

Vile 1061

[Chapter 1061 Staying Impartial To Enemies' Backgrounds](#)

Day 20: Lavalrock Grove. Midnight time.

The Lavalrock trees would channel fire mana through the heart-shaped leaves they had sprouted from their branches as they breathed. As a result, they would emit eye-blinding bright yellow light during the nighttime.

For a moment, the region would be banished to the pit of nighttime darkness. In the next moment though, the Lavalrock trees would start exuding their yellow glow and lighting up the entire region.

A team of rankers was traversing through this region which was full of Lavalrock trees. The natural phenomenon generated by the entire region's trees irritated a few of them. Just when they thought that they had gotten used to the darkness, the trees would illuminate their path only to send them back to the pit of darkness once again.

"Becky, couldn't we take a different route to reach Eren's location? These damn trees hurt my eyes."

Using his movement spell, Jake followed Becky along with the rest of his team. Bel was to his right and Ana was to his left. Ron and Dino were following right behind him while Becky was leading the entire group.

Becky got irritated by Jake's complaints.

"I'm not the ranger of the group, Jake. I can hardly navigate my way using my spells. Bear with it for a while. We'll be out of this damn region soon."

The main group of the White Raven Crew was separated from Steve and Renita. The separation was done to avoid getting surrounded by multiple teams. The White Raven crew escaped the ambush and successfully took care of its opponents. They decided to remain apart, however, due to a variety of other circumstances.

The two groups stayed separated for a couple of days. And they would have remained separated for a few more days. However, the announcement they all received through their Sansara interface changed everything. The White Raven crew wasn't the only one who changed its plans. The rest of the participants also had to revise their strategies because of this announcement.

The legacy of a Sage will appear in the Lama Ruins in the upcoming hours.

With the required number of flags in their possession, qualified teams could gain access to Nira Nightshade's legacy. However, they would have to get inside the Lama Ruins to do that.

The teams still in the game let go of their safe zones and ambush points to reach the Lama Ruins from various directions. At this point, reaching the Lama Ruins was more critical for them than anything else.

The two groups of White Raven crew also decided to meet near the Lama Ruins once they received the notification. Eren had also contacted them after receiving the notification. He had told them that he was on the other side of the Lavalrock Grove, waiting for both groups to join him.

The Lama Ruins were only a couple of hours' travel from where Eren was. So it made sense for both groups to use Eren's location as a rendezvous point before commencing the journey towards the target location together.

Becky had taken the shortest route to Eren's location through Lavalrock Grove. That's because that's how she read the map on the Sansara interface. The Mage decided to draw a straight line connecting two locations using her travel path.

Only now did she realize she could have done things better. After all, taking the shortest distance possible wasn't the only thing that was expected of a pathfinder. It was also imperative to consider the environment and the potential disadvantages it might have for the rankers involved in the party.

"Something's up ahead."

Bel was using his historian-specific spells to support his team. He couldn't fill the void of a ranger on his own. However, with his historian-specific spells along with Becky's support magic, they had made it here. Bel picked up a few mixed mana signatures ahead which told him that a bloody battle had taken place at the location they were approaching.

Becky and the rest got tense. They drew their weapons and readied their spells, expecting another clash with the enemy team. When they got out of the Lavalrock Groove, their vision expanded to a lush prairie that was bathed in starlight.

However, all of them stopped in their tracks when they sensed something. They recognized the presence of a single live ranker standing amid the butchered corpses of his recent victims littered around him.

It looked like a particularly brutal battle had taken place between the two sides. One side contained the entire team of dead rankers whereas the other side only had one addict who refused to call himself one.

Lavalrock trees in the region served as breathing lights. Because of them, the single survivor ranker as well as the bodies he had butchered would be seen clearly for a brief moment before disappearing into the night's darkness. The entire scene had a macabre touch to it as a result. Enough for Becky to have goosebumps on her skin.

"Took you long enough."

Eren said while releasing a lungful of smoke into the air. He sounded casual... as if he was taking a night walk under the stars. He was looking in the direction of the Lama Ruins while his back was facing his incoming teammates.

The butcher had a lot of blood splattered on his clothes. However, the man himself didn't have any serious injuries. And the minor injuries he did have were in the process of healing.

After getting out of the demonic altar, Eren had leveled up quite a lot despite sharing his Karma points with Steve and Renita. As a result, he gained access to his Adept rank powers. The butcher made up for the lost time by using them to the fullest.

