.

He was on the verge of dismissing this offer when his mind churned out a singular objective that he was striving to accomplish.

He didn't have any connection that could potentially help right now and from the looks of it, this strong looking giant could be of assistance. Maybe.

He gazed intently at Sause from behind the helmet and spoke solemnly.

"If you can do something small for me in return, I will consider helping you, bro."

"What would that be?"

"First. How do I know you will keep your word?"

"You should learn to trust more..." Sause said with a low chuckle.

Inside, he was agitated at having to negotiate with this small creature. He was used to compelling weaker creatures into submission simply by speaking but things didn't seem so simple with this undead.

He would be damned if he allowed himself to stay in this place though as he didn't know if another method to escape would arise in the future.

To put it simply, he was desperate.

'It's my fault in the end. I was too greedy. I probably should have had those two grab him and then compel him to use the Key he has aha ha. Who knew even I could learn,' Sause thought.

Sause suddenly grabbed his pinky finger's nail and pulled on it until it was detached from his finger!

Drops of blood fell from the where the nail had been removed and Sause used them to smear the nail.

He then held onto the nail and injected a stream of energy into it that made the object shine for a moment.

The nail began to release a soft red glow afterwards and Sause flung it at Skullius who caught it warily.

"That is my guarantee that I will keep my word. It's an object that essentially guarantees that I commit to the favour I owe. I cannot do you harm before then. Of course, it will only activate if you agree ," Sause said.

Skullius pondered as he held the nail which was larger than half of his frame.

He analysed it with his guidance field to verify if what Sause had said was true or not.

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[Tie of Exchange: Nail of Sausifillis Roughborne]

The individual Sausifillis has pledged a nail coated with his blood and mana as a medium for the exchange. He is the prime attendant for the Tie of Exchange and is bound to not break his word after offering it.

With this item, the lesser attendant can summon Sausifillis to pay the favour he owes for the exchange.

Individual Skullius is yet to pledge anything as a medium for the exchange. Would you like to pledge?

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"Uhm... it seems he's not lying. What do I pledge though?" Skullius thought after reading the description multiple times.

"Use your mana. It's all a lesser attendant needs to pledge," Sause said.



Skullius thought about it and decided it probably wasn't harmful if the guidance field didn't warn him about.

He injected his mana and he felt himself tied through the mana to the nail he held.

"It is done," said Sause. "Now, tell me. What do you wish for?"

Sause was grinning on the inside. This was definitely an unfair exchange. He was the one benefitting most from this, after all, what could this little creature that he could kill with the flick of a finger ask for that he couldn't do?