

## Vile 1001

### [Chapter 1001 \[Bonus \] The Cure For Pain Is More Pain P2](#)

"Tch tch tch. You failed this mission as well, Old Idril. Just what I expected from you. Another pathetic performance. Another excellent reason to punish you."

The Paladin of Pain— Reva Rain said in a condescending tone. She smoked from her pencil cigarette as she continued.

"At least take responsibility for your failure and stop screaming. A high-ranking entity like mine has to come down in this filth to teach you a lesson in humility.

You should be glad that I'm giving you special treatment. And you are not even grateful for all that I do for you. What a shame... what a shame..."

The green-eyed old man had lost all the anger in his eyes. It was because that emotion was lost along with the huge amount of blood his wounds had gushed out due to the torture. His Adept-ranked body was only allowed to assure its survival. Otherwise, he would have died long ago.

Reva also had to admit that this old man had a special talent for bearing the torture he was subjected to. All of her reasons for torturing him were nothing but bullshit.

The Paladin of Pain wanted to see this old man break in front of her completely. So she would find ways to do just that— giving him tough missions knowing he would fail and then blaming the failure on him. This was so she could torture him on her whims.

Shalen Craft was Eren's handler. She was standing not too far away from the two. This was a scene she had seen countless times. Even an assassin like her felt a bit of pity for the old man. But it wasn't enough to make her stop the Paladin of Pain from what she was doing.

Eren coughed some more and spat sideways, prompting Reva to retract her neck. The tortured man looked lifelessly at Reva before replying in a lifeless manner.

'How... How was that my fault? The info was all wrong. The healer in that party was nothing like the profile you had given us of him. He could use silent sound-element spells to heal himself and his allies.

No matter how we tried... no matter how boldly we attacked, those fuckers kept on getting up until we understood the reason behind that. By the... cough... cough cough...'

Eren started coughing again because Reva had released another cloud of smoke on his face. His eyes, which were already bloody, had managed to turn redder than before due to his severe coughing. He was only able to continue after a while.

'By the... by the time we realized it, it was already too late. The mission was doomed to fail from the very beginning with the wrong...'

Slap. Slap. Slap. Slap. Slap.

Eren's face turned from left to right and then from right to left under the constant barrage of slaps Reva had unleashed on him. His cheekbones and his jaw were about to crack before Reva stopped slapping him.

Eren's face turned bloody and his cheeks bled from many places at once. The skin tore from extreme blunt force trauma instead of getting cut.

"Tch. Tch. Tch. Excuses and more excuses. Is this how an Escalon guild member conducts himself? Didn't Shalen teach you any manners?"

And what's this bullshit about wrong information? You should be able to accomplish any mission successfully with the wrong information or with no information at all.

You could target the healer first. You could yank out their vocal cords to prevent them from casting spells. You could have become a fucking killing machine and butchered your opponents up before they even had a chance to retaliate.

Whose mistake is that? When will you take responsibility for your lack of skills and planning?"

The green-eyed man remained silent when he heard Reva Rain's explanation of why he was responsible for the mission's failure. He became silent because he found it to be logical.

A chuckle was heard in the underground facility for the first time since its creation. Soon, that chuckle turned into laughter.

'She finally broke him.'

Shalen Craft sighed as she watched the green-eyed man laughing like a maniac. Some shred of life returned to his emerald-green eyes as he spoke in a grim tone.

"Heh! You are right. You are absolutely right, Paladin of Pain. That was my mistake. That was all my mistake. You'd have to forgive me. Here's what I have learned from my mistakes. Please correct me if I'm wrong.

First- Always take out the healer first.

Second- Yank out the healers' vocal cords to prevent them from casting silent spells.

Third- To butcher my enemies, I must become a fucking killing machine.

Noted... all duly noted. By the way... Madam Paladin of Pain... There was this question I had that I wanted to ask. Would you mind answering?"

Reva Rain was a bit taken aback by the old man's demeanor and the peculiar shine in his eyes. She felt like she was messing with someone who she shouldn't mess with at all. But she discarded all of her instincts after considering the situation he was in.

"Speak."

Eren smirked at Reva Rain before responding.

"You are a healer too, right? What happens when your enemy adopts the same strategy for you as well? With your dying breath, will you curse your enemy at that time? Or will you be awed by their efficient killing mechanism?"

Reva Rain was tongue-tied when she heard Eren's grim voice that sounded like a prophecy to her ears. For some reason, goosebumps formed on her skin as she looked into his emerald-green eyes.

"No answer, huh? I guess there's only one way to find out. Hehehehe!"

The Paladin of Pain stepped back as she felt Eren's presence that was turning sinister by the second. It was Shalen who found out that the X-shaped torture device had malfunctioned for some reason and allowed Eren to use mana for himself. She operated the device and controlled the old man's presence.

Reva Rain cursed herself for getting scared by an old helpless man. She made an unsightly expression before operating on the runes on the X-shaped structure Eren was pinned on. The stakes lodged inside his body started rotating and spilling blood. However, this time, the old man didn't scream.

"Hehehe... uuuugh! The cure for pain... is more pain."

The green-eyed man thought out loud as he faced the mindless torture he was undergoing.

#### [Chapter 1002 There Is No Such Thing As A Painless Lesson](#)

A staring contest.

That was what was taking place between Reva and Eren. Reva spoke with an irritated expression on her face when she finally couldn't take it anymore.

"I didn't know the White Raven guild master liked to stare at random strangers without even extending formal introductions."

Reva said before releasing her aura. She was an Expert ranker just like Eren. However, she was on the cusp of breaking into the next rank. Plus, she was an accomplished ranker with plenty of accumulation. As a result, the mana signatures of Paladin of Pain established her as a particularly cruel ranker.

Eren smiled as he was subjected to Reva's aura. He released a lungful of smoke in Reva's direction before responding.

"You already know my name and I know yours. Why bother?"

More importantly, did you find out what happened to Shalen Craft? Brilliant girl, if you ask me. It's a shame she was somehow pulled into a royal conspiracy and died.

Sadly, we can't bring her back. But we can at least find out how she was killed, right?"