He used various Perks to get as close to Lama Ruins as possible. The team of rankers he had killed for real at this point was members of Midnight Moon. Turns out, the infiltrators weren't strictly related to the kingdom of Layos alone. The enemy kingdom had used outside help to get the job done.

Eren had the peculiar quality of staying impartial to his enemies.

He was impartial in doling out his attacks on them, no matter their gender, ranking status or any other distinguishing factors. After all, regardless of what was between their ears and legs, they all gave Karma points. And since they were all infiltrators in the first place, he didn't have to worry about facing repercussions for killing them for real.

[Chapter 1062 Attack First Ask Questions Later](#)

Eren discarded the remnants of his smoke before turning around.

Becky and her group stopped a few meters away from Eren. She was about to speak to him. However, the mage closed her open mouth when she felt a peculiar mana pulse beside her.

"Haha. We are here, at last. Thanks for sharing your location with us, Eren."

Steve and Renita appeared at the scene out of nowhere using the Sansara Perk. It worked in conjunction with the coordinates Eren shared with them, allowing them to teleport directly to the scene.

Eren appeared right beside Renita before taking her hand in his own. It seemed that Steve and Renita had just finished dealing with their share of opponents as well. The ranger was slightly injured in the conflict.

Eren snapped his fingers and healed Renita right away without waiting for Ana to take action. The healer of the group looked at Eren begrudgingly for subtly undermining her role in the team.

Renita smiled as she enjoyed Eren showing his public display of affection in his own way. The close combat expert caressed the locks of her hair and tucked them behind her ears before addressing the entire group.

"Glad to see all of you made it to this point."

Eren smiled lightly and welcomed his teammates before continuing.

"Let's rest before we enter the Lama Ruins. The further we travel from here the more teams we are likely to encounter who also have the same destination as us.

We don't need to worry about the qualified teams as they would prioritize getting to the Lama Ruins over battling anyone. But the teams that don't have enough flags will try to fight all out against those who do.

Let other qualified teams fight these desperadoes while we wait. Steve will teleport us to the entrance of the Lama Ruins right away when we are ready."

There was no hiding place on the prairie, which seemed to extend in all directions. However, thanks to the Basic Group Stealth Perk Renita had received, the team could take a breather inside a translucent dome. This made them invisible to the naked eye as well as the mana sense.

The smell of freshly grilled pork chops started lingering inside the Stealth Dome as the team decided to have its fill. The group sat in a circle around Eren, Steve, and Renita as they were busy prepping food for everybody.

"The delay in the defense mechanism is one thing. But did you guys encounter the masked elves who had infiltrated the event?"

Jake looked at Eren, Steve, and Renita before asking his question. Steve nodded his head as he flipped the piece of meat over the elemental fire before speaking up.

"Yeah. I get that the kingdom of Edinburgh would indulge in a power play and keep the event running even after knowing about the infiltration of these elves. But it has gotten too far.

It looks like they have already killed many rankers from five academies to make those elven masks. And they are even killing more rankers at the event. The kingdom is only liable to hurt itself if it lets this drag on for any longer."

Becky agreed with Steve's statement. The mage was a vegan so she kept her distance from the group before responding.

"The moderators should have intervened by now. Rufus, the chief moderator, at least should have taken action against these infiltrators, even if he didn't completely stop the event. I don't know why it is taking this long."

Becky wasn't the only one. All the other participants from LA were expecting some form of leeway from the chief moderator Rufus because he was from their academy.

Eren was lowkey whistling when he was adding spice to the grilled meat. He had to say that Argo's songs were very catchy. He couldn't help singing some of them under his breath as he busied himself with work.

The butcher chuckled before answering Becky's question.

"That's because he's dead."

Eren stopped hearing the munching sounds of his teammates. He turned around to see that every teammate was looking at him with blank looks on their faces. He coughed before creating a metaphorical patchwork.

"I mean... he must be dead if he is not doing anything. Or he is busy with something much more critical for all we know.

My point is... we can't expect any intervention from the moderators. At least not for us commoners when the royal scions of the kingdoms are being targeted.

Things are much more serious than you think. Even the cultist organization Midnight Moon is involved in the infiltration. The fake participants I killed earlier belonged to that organization."

Eren remembered that he had sanctioned a hit on the Midnight Moon through Serius Fenris. He smiled mirthlessly before continuing.

"Midnight Moon and I... let's say that my guild and those guys have our differences. So they tried to target me."

Ramy Richards stopped chewing on the grilled pork and drank a mouthful of White Raven ale. While slapping his thighs, he enthusiastically interrupted Eren.

"Hahaha. No wonder they died so... how weebly."

Ron was lost in his thoughts until this point. It seemed that there was something he was unable to come to terms with. He looked at Eren before raising his doubts.

"I understand Edinbugh's politically motivated ambition to continue this event. But I don't think it would allow the cultists to intervene. Something doesn't add up. It looks like..."

Eren nodded at Ron before confirming his doubts.

"That's right. This is what I have been meaning to tell you guys.

The event is rigged from the inside. Some of the rankers from Edinbugh's side have switched to the other side. Or did they already belong to the kingdom of Layos in the first place? We don't know."

Eren saw his teammates' grim faces. He took a deep breath before reassuring them.

"Don't worry. Not all hope is lost. The moderators get bound by the same rules as participants if they enter most places accessible to participants. There are only a few extra perks to support them.

Sage legacies have started appearing. We are in the endgame.

So next time... when you see a moderator stopping you for something... don't lower your guard. If they fail to maintain a safe distance from you..."

Renita completed Eren's statement in a grim voice.

"Attack first. Ask questions later."

[Chapter 1063 Back To Experimenting](#)

Day 21: An area near the entrance to the Lama Ruins.

"Aaaaaaargh!"

A moderator was injured before he could even use his Perks. The next thing he knew, his left arm was torn off from the shoulder joint by sheer physical force. The moderator's heart was punctured when he received a severe blow to his chest that sank his ribcage. One solid punch was all it took for the moderator to die from an attack.

Steve attacked the moderator as soon as he came too close to him. The Boar Berserker followed Eren's plan to a T. He immediately tapped into his body-strengthening art and changed his physique. He became taller, stronger, and sharper. The boar berserker also grew a thick reddish brown hide and some sort of callous exoskeleton over his shoulders and other vital organs.

Steve's eyes were red. His canine teeth had grown out of his mouth. They were curved, crazy-looking, and almost looked like antlers. His limbs were as ripped and muscular as they could be. And his aura was that of a beast rather than a human.

The captain of the White Raven Crew fended off a major threat on his own. He looked around to see that others on his team were almost more or less done with their jobs.

Steve and Renita joined the team shortly after Sage Legacy started appearing. Eren was also with them. There was no point dividing the team into multiple groups when there were only a few days remaining.

Eren felt that his efforts in raising a team to ensure his survival was worth it. Through Ivor's actions, Jason was killed and another Sin Series Mark was obtained. He only needed to ensure that he got his hands on multiple Sage legacies.

The team had fought as a whole for the first time at this stage since the event started. The White Raven crew was practically unstoppable after the remaining members joined.

Eren didn't have to guide Steve as captain of the team anymore. The Berserker knew how to use each of the members of his team. He would tag-team with the Dual Berserkers when required, destroying the enemy frontline as soon as the two teams clashed. He would pair well with Becky to assist her in her mid-range moves. He would work with Jake to bolster the team's defensive capabilities. All of this while ensuring that the team's healer Ana doesn't come under harm's way in any situation.

Steve also tried to keep up with Eren. And for the most part, he managed to do just fine. However, Steve felt a subtle mental burden every time Eren operated on his victims beside him.

Eren's blood lust would sometimes slip through his aura and unintentionally affect the Boar Berserker's psyche. Therefore, Steve decided to let Eren move on his own. The butcher worked most efficiently most times while he was not being paired up with anyone anyway.

Eren had gone back to his experiments.

This was apparent when his teammates saw him use his Fists Arts unexpectedly. That too, using the earth-element technique that he hadn't shown them before.

There were many things that Eren had changed about him. But his nature as a ranker and his love for adding multiple facets to his battle style was not something novel for them. They had seen Eren do that multiple times when he was participating in ranking wars.

Eren was becoming more adept at throwing punches with each passing opponent. He had even managed to use his earth-element movement technique in sync with the Fist Arts he had borrowed from Ken.

The butcher made several changes to Ken's techniques. He started fine-tuning them to give them the lethal edge they were missing. He made a lot of mistakes at the beginning and got injured in the process.

However, he never had to seek Ana's help in healing him. The Ability he had received from Nina made him self-sufficient and bold enough to incorporate new techniques into his battle style.