Eren remained unfazed by Reva's intrusive act. He knew that even a cruel ranker like her cared for Shalen who she had practically raised from the ground to the top. Just like the Paladin of Pain, the butcher liked to strike at his enemies where it hurts the most. One could say that he had learned it from her.

Reva was a smart woman. She looked at Eren's playful nature and immediately understood that he was trying to incite her just to see her react. It was as if this was not their first time talking to each other.

Reva smirked. Immediately her aura changed and it started to incite a certain emotion in Eren. She wanted to show that only she could play with others' emotions and not the other way around. Although she cared a bit about Shalen Craft, the fact that she died had no visible impact on her.

A subtle mana pulse was released. And it was the tell-tale sign of an Ability getting used.

Eren first realized that he was sick. That he was mortal again and suffering from various diseases all at once. Then he felt hungry - as if he had been starving for weeks on end. After that came the feeling of unexplained aggression. And finally, he felt that he had achieved everything he came to achieve and it was okay for him to die.

Eren felt different shades of all those emotions in a fraction of a moment while he was being exposed to Reva's aura. If there was any other ranker other than him standing in front of her, they would have been brought to their knees by her peculiar Ability.

Eren knew about the Paladin of Pain's Ability the most. He had been subjected to its effects many times just for her entertainment. But unlike last time, he wasn't affected by any of the feelings she was trying to induce him. And in doing so, he denied her the pleasure of breaking in front of her.

'Hmm? She is a demonic ranker, Eren. Her demon soul fragment, however, is put to sleep and restricted. She is an initiated demonic ranker.'

Eren heard Alephee's words in his head and raised his eyebrows in shock. Even after knowing Reva Rain from the past timeline, he didn't know anything related to demons or demonic rankers. So it took him some time to process it.

Reva's expression changed when she saw that Eren was not affected by her aura that carried the effects of her Ability. His response to it made her eerily uncomfortable. She felt that what was deep inside her was trying to warn her— either kneel or get the fuck away from this man.

Everything starts looking yellowish when one has jaundice.

Eren felt it odd that as soon as he learned the existence of demonic rankers, there was someone from those groups standing in front of him. Especially someone like Reva who he knew from his past timeline.

However, he quickly concluded that there was a reason for that. First was the fact that demonic rankers were relatively stronger than their peers. As a result, they became more successful in their ranking journeys and other aspects of life than the rest. So it was natural that some of them gathered inside the capital city of Edin where people with influence and power were concentrated.

The reason he was not aware of Reva's status as a demonic ranker in the previous timeline was that he was not qualified to know. He could only blame his past self for being incompetent and uneducated.

Reva dispersed her aura when she found out that it did not affect Eren. She could have tried suppressing Eren even more. She could have said something clever to intimidate him in return. But she chose not to do that. It was as if every fiber in her body wanted her not to engage in conflict with him. For the first time in her life after a long while, the Paladin of Pain felt like prey standing in front of an Apex predator.

'This man... Something about him just creeps me out.'

The revelation bothered and intimidated her at the same time. There was only one person who induced those same feelings in her— Demonmir.

Once Reva retracted her presence, Eren narrowed her eyes on her. He stepped forward and got within a breath's distance of her.

"Do... Do we know each other? No... how do you know me on a personal level?"

Reva couldn't help asking Eren this question out of frustration. She could sense Eren's behavior and tell it wasn't his first time getting affected by her aura. She tried her hardest to remember if she had ever met someone who even remotely looked like Eren. But so far she had drawn a blank.

Eren flashed a subtle smile at her before responding. His voice was calm, his eyes the reflection of calm water.

"I have come to realize that there's no such thing as a painless lesson in life. The lessons that truly hold some value will be taught to us at the cost of losing something in return.

We can walk away from the pain. Or we can work through those lessons to find out that we have been reformed by the very pain that tried to break us.

You don't know it, Reva Rain. But it was you who helped me make peace with the feelings of pain. You helped me see past those feelings and reach for what lies on the other side of them.

So as a gesture of conveying thanks... I'm offering you a deal."

### [Chapter 1003 Pain Is Inevitable](#)

"So as a gesture of conveying thanks, I'm offering you a deal."

Eren spoke in a calm, authoritative voice. Reva was about to open her mouth to say something. But she stopped midway because she felt like she had lost her voice. Her unspoken words were not heard for some reason.

The butcher's voice turned cold. He almost whispered his words into Reva's ears directly.

"Tell your Escalon guild to back off. It will not assure you of your personal safety. But it will at least allow your guild to survive. It might also reduce your suffering.

Either way... I'll come for you. And when that day arrives, you will realize that pain is inevitable for everyone, even for someone who is called the Paladin of Pain."

Eren said before releasing his aura for a fraction of a second. And everything in Reva's vision turned red. She felt like she was suddenly thrown deep into a pool of blood and carnage. The illusion was so strong that Reva could almost taste the metallic flavor of blood.

A chill ran down Reva's spine when she felt his presence affect her. Her instincts screamed at her to leave Edin this instant. Even her mana defense layer was compromised because of the state she was in mentally.

Then the butcher's presence disappeared and she felt no warning signs coming from him all of a sudden. As if what she had experienced was just an illusion. As if he was as harmless as the word harmless could mean. And that feeling scared her even more.

"Hehehe. Have a great day, Miss Paladin of Death. Hope we meet soon under different circumstances. I'm really looking forward to it."

Eren said before walking past Reva Rain, leaving her stunned at her position. She could hear his chuckles from behind her that almost sounded like a demonic laugh. Or it was even more sinister than even the demons were capable of.

Lightning struck and Eren vanished, bringing some relief to Reva's agitated state. With a stressed expression on her face, she turned back and looked around. She felt like she couldn't count on her mana sense for some reason.

Reva clenched her fists and felt angry at herself for getting intimidated by a mere toddler who hadn't even completed his graduation. She had to admit that Eren was a better ranker than her because of the speed of his progress. Despite their talent and hard work, one's safety couldn't be guaranteed in the land of Anfang after all.

Reva stomped her feet and made a declaration to herself.