Applying soul sense to incompatible weapons was difficult. However, one's arms were excluded from that limitation. Eren started imbuing his fists with soul sense as well. As a result, his attacks affected his enemies physically and mentally as well.

There was a huge difference between applying soul sense to intimidate opponents and incorporating it into one's physical and elemental attacks. The butcher was still learning to use his soul sense in his elemental spells with Alephee's guidance. However, he didn't need to seek any guidance to incorporate soul sense into his physical attacks.

Ken's Fist Arts opened up a new way of fighting for the butcher. And he was becoming more adept at using it. He was also training his soul sense with it. He was learning to use the soul sense at the right time at the right intensity so that it doesn't mentally drain him in the long run.

One had to say that Eren was leaps and bounds further from his fellow participants when it came to employing his soul sense in his battle style. Hansen could count the participants who could use their soul sense on his fingers. And even they were far away from employing it in their battle styles.

Eren enjoyed the process of experimenting to his heart's content. He neither got disheartened when he made mistakes nor overexcited when he landed his punches right.

He even dragged fights with his opponents, giving them a false sense of hope only to kill them with his go-to moves when things got out of control. Battling like this allowed him to see the errors in his ways and work on them. It also prevented his opponents from bailing out early.

The butcher had learned his lessons well from his previous encounters. He didn't want to perform cardio chasing after his opponents while trying out various things.

The butcher started getting exceptional results right from the beginning using Ken's techniques. As a result, his enemies weren't being butchered to death. Instead, they were being bludgeoned to death.

[Chapter 1064 Entering Lama Ruins](#)

It wasn't easy to keep reinventing one's self.

It was difficult for the individual as well as for those around him. Steve couldn't employ Eren in normal battle tactics anymore because of his experiments. And nobody had the right or the guts to tell Eren otherwise.

Therefore, Eren's team members started keeping a safe distance from him.

They didn't want to get involved in his experiments and suffer the consequences. After all, they didn't have the convenience to heal themselves using their Ability.

Ana would have been overworked to death if everybody kept acting like Eren mid-battle. That too, when the stakes were this high. The rest of the White Raven crew members neither had the guts nor the privilege to try something as crazy as what Eren was doing.

Eren's killing efficiency had dropped way down from its usual level at the beginning. However, he quickly recovered all of it for the most part in relatively no time at all.

Eren's gauntlet-covered fists started getting coated in his enemy's blood. He was even more brutal than Steve with his attacks, exploring various nuances of his opponent's anatomy.

The butcher always targeted his opponents' weak spots. He didn't care about his opponents' personal boundaries or gender. It was to the point that most members of Eren's team started feeling sorry for his opponents after hearing their heart-wrenching screams.

Steve's demon beast Wilber also felt pressured by Eren's presence. The participants were only allowed to keep their demon beasts inside the Beast Space. They couldn't summon demon beasts to fight their battles for them. Nevertheless, tamers were allowed to use Demon Beast Transformations and Demon Spells.

Steve's Demon Beast Transformation allowed him to adopt Wilber's physical characteristics while boosting his body stats. Plus, the body-strengthening art he had gotten from Wilber paired nicely with the Demon Beast Transformation.

It allowed Steve to explore the limits of the beastly transformation defined by normal rankers. The berserker's offensive and defensive capabilities were elevated at the same time. Plus, the body-strengthening art gave him elemental resistance to various spells.

Steve became an unstoppable hurricane after stacking many of his advantages together. He dealt with his enemies with almost the same level of brutality as Eren.

To test Steve's limits, Eren told him to take care of the moderator all by himself. And the berserker managed to excel at his task with stellar distinction.

Steve had become a purist in terms of his battle style.

He didn't make much use of his Perks or spells. The guy was comfortable dealing with his opponents head-on. Most opponents weren't even able to land serious injuries on him.

Upon Eren's orders, the White Raven crew didn't wait for the enemy to turn hostile. It attacked the moderator as well as a few participants who were with him when the meeting took place.

Not even Becky posed a question about Eren's decision this time. The teams needed to ensure their own safety before even thinking about forming alliances.

The team's path to the Lama Ruins was bloody and full of violence. It only allowed the defense mechanism to kick in for a few teams who it judged were genuine participants. The butcher insisted on killing all the rest of the enemies.

The team's Karma point accumulation kept on increasing by leaps and bounds. All the members made use of various individual and group-based Perks available for their use. Most were used to counter the opponents' Perks while the others provided them with the edge they needed to dominate.

Renita stayed with Ana when Steve and Jake weren't around to defend her. She also supported Bel in his ranged attacks. The historian had also improved greatly. With a bit of help from the ranger, he was able to tackle and hold off multiple opponents at the same time without losing ground.

Ron and Dino managed to keep up with the rest of the team. They performed their roles as support for Steve's berserk charges well. They were told to concentrate on the offense and allow Steve to take a breather.

With seamless team play and excellent individual performances, the White Raven crew managed to get inside the Lama Ruins safely. What they didn't know was the fact that many teams had been eliminated during this time when they were trying to get inside the Lama Ruins.

Metal towers and metal buildings.

The Lama Ruins featured various metal constructions. From overhead hydro pipelines to runic cable cars, everything was made out of various mana-imbued metals. Even the ground beneath was made of metal sheets.

Some of these metal constructions had gotten old and rusty. They had a layer of red and brown rust on them. The rest of the metal surfaces would shine dimly or brightly from time to time depending upon exposure to sunlight.

There were various blind spots present inside the Lama Ruins. It seemed that the teams were encouraged to attack one another while they were busy getting their hands on Sage's legacy.

A team of rankers chose to stay low-key in a particular corner of the city. They started activating various security measures in their surroundings as a form of precaution against potential enemies.

Steve and the rest started arranging the flags in an array diagram shared with them through the Sansara interface. These flags, which the White Raven crew had collected from its enemy teams, served as the keys to opening the entrance and keeping it open.

Eren had already told his teammates that he'd be the one to attempt to inherit Nira Nightshade's legacy. The gains he receives from the Sage legacy will be shared with his teammates. The ones he could share, that is.

The flags were arranged systematically and the array was partially activated. At this point, various teams inside the Lama Ruins were waiting for the notification to arrive.

The wait was eventually over.

All the arrays created by the participants inside the Lama Ruins lit up at the same time as the notification arrived. A spatial tunnel was opened at the center of these array layouts.

[Chapter 1065 Nira Nightshade P1](#)

Eren found himself inside what looked like a castle.

After entering the space tunnel, he reached this location. He couldn't see the castle's exterior because he had been summoned right inside its giant hall. And he had found it impossible to get outside. This is even though the hall seemed to have multiple entrances and exits as well as glass windows that let the starlight in.

The giant windows were at least 50 meters tall. Their premium-looking curtains were the same size. The curtains weren't drawn completely. As a result, the hall had a soft ambiance that added to its elegant vibe.

The interior of the castle was a fine balance between sophistication and lavishness. The oddly shaped pillar had golden detailing. There were white stone statues of many stallions with their front limbs raised in the air. It looked as if these stone statues would stomp the ground and charge out of the hall at any time they wanted to.

There was a long blue carpet spread in the middle of the hall that stretched across the entire length of the hall. Its one end led to the inaccessible entrance while its other end led to the front of the hall which had stairs.

The stairs would separate from each other after a certain height to lead in two separate directions. They would circle back and intersect with one another at galleries located at a certain altitude from each other.

The hall's ceiling was high enough for Eren to take a stable flight with his Wind-Fire Wings. The air inside the hall was stale as if nobody had visited or lived in this castle for a long time.

The entire castle was enchanted to withstand the presence and pressure of high-ranking entities. It is unlikely that participants would cause damage to this place in any way even if their restrictions were lifted.

Step. Step. Step.

Eren started walking around the hall to see if he could find something of interest. He wasn't sure of the exact time but he could feel that it had been an hour since he had entered the hall. It was not the butcher's style to spend his time idly.

Eren started exploring the hall's nooks and crannies. He could feel that this was Sage's abode that he had been summoned to. After all, he had seen how Eliza lived despite centuries of isolation from the real world.

The place didn't have the same haunting touch as Eliza's. However, the feelings he received just by being inside both castles were the same.

"That's right. It's my home. Or more correctly, it used to be... when I lived here."

Eren's suspicions were confirmed by someone. The latter turned around and looked at the front of the hall. A figure had appeared at the intersection of stairs that served as the gallery.

Nira Nightshade.

The castle was owned by the seductive night elf. She had light blue skin and light blonde hair. Naturally, her eyes glowed with crimson radiance, as if she had been born for nighttime hunting.

Nira Nightshade was seen carrying a quiver on her back with a bunch of arrows in it. There was a bow in her left hand which would disappear from her hand and materialize in its previous position in the next moment.