'Hmph! Tell Escalon guild to back off? Why would I do that? Why would I engage in a personal conflict with him just because he killed Shali? I.... No... I have to personally get involved to teach this man a lesson. Yes!'

Reva didn't like that Eren was trying to manipulate her into acting his way. She decided to retaliate in her own way. And in doing so, she was still subjected to how the butcher wanted her to act anyway.

'I have many ways to deal with this pompous young duck. I'll just have to make my moves smartly.

Let this stupid graduation event get over. He'll soon discover why I am called the Paladin of Pain.'

Reva Rain thought to herself before disappearing from her position as well. Even if Eren seemed way too strong for his ranking status to her, he was still her junior and had just broken into the Expert rank. She believed that she could still deal with him given the right settings.

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Eren knew that he was short on time. But he couldn't help looking at the grandeur of the city once he stepped through the giant doors. He quickly hired a flying vehicle and a vibrant cityscape view unfolded in front of him.

The vehicle Eren hired was different from that of Duja Katak. Eren's vehicle had three large glass spheres serving as passenger spaces. Each sphere was spacious enough to accommodate at least three rankers comfortably.

The spheres were connected using golden metal plates and rods etched with elemental runes. The top edge of the vehicle also had red drapes reaching for the ground for added visual appeal. The vehicle had two rotor blades and a tail rotor, which could be controlled using one's mana sense through the array placed in the driver seat.

The vehicle provided Eren with an unobstructed view of the city as he drove around the city. He already knew where to go using the vehicle's spectral display. It was just that he was taking his sweet time getting there.

Runic structures and towers. Aptly placed elemental pools. And the Water of Leith connected all these factors in threads like one big web. It was as if the whole city was one giant array.

Such arrangements created a unique atmosphere in the city, increasing the quality and density of mana across all its grades for various uses. Living in Edin was akin to being affected by a certain buff effect that increased one's chances to progress forward in their ranking journeys just by living inside its borders.

Of course, this buff had limitations. But that didn't stop the rich and influential from gaining a foothold in Edin.

'Damn. My city could learn a thing or two from this place. The city of White Raven is at least 200 years behind Edin in achieving the same level of depth.'

Eren sighed in his head as he looked around the city's structures and the crowd below.

He didn't feel any shame in downvoting his city when it was pitted against Edin in his head. He also felt that it wasn't his fault that his city hadn't achieved the same level of greatness as Edin. After all, the city of White Raven was no more than an infant when it was compared to Edinburgh's capital city.

'Hmm? What are those two doing here?'

Eren managed to identify two rankers among the crowd when he was flying over a floating island in the sky. He knew them from his academy days and decided to meet them.

Marla and Almera were seen bargaining at the rankers' market. Wtt

#### [Chapter 1004 Reuniting With Marla And Almera](#)

"Are you taking me for a fool?"

You listen to me, you conniving vixen. This lightning-element Red Constrictor Grass is not worth 60K Extols no matter how you look at it. This is way too expensive even by capital's standards.

The only reason I'm even interested in talking to you is that I couldn't find this bloody thing anywhere. But being rare doesn't warrant such a steep price hike. Hmph!"

Marla was furious and her anger could be seen on her red nose and red cheeks. Or it might be because she was just a teensy-weensy intoxicated. She turned around to look at a certain ranker and made a "get a load of this harlot" face before commenting.

"Did you hear that price, Almera? Unbelievable! Imagine the kind of booze I could buy with that much money."

Marla almost managed to push the seller away with her mana fluctuations alone. Almera stood behind her, feeling uncomfortable with her captain's behavior.

Marla was seen wearing a cream-colored shirt under her brown sleeveless leather armor. She was wearing black pants that matched perfectly. Her bodacious figure couldn't be hidden under her clothes.

Marla had changed her hairstyle from the last time. She had long hair that reached her waistline. Her light blue eyes were complemented by the prominent earrings she was wearing. Her cherry-red lips made her gorgeous face even more attractive.

Marla had stepped into the Expert rank a few days after Eren was done contacting her for an invitation to join the White Raven guild. She couldn't take him on that offer because of the graduation event. After the event, she would be relieved of her responsibilities as a professor in LA.

Almera was seen in her usual adventurer's clothes as well. She too looked beautiful and full of youth. The ranking breakthroughs both ladies had achieved in their respective ranks had allowed them to refine their looks.

However, Marla was still Marla. She still liked drinking and creating a fuss. She would often be quite a handful for Almera, who was stuck in the Adept rank for months on end at this point.

The ranger was about to pull Marla away from being on the seller lady's face. But it turned out she didn't have to. Because they both sensed something flying towards them and looked up.

A flying vehicle attracted the attention of leaders who were buying and selling things on the market. It stopped at a corner and a black-haired young man stepped out of it.

Marla and Almera both looked at each other when they saw the young man's face. Marla even used her mana sense to verify the mana signatures. It had been a while since they last saw each other after all.

"It really is him."

Marla mumbled as Eren walked towards her. She got rid of her booze-induced temper and sobered up after such a pleasant surprise was given to her.

Marla blinked once and saw Eren standing in front of her. She saw him flash a mild smile at her before speaking up.

"Long time no see, Expert Marla. Congratulations on your breakthrough."

Marla smiled back before returning the compliment.

"Hehehe. Thank you. Long time indeed. It's a pleasure to see you here. I was looking forward to this graduation event because of you.

And congratulations on your breakthrough into the Expert rank as well, Ex... Naaah... Eren. I'll just call you Eren from now on."

"Haha. Fine with me. I'll call you Marla as well." Eren laughed before looking at Almera. He nodded at her before speaking up.

"How are you doing, Almera? Does Marla's drunken antics still give you headaches?"

Almera chuckled before agreeing with him.

"You bet, Eren. She has started drinking even more these days, creating a ruckus wherever she is."



Marla scrunched her nose and made an "I am not happy with what you said about me" face looking at Almera. Folding her hands under her heavy bosom, she let out a discontented sigh.

"Sheesh... stop exaggerating you two. I don't drink that much."

Eren looked at Marla as if an old man was looking at a wasted youth. He sighed dramatically and spoke.

"The first step in Alcoholics Anonymous is accepting the fact that you are an addict. We can't get anywhere with you not accepting a simple truth, M'lady."

'Hehehe. How you of all people can preach about how to recover from addiction with a straight face is beyond me.'

While looking around him, Eren ignored Alephee's voice in his head and continued.

"Let's change the venue, shall we? Almera, and Marla, you two must be heading to the graduation event as well, right? Hop on my ride. We'll talk on the way."

Eren pointed behind him. Marla and Almera nodded enthusiastically. But then she thought of something and looked back. After staring at the cute-yet-cunning Adept rank lady seller for a second or two, she made her a final offer.

"20K Extols. That's my final offer for that shitty old herb you have. How about that?"

The middle-aged lady was looking at Marla's meeting with Eren with quite an interest. By looking at the vehicle Eren rented for himself, the businesswoman in her saw that Eren was loaded. She ignored Marla right away before speaking straight to Eren.

"Expert Eren is it? Don't you want to impress your ladies by buying the ranking resources they need? I am selling everything in my lot for a measly 400K Extols.

I'm sure lady Marla and that lass Almera would be very happy with you if you did. A lady's heart is always up for the claim if she finds a man who can give her what she needs after all."

Marla and Almera both looked at each other and were too stunned to speak right away. They felt awkward that they were being called Eren's women.

Almera had first thought that Marla was stepping out of line when she called the lady seller a vixen. But she had to say that Marla's assessment of this very vixen was spot on.

### [Chapter 1005 Vixen And The Wolf](#)

Marla and Almera both wanted to object to the vixen's convenient assumption.

They both knew that Eren could afford the stuff they needed without breaking a sweat. But that didn't mean that they would allow the vixen to have her way.

Then they noticed Eren standing right next to the lady seller's array projection, which acted like a spectral display of her inventory. He looked through the stuff and concluded that it was worth about 240K Extols. And that included the two C-rank resources she had in her storage.

"Hmm. What do we have here? Let's see... Red Constrictor Grass, Evergreen Moss, Frost Lotus, Gold Clover, Ice Thorn, Talandra's Rose, Tiger Lily, and Whispervine.

That's a neat collection you've got in this shabby market, pretty lady. I believe 200K Extols is the right price."

Eren placed his buying offer. There were a few resources in the vixen's inventory he could use. So he thought of buying them for himself.

The vixen cursed Eren in her head for being so thrifty and spot-on with his assessment. But she played her part well by maintaining a constant smile on her face as she replied.

"Expert Eren, I think you misunderstood. I was talking about selling my entire inven..."

"I know. Stop wasting my time. It's 150K Extols now."

The vixen felt like her eyes were getting gouged out when she heard Eren's blatant display of disrespect towards her. She had thought that she would be able to fleece this fat sheep for all its soft wool. But it turned out she had attracted a wolf's attention who just happened to be rich.

The vixen regretted the fact that she did not stick to haggling with Marla who was quite manageable for her despite her foul mouth. The seller lady clenched her fist before replying to Eren's absurd demand in a voice that made her look like the victim.

"Expert Eren, you cannot use your ranking status to bully a broke businesswoman like me who is only trying to make ends meet.

350... Extols... that's as low as... I'm willing to go..."

The vixen felt like her consciousness was drifting away mid-sentence when she looked into Eren's emerald-green eyes. They shined when he activated his Ability.

Mark of the Seven Sins: The Mist of Lust

Eren had better control of his Sin Series Abilities than ever before after breaking into the Expert rank. He felt that he was better suited to using these Abilities than Ivor or possibly any other ranker of Anfang. The higher he rose in position, the less foreign they became.

Now, the Sin Series Abilities were being integrated into the land of Anfang. They have evolved as he has progressed, allowing him to use them without any repercussions from an inspection standpoint.

Eren's exceptional finesse in mana control also had a hand to play. Eren could target his Ability on an individual without anyone else getting affected by it. He could also pair it up with his soul sense to get enhanced effects.

The butcher resorted to using both his Ability and his soul sense on the vixen. The latter's psyche started getting influenced by Eren's right away as a result.

Eren got close to the vixen who had weird expressions on her face at this point. He lifted her face with his hand and brought his lips close to hers. His whispers were like the temptations of the devil.

"Give me everything you have and I'll kiss you."

Eren embraced the vixen and made her an offer. The Scrooge in him felt that what he was offering the vixen was a fair deal for both of them. Especially since she had tried to take advantage of him first.

"Al... alright."

The vixen replied in a shaky voice. Her lady part had started oozing a crazy amount of love juice just by being near Eren. Her eyes had been diluted and her body was shaking in anticipation. The feelings of lust had taken over her and gave a time-out to her rational mind, which was screaming at her with rage.

"Good girl. Here's your promised reward."

Eren said and smiled widely before closing the deal. He planted his lips on hers and inserted his tongue into her mouth right away. The butcher didn't care about the onlookers including Marla and Almera who looked at him going at it with dumbfounded expressions.

Eren first used his Sin of Wrath on Reva Rain to manipulate her into acting personally. And with his Sin of Lust, he resorted to partaking in a legal robbery. With his Sin Series Abilities strengthened beyond imagination, the butcher was like a walking menace to everybody around him.

And this was when he only had access to two Abilities in the Sin Series. One could only imagine the storms he would cause if and when he got access to the remaining five.

The vixen almost melted away in Eren's embrace. Her legs got weak. So she had to place responsibility for her body weight on Eren's embrace.

Despite the weakness she felt below her waist, her torso and arms were very active. She pressed her decently sized-breasts against Eren's chest and explored his back with her arms. She started kissing him frantically as if her life was dependent on it.

Against the vixen's wishes, Eren broke his liplock with her. He wiped his mouth with the back of his hand. He then looked at the vixen and let out a loud sigh before commenting.

"You drive a hard bargain, Miss. I had to overpay for your resources. Sigh. It's okay, I guess. Take advantage of a gullible guy like me, why don't you?"

The vixen appeared agitated when she heard Eren's words. She looked like she actually believed everything the butcher had said to her. She looked around frantically as if to think of something before answering him.