Nira Nightshade had long ears that poked out of her raised cape over her head. She had a sharp oval face, a relatively small nose, and bluish ivory lips.

This Sage was as seductive as she was mysterious. Her prominent bust, slim waistline, and shapely posterior gave her an hourglass figure.

Despite her alluring looks, Nira managed to maintain a certain elegance about her. An elegance that was mixed with a lethal edge only a Sage could manage to project. Nobody would dare to notice her physical features when she was staring at them right in their eyes.

Nira stood casually on the ledge, looking down at Eren. If one looked really carefully at her, they would be able to see things through her. Her appearance was like an apparition from a live array-based communication call, only more intimidating and real.

Ever since he met Eliza, Eren would start drawing comparisons between her and his opponents or some of the prominent figures he would meet. This was the kind of power scale his subconscious had created for itself to perceive the threat level of his enemies or potential enemies.

Eren's subconscious judged that Nira Nightshade was not as much of a threat to him as Eliza was. Still, he didn't think this was a comfortable conclusion for him.

Nira was still a Sage- an entity that had risen further than him as a ranker, far beyond him in the past and current timeline. She could hurt him at any time she wanted to. This was true even if what he was facing was nothing but a vestige of her soul. He still knelt where he stood and bowed his head to offer his respects to the Sage.

"It's an honor to be graced with your presence, Sage Nira Nightshade. My name is Eren Elijah Idril. I was wondering where the rest of the participants were..."

Eren asked about the participants who were supposed to be present with him. After all, the other teams had their representativesâ€” someone who had been sent inside to win rewards for the entire group.

However, for some reason, Eren couldn't find any of them here with him. He would rather face multiple opponents at the same time than get surprised by the sudden appearance of unknown participants.

Nira chuckled and waved her hand as if swatting a fly before commenting.

"Most of them were kicked out by me as soon as they entered the tunnel. The remaining ones are going through... let's say preliminary assessment.

You are the only one among them who doesn't need to go through such an assessment. I wanted to see you personally as soon as you entered through the spatial tunnel. So I kept you here."

[Chapter 1066 Nira Nightshade P2](#)

Eren was a bit taken aback when he realized Nira had started taking an extra interest in him.

He was more aware of his abilities than anyone. There was no doubt that he had come far and there were not many in his generation who could match his current progress.

Still, he didn't think that someone like Nira Nightshade would take notice of him. After all, he wasn't just a ranger or an archer, to begin with. It technically made him less qualified to receive Sage's legacy than someone with a ranger class or archery skills.

At least that's what Eren hoped Nira would read from his surface-level thoughts.

It was clear that Nira's apparition could read Eren's surface-level thoughts well.

Nira was just a vestige of the soul of her former self. However, her authority as a Sage couldn't be questioned. At least not in her own castle. She also had access to her soul sense which allowed her to judge the participants on a deeper level.

She looked at Eren emotionlessly before commenting on his thoughts.

"Not having a ranger class doesn't make you less qualified to receive my legacy, Eren."

Eren breathed a sigh of relief deep in his psyche. After all, he knew that he would be able to incorporate any path and any specialty into his ranking journey.

Nira disappeared from her place and appeared right in front of me. "You don't need to hide things from me. I can sense that you are trying to incorporate multiple specialties into your path. As a result, your mana signature reeks completely different from any other ranker."

t in front of the kneeling Eren. She asked him to get up before observing him closely. She narrowed her eyes at him before speaking up.

Just like Eren's soul sense had a unique property to trap his opponents into grim illusions, Nira's soul sense also had a special quality attached to it. She was able to smell and almost taste the live and residual mana signatures of rankers.

As a ranger, Nira depended on her sense of smell to find her way about and track her opponents. She got so professional at using that skill set that when she awakened her soul sense, this was the peculiar power she unlocked with it.

Nira could feel that Eren was different from the rest of the rankers the moment all the participants entered through the spatial tunnels from various locations inside the Lama Ruins. Eren's uniqueness led her to take a closer look at him.

Nira started walking around Eren as he stood motionless. The butcher was feeling tense at the apparition of a Sage taking an interest in him. She had summoned only him out of all the participants.

Nira's speculative gaze and soul sense told Eren that Nira didn't care about the qualifications of the participants who would eventually end up getting her legacy. She must have created the preliminary rounds on the spur of the moment to get some alone time to observe a unique specimen like Eren Idril.