"No... my Lord... I... I'll offer you more... much much more. Just... Just... I need to be with you. Kiss... kiss me again."

Marla and Almera were poised to lose their tempers when they heard Eren's overly hurt voice. It was as if it was him that had suffered in this unreasonable transaction.

At first, they thought that they were saving Eren from the vixen's grasp by denying her the transaction. In the end, it turned out that the vixen was nothing more than a gullible lamb for the butcher, eager to get under his axe of her own accord.

[Chapter 1006 Edinnica Arena P1](#)

"My lord... Will... Will I see you again?"

The vixen asked Eren in a voice mixed with excitement and nervousness. The butcher was busy checking the items the former had taken out of her inventory. He chuckled and answered without turning back.

"Hmmm? Well... I am not sure. But you can go to White Raven city in the Nightshade duchy and wait for me there. Maybe shift your business there, Miss."

Eren said while he was storing the items. He had to say that he had gotten a good deal on his way to Edinnica. He knew that the vixen wouldn't stay under his Ability's effect forever. Her altered mind and tweaked emotions would come back to normal after some time.

Once the effects of his Ability disappear, it would be up to the vixen to follow up on the decisions she took when she was under the influence. Also, her muddled memories would prevent her from seeing through Eren's previous interactions.

Eren bid adieu to the vixen with a smile on his face before getting inside his flying vehicle parked in the corner.

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There was a flying vehicle zipping past aerial constructions in Edin's skies at incredible speeds.

'I underestimated the city's aerial traffic. Damn it.'

Eren cursed under his breath as he sped through the city's structures. Marla and Levine were behind him inside the vehicle, processing what had happened thus far.

Eren chuckled as he drove past the floating island. He removed the ranking resources Marla and Almera needed from his storage before commenting.

"Take these, Marla and Almera. Don't worry. You don't have to pay me for these."

Marla pursed her lips before opening them to say something. But in the end, she sighed and dropped her shoulders as if giving up. Having received the resources from Eren, she stored them in her storage before commenting.

"You have never ceased to surprise me, Eren."

Eren smiled as he heard Marla's voice while driving. He had increased the flying vehicle's speed once again, testing the speed limits of the city.

"I did that for you guys. Trust me... you don't want to owe me."

'Ask Altashia. She knows this better than anyone.'

Eren heard Alephee's comment and chuckled a bit. She had contacted him a few days back. Since she had graduated, she was unable to attend the graduation event as a participant. However, she was going to be in the audience with her Grandpa Altair Argas.

Eren didn't forget to invite Marla and Almera to his guild as he drove. Marla learned that he had hired her step-sister Marie and given her a prominent role as a lead potion researcher.

Marla and Almera were already on board with Eren's plans. But they started looking forward to their future with him when he listed the benefits they would receive.

Using the elemental runes, Eren metaphorically pushed the pedal of his flying vehicle. This was when he realized that aerial traffic in Edin's skies was halting his advances to the Royal Ren district.

Soon, everything around Eren and the rest became a blur when the vehicle started traveling at speeds more than the speed of sound.

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Edinnica.

This district was a collective term for the giant masses of land floating 4000 meters above the ground. From a bird's eye view, it looked like an entire city was flourishing in the embrace of the white clouds.

The entire city was now basking in the Old castles that served as lecture rooms and libraries for the students of Royal Ren. Each building in the district had a rich history of its own. Each building was strategically built to serve multiple purposes.

Edinnica Arena.

This was the arena Royal Ren students used to conduct their ranking wars. Today, however, it was time to get used to hosting rankers from other academies as well.

The Edinnica Arena looked like a valley surrounded by an artificial mountain range. The mountain range had four peaks in four directions. These peaks were equidistant from each other. They had a certain symmetry to them that made them look like the four legs of an upside-down desk from a distance.

However, there was something else about the Edinnica Arena that wasn't there before. A levitating metallic mass hovered above the arena's skies. It was a golden sphere about 2000 meters in radius.

This golden metal sphere was placed right in the center of the four peaks. Half of its portion was surrounded by these four mountain-like pillars. The sphere floated motionlessly about 800 meters from the arena ground. It reflected the morning sunlight off its lustrous surface and spread a golden hue everywhere. As a result, the rankers and the nearby area were bathed in golden sunlight.

The metal sphere looked like it would crush everything and everyone if it stopped rebelling against gravity. A huge mass of metal hovering above their heads would make mortals afraid to be present in the arena.

However, rankers in the audience and the rankers summoned here as participants in the events treated it as no big deal. Or it was just that they refused to show how intimidated they were by such a huge time bomb hanging over their heads.

A huge crowd had gathered for the event. The participants had been allowed to enter the arena in groups. The rankers in the audience kept a safe distance from these participants. The arena was secured by an invisible barrier that separated the participants from the rankers in the audience.

There were several powerful presences everywhere. A lower-ranked entity using their mana sense here would probably be confused because of the sheer amount of feedback they received. Not that anyone would dare use their mana sense so intrusively and carelessly here.

They all seemed to be talking to each other in their groups. There was gossip, greetings, yelling, and screaming happening all at once. People everywhere were excited.

The arena couldn't have been livelier than it was at this point. Then all of a sudden, the sound of a huge bell was heard out of nowhere, and everyone stopped talking. They all looked upwards to see a bunch of rankers descending from the skies.

### [Chapter 1007 Edinnica Arena P2](#)

"Hahaha! Isn't this an exciting day today?"

A deep voice asked a question to its audience. It carried with it a certain authority that couldn't be challenged by any participants in the event.

"Audience members as well as participants from all five academies. Welcome! I'm Rufus Rodriguez, and I would like to share a few things with you before we proceed with the event."

Rufus Rodriguez greeted his audience with a smile on his face and excitement in his voice. This Grandmaster Ranker looked to be in his early 30s. He was wearing typical adventurer clothing as if he was ready to fight anyone. The smile on his face was contagious and subtly forced everyone who looked at him to smile with him.

This A-rank entity had served as vice-principal of Lionhearts Adventurers' Academy. But he was relieved of those duties when he made substantial progress on his ranking journey.

Rufus Rodriguez was the same ranker who conducted Eren's induction ceremony at the time of joining the academy. Somehow, he looked younger and more powerful than his past self.

There were other rankers besides Rufus as well. Within the five academies of the kingdom, they held their respective positions. However, they allowed Rufus to take the initiative and talk to the audience. After all, Rufus was the only one who was self-motivated to act as the announcer for the event.

Rufus and the panel of rankers behind him stepped onto a levitating platform in the middle of the arena quietly. Rufus stepped forward and spread his hands before speaking in an energetic voice imbued with mana.

"Welcome to this unique event. This is a kind of congregation of young rankers that has never happened in the history of Edinburgh until now.

As many of you might have guessed... There's a reason for such an event to take place in such turbulent times for the kingdom of Edinburgh. You have to understand that hard times force us to take tough measures. And tough measures give us stronger rankers.

We need these tough rankers in our midst. We need to identify them and invest in them. So that when the time comes, these rankers will be able to do their absolute best in protecting the borders of Edinburgh."

Rufus' speech started on an inspiring note. It highlighted the incoming war subtly while making his audience understand the reason the graduation event was organized.

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One of the goals of the graduation event was to find strong generals and dependable workers for the kingdom in the upcoming war with Layos. To select the most qualified candidates, the kingdom summoned everyone qualified from the five academies in this place. Moreover, it wanted to hire promising rankers by offering them various rewards and perks. The event was nothing but a grand-scale enlistment event.

Edinburgh also wanted to show its citizens that its borders were going to be safe from Layos' forces. This is why it organized such a big event the live feed of which could be seen from major cities of the kingdom.

For example, rankers in White Raven City could also see what was happening at the Edinnica arena. Several locations within White Raven City were broadcasting a live 3D spectral rendition of the event.

Rankers eagerly watching the feed knew that the founder of the White Raven city had come to Edin to take part in the graduation event. A majority of viewers would be seeing what this founder was capable of for the first time. They were basically set to judge the butcher based on his onscreen performance at the event.

Agatha and other members of the White Raven guild were also keeping tabs on the event whenever they got free time to do so. They were yet to find Eren in the audience though.

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Rufus liked the serious attention his audience gave him. It showed that they had understood the multifaceted reasons for the kingdom to organize this event on such a grand scale. He put his hands behind his back and started pacing around the platform before continuing.

"We have already cut down on rankers that don't deserve to be here. This graduation event is only for elite members of their generation to attend.

What I mean to say is that the participants of this event have already been through multiple stages of funneling before they were allowed to step foot in this place.

Furthermore, participants from all five academies will compete against each other, allowing equal opportunities for all the young rankers to secure maximum rewards for themselves.

Ranking resources, fame, and political power are all up for grabs. But only those who have what it takes to stand above the rest can claim those rewards for themselves."

The fervent gazes of the participants were fixed on Rufus as he looked around. He smiled cunningly before adding further.

"I'll have to be honest with you guys as well as my colleagues from other academies. I'm rooting for rankers from LA to get the maximum benefits from this event. After all, I served as a vice-principal there for many years.

So, those rankers who came from the Lionheart duchy... Hehe. I wish you all the best. While I may sound biased, I hope you do well and justify my bias in the end.

Hahaha. It is what it is!"

Rufus was always known to be a straight shooter. He was never known for downplaying certain aspects of his speech. So everyone except the participants from the Lionhearts duchy started seeing him with a bit of displeasure reflecting in their eyes. But nobody in the audience dared to object to Rufus' way of doing things. They liked to keep their heads attached to their necks after all.

There was a certain group of LA rankers standing inside the crowd of participants. These rankers paid close attention to Rufus' speech. They had already heard him speak several times when they were in LA.

They knew that Rufus would keep talking about a bunch of topics for an extended period. But he would cover every aspect of the event so that the participants who were paying attention to him wouldn't have to go in there with a blank slate. Thus, rankers from LA were paying special attention to his words.

They were also glad that a Grandmaster ranker had come out openly to support them. That's because the participants from the four academies were getting intimidated by the students of Royal Ren. wff

#### [Chapter 1008 Team White Raven P1](#)

Rufus kept talking about the event's importance in the kingdom's eyes.

The Grandmaster ranker also told the young rankers how they could apply for benefits after they have officially graduated. However, a certain group wasn't fully into Rufus' speech. It was busy trying to find its last member that hadn't shown up at the venue yet.

'Where's Eren? Does he know this shit has already started?'

Jake looked around as he commented in a voice that said 'I don't believe this guy'. The White Raven party from LA had been waiting for his arrival for a few days at this point. But he wouldn't show himself even now. The entire team wondered what was keeping him away from the event for so long.

Jake looked a lot different from his previous self. He had transformed himself into a completely different person by shedding all the fat. One look at him and anybody could tell he was a capable tank.

Jake had entered the solid stage of the Adept rank not too long ago. His transformation and his ranking progress were astonishing to most rankers who knew him from the beginning.

Jake had also progressed further in his elemental attainments, allowing him to have no bottlenecks at the time of his ranking breakthrough. One could say that his on-field assignment had changed him completely. He was not only better potioner at this point but had also learned what it meant to be a tank.

'He should be here at any moment. I just hope he makes it in time.'

Renita Diabreo commented while looking ahead. She had a smile on her face that expressed the feelings in her heart. She was excited to see Eren after so long. And rightly so. She stood in her place as a proud Adept ranker who was only a step away from entering the next rank. The ranger was looking forward to



showing Eren what she had achieved in her on-field assignment that had turned out to be the most sensible decision in her academic life.

Renita was wearing an all-black ensemble that complemented her free-flowing jet-black hair. Her golden iris would shine faintly when she inhaled. She maintained a nimble physique despite her attractive feminine features.

Renita's presence as a ranger and long-range expert was also made apparent by her aura. It looked like she had branched out from merely using mana guns. She was equally capable of employing other long-range weapons in her battle style.

The dual berserkers Ron and Dino were standing beside Renita. They had also become part of the group.

Both of these dual berserkers had recently entered the solid stage of the Adept rank. Years of grinding had made both rankers look older despite the progress they had made in their ranks. Their physiques were more in line with the mature thought process they had come to cultivate over the years.

Ron was still the brains between the duo while Dino was the brawns, giving him a taller and larger constitution. The smarter berserker among the two spoke, with half of his attention focused on what Rufus was saying.

'Don't worry about Eren, you guys. If he says he'll be here... he'll be here.'

More importantly... Ana, did you succeed in your quadruple casting practice? It could give us the edge we need in the competition.'

Ron didn't want to show it on his face but everyone who had gathered in the arena as participants looked intimidating to him. Especially the young rankers from Royal Ren.

Ron had thought that being a solid stage Adept was going to be a big thing at the event. And it was a big deal considering there were not many of them. Nevertheless, the presence of Expert rankers couldn't be ignored either.

Oriana Amaris AKA Ana had stress lines on her forehead when she listened to Ron's question. She had just broken into the Adept rank and was technically the weakest member of the White Raven team. She was still proud of her progress because others had a great start right from the beginning.

Ana had also taken an on-field assignment under Eren's guidance. Her job as a healer at the southern duchy's borders had made her a better healer than she was. She had also learned various ways of casting healing spells, not getting confined to a particular school of spells.

Ana pursed her lips before responding.

'I... I should be able to execute quadruple casting successfully three times in six attempts. It's still a little difficult for me. But I can make up for it using my healing talismans.'

Ana had gotten taller and prettier over the years. Her feminine curves were more defined than before, increasing her charm even further. As a capable healer herself, her presence felt full of life and vitality.

'Talismans? Branching out to different schools, huh? Well done, Ana. Looks like we are going to have to depend on you a lot in this competition. Battling with these rich kids is not going to be easy.'

Steve commented as he looked around. Like Ron, he was also most concerned about the Royal Ren students. Not only did they have more Expert rankers in their midst than any other four academies but they also likely possess loads of Trump cards. He just hoped that competition would make it difficult for them to use their accumulated advantages.

Steve Austin was White Raven's berserker. He still had his handsome features from the past. But there was a certain hint of maturity added to them.

Steve had gotten taller and looked more ripped than before. He had cut his hair short and maintained a light beard. He was standing right in the middle of the White Raven group, acting as the team's official captain.

Steve was the sole Expert ranker on his team. Everyone on his team was inspired by his progress. He had proved his mettle while doing his on-field assignment. Therefore, both he and his demon beast were rewarded for their accomplishments.

For a berserker, Steve looked relatively less intimidating. But his battlefield presence as a strong and domineering ranker couldn't be underestimated.

#### [Chapter 1009 Team White Raven P2](#)

Steve stuck to his role as captain of the team.

He made her feel comfortable with her achievements while subtly encouraging her to do more. He had pushed himself harder than before in his on-field assignments and had plenty of close calls, which made him dig deep into his potential as a berserker. Those experiences had molded him into a fine Expert ranked entity that was in touch with his basics.

Boar Berserker's demon beast greatly helped him in his mission. As a result, Steve shared and invested half of the resources he earned in his demon beast's progress. Due to this the boar-type demon beast also entered C-rank not too long after Steve's breakthrough.

'Battling with them is not going to be easy? Who said that? You don't need to get chicken feet looking at these bastawds, Steve.'

Ramy Richards commented on Steve's words. A clenched fist was raised in front of him before he added more.

'Only these fists will decide who awe bettah wankers among us.'

Nobody talked for a while after Ramy spoke. The White Raven members were glad that Ramy had not spoken out loud about what he had said to them. Otherwise, the entire group would have been made fun of by other participants.

Steve had a grim expression on his face when he turned around and looked at Ramy. He looked at Ramy's fist that he had raised in front of him and narrowed his eyes at them before commenting.

'Sometimes I feel you choose your actions and words purposely, knowing full well how they will get interpreted by others.'

Steve immediately assumed his previous position and resumed listening to Rufus' speech. The expression on Ramy's face when Steve looked at him was, "I don't know what you're talking about."

The sound-element knight chuckled in his head and a hint of a smile could be seen on his face after Steve and others took their eyes off him. It looked like he enjoyed the group's response to his speech impediment issue. Something that he could have avoided when talking over voice communication but chose not to.

Ramy Richards was used to carrying his speech impediment like a badge of honor. He was never ashamed of it. But after breaking into the Adept rank, Ramy's mana circuits were reforged and his speech impediment had technically vanished.

But by that time, he had made peace with his condition and considered it a part of him. So he carried on with his defective speech without letting anyone know his impediment had been cured.

Ramy Richards still looked almost the same for the most part. But his stature and his musculature had increased by a large margin. He was as tall as Steve and looked almost as beefy as him. He was wearing knight armor and carried a sword attached to his waist.

Ramy was only a step away from achieving the Expert rank. It technically made him the second strongest member of the current team White Raven after Steve.

The sound-element knight could feel that his breakthrough into Expert rank was near. He just needed the right kind of inspiration or enough stimulation to achieve that.

'My point is... you guys don't need to get so wowked up. Ewen will be hewe soon. We'll just have to follow his instwuctions. And not only will we get gwaduated with flying colors but also weap plenty of added benefits for ouwselves.'

Ramy was looking forward to Eren's arrival. He did not doubt in his head that Eren would be a lot stronger than all of the current team White Raven members combined. He just wanted to see how much.

Ramy also wanted to challenge Eren to a duel. But that would come later when the event is over. Ramy wasn't delusional enough to think that his whims would be entertained at such a crucial time by Eren.

There was someone in the group who didn't quite agree with Ramy's assumption about Eren. She voiced her opinion right away.

'Yeah? Forget about Ramy... But I think you guys are giving Eren too much credit. I mean he would be stronger than us, no doubt. And I'm not trying to underestimate him in any way.'

But look at the competition all around us. Didn't you hear? The rankers from the remaining four academies as well as students of Royal Ren have been put through multiple funneling processes to attend this graduation event. You know what that means?'

Rebecca White AKA Becky posed a rhetorical question to her group. With a short pause, she answered it herself.

'It means everybody who stands here has already proved their mettle. Just like we had to back when we were in LA.'

We will not be dueling with random opponents at this event. We are up against elites in a crowd of elites. Who can say with confidence that their team will fare better against the top teams from Royal Ren?

The point I'm trying to make is don't depend too much on a single individual. Especially when it comes to working as part of a team.

Eren is not a miracle drug that can cure all your problems as soon as he shows up. Plus, he is not much of a team player either. Chances are he will leave us to our devices while he looks after his own interests. That's all he has done, in case you forgot.'

Rebecca said with a serious tone in her voice. Nobody completely agreed with what she said. But they had to admit that there was some shred of truth in them. It was just that the words she had used to speak the truth made it seem as if she was jealous of Eren's progress.

Becky had also completed her on-field assignment under a kingdom-certified mage acting as her tutor and employer. She was in the last stage of the Adept rank but still quite far away from achieving her breakthrough into the Expert rank.

Under the mage's tutelage, the cold-fire mage had managed to unearth and find for herself the true potential of her unique affinity. The only reason she was experiencing a bottleneck in her ranking journey was because of her unique affinity.

Becky believed that she could have been an Expert ranker at this point just like Steve. The mage wouldn't have shied away from challenging Steve for the team's captainship had she managed to achieve that.

#### [Chapter 1010 Prior Investment & Time To Pay Up](#)

'Becky... you just salty because Ewen chose Wenita over you. Hehehe!'

Ramy couldn't help but laugh at Becky's response. He was a staunch supporter of the butcher from the moment he fought with him. And he wasn't willing to let Becky badmouth Eren just because she had mixed half-truths in her statements.

Renita and others chuckled when they heard Ramy speak. The sound-element ranker had a knack for diffusing a tense atmosphere in the team. But Becky wasn't happy with Ramy's uncalled comment.

Becky looked at Ramy in anger because she felt that whatever he had said couldn't be further from the truth. She wasn't interested in getting along with Eren romantically at all.

Becky could recall every reaction she had to Eren. And she found something common in all of them— the guy gave her a tingling sensation at the back of her neck every time she was near him. She felt scared. And it wasn't like she was mute about her feelings. She had made that known to everyone. A large part of why she didn't like Eren leading the team she was in was because she couldn't count on him to prioritize the team over his own gains.

She felt like a reptile was staring at her every time Eren glanced at her. A vile evil creature that put on a mask of emotions to get what he wanted from everyone.

Becky could feel that Eren wasn't an emotionless maniac that roamed the world killing everyone and everything that he laid his eyes on. But he was an ambassador for violence and carnage nonetheless. With or without emotions, he would only do what he had intended to do all along. It was just that he had a different palate of emotions than normal rankers. She found that to be the most dangerous aspect of rankers' conduct.

Becky felt that she would rather work with the cultists than form a tag team with Eren on her own. Because at least with the cultists, she knew that they might backstab her and hence could see the attack coming. Eren, however, was a complete mystery to her.

'Listen to me you little shit, I don't have any interest in worshipping that creature like you. I'm just saying that you guys need to think about yourself instead of relying on Eren. It's not bad advice no matter how you look at it.'

Steve had stress lines on his forehead when he heard Becky and Ramy were about to fight again. This was not the first time they had verbally and physically challenged each other in combat. And he could tell that they would continue to act that way as long as they were on the same team.

'Cut it out, guys! Grandmaster Rufus is finally ready to talk about the event. At least wait until...'

Steve was about to silence both Ramy and Becky. But all of a sudden, he noticed interference in the voice communication channel. Someone had used their ID-stone rune to connect with the group.

Blink.

'Hmm. Becky is right, you know. You guys shouldn't count on me.'

A familiar voice spoke in the group communication channel. Becky was frozen in her tracks when she heard that voice in her head.

The voice took a brief pause before continuing in a tone that demanded unquestionable loyalty.

'Rather, I'm counting on you to get what I want. After all, it was I who made an investment in you when I first talked about this event. It was I who prepared you for this event years before it was even announced.

All your progress is because of me. It's time for you to pay up now.'

Steve and the rest were bewildered for a moment when they heard the voice. They turned around in unison to see Eren had appeared behind them out of nowhere with his signature crooked smile.

"EREN!"

The rankers around team White Raven were taken aback when Renita and others yelled one name in unison. A ruckus was created when so many mana pulses were generated by the group at the same time, which highlighted the anticipation and excitement they felt. They were all seeing Eren for the first time after he was away on his on-field assignment in the Nightshade Duchy after all.

Renita was the first to approach Eren as soon as she realized he was not a mirage. The butcher smiled and opened his arms to receive her. The other members of Team White Raven gathered around the duo, Becky included.

Rufus and the panel of rankers behind him had their attention drawn to Eren's group when Eren appeared. Rufus could see that the young rankers belonged to LA for whom he had a soft spot in his heart. But that didn't mean he would allow them to disturb his schedule.

Rufus was about to reprimand Eren's group when he felt something approaching the arena at a critical velocity. It was a flying vehicle that had gotten out of control due to overspeeding.

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"Oh! It seems we have approached. Miss Marla, I think you should take the wheel from here. I'll just..."

Blink.

Eren disappeared from his position as soon as he sensed the Edinnica Arena was within Blink's range. He knew that he was late for the event. Due to his misuse of the elemental runes, his flying vehicle was also about to be totaled.

So he slowed down the vehicle as much as he could and then decided to leave the car in Marla's care. But he had obviously overestimated Marla's driving capabilities.

It took a while for Marla to react. But when she realized that the butcher had practically abandoned her, she couldn't help getting livid at him.

Marla tried to control the flying vehicle by taking control of the flying vehicle. But she couldn't handle the vehicle's worn-out control array. It also didn't help that she was still a bit tipsy from her drinking voyage just some hours ago.

All of these factors contributed to Marla approaching the Edinnica Arena without slowing down. A mana-induced scream could be heard coming from a smoke-releasing flying vehicle, which approached the golden sphere as if it had decided to go through it.

"AAAAAAH! I'm going to kill that man when I see him next time."