Nira's eyes shone as if she had figured something out. She flashed a knowing smile before commenting.

"No... it's not just your mana signature. This bloodline energy I'm smelling... you are half-blood."

Eren narrowed his eyes when he heard Nira speak. Nira seemed to have special attributes related to her soul sense that helped her discover his true identity. He didn't want to turn hostile against a Sage even if she was nothing but an apparition. However, it looked like things were bound to go that way.

Eren's aura started to change. There was no respect in his demeanor anymore. He was ready to locate the array that kept the vestige of Nira's soul and destroy it for good. He had Alephee on standby to locate the array for him as well.

From being fearful of the Sages and completely helpless in their presence to being fearful of Sages and still being able to face them head-on, One had to say that Eren had come a long way. He had already started to plan multiple strategies to completely destroy the vestige of Nira's soul along with the entire castle.

Nira started chuckling when she sensed Eren's bloodlust. She decided to clear a few things before Eren started taking some drastic measures against her.

"Relax, Eren. I don't plan to hurt you in any way. Your half-blood status doesn't bother me. I had faced many half-bloods in my past when I was in the land of Anfang.

I faced some of them as "rivals" and others as... let's say... "lovers"... by the rudimentary definitions of those worlds, that is."

Eren didn't let his guard down even after hearing Nira's non-threatening response. However, he stopped himself from taking extreme measures against her.

Nira could feel that the assurance she had offered to Eren wasn't enough. So she added further.

"Listen here, boy. I am my former self's apparition forever locked inside this castle. I have no reason to lie to you. I gain nothing from abiding by the land of Anfang's rules anymore.

What's more? My real self is not in the land of Anfang. So I am no longer bound by this world's restrictions either."

Eren had to say that he was surprised by what Nira was telling him. The way she said those things made it seem like she was still alive somewhere outside the land of Anfang.

He had often wondered how the Sages of Anfang kept themselves busy after reaching the pinnacle of power in this world. It looked like some of them would leave this behind to seek greater heights.

It seemed like Nira was in a mood to share things with Eren. She wasn't bound by Anfang's rules either. Plus, her castle was a safe place to talk about these things.

The ghost of the Sage-ranked ranger stood in front of Eren after circling him. She looked him in the eyes before continuing with a playful tone.

[Chapter 1067 Half-Bloods' Origins](#)

Eren maintained an expressionless face as he listened to Nira Nightshade's words.

"Hehe. I was never so shallow-minded as to look at half-bloods as if they were the scum of the world. So what if they are labeled as demonkin or demon spawns? This entire kingdom was established because of demonic rankers like us in the first place."

Eren found it difficult to maintain his stoic look when he heard Nira's statement. He had so many questions to ask. But he figured he should let Nira continue talking on her own initiative. And that's what she intended to do all along.

Nira shrugged her shoulders before speaking up.

"You must know about the demon beasts' origins by now. The demons occupy the mana beasts' bodies and turn them into vessels. They can take humanoid forms after ranking up their beastly shells.

Have you ever wondered how the first line of half-bloods was created? It was created when demon-like creatures mated with normal humanoids.

Mana beasts sleeping with the "children of Creation" are already frowned upon by the "gods". And if the act is done while a demon is using the beast's body as a shell, then it becomes taboo.

After all, half-bloods gain demonic roots from birth when they are sired by demons' soul fragments. It is rooted in their bloodlines, making them demonkin. And there's nothing the "gods" can do to change that.

Half-bloods descend from demons. As such, we can say that they are born demons. And in some ways, they are more dangerous than demons born out of chaos."

Eren could have never guessed that one of the long-standing questions he had in both his timelines would get answered like this in this place. His mind was occupied by metaphorical white noise while he stopped thinking.

"This.... This is big."

Eren mumbled to himself finally. Eren had learned a lot about demons and demonic possessions recently. However, the information Nira gave him was like something hiding in plain sight.

Nira wasn't surprised that Eren didn't know about these things despite being a half-blood himself. She knew that most uninitiated half-bloods in the land of the Anfang who hadn't been targeted by the establishments were unaware of their identities and what it meant to be a half-blood.

Edinburgh had the Blood Punisher Force search and destroy the half-bloods found within the kingdom's territory. Other establishments in the Anfang alliance also had their own special units to get rid of the demonkin known as half-bloods.

The Anfang alliance kept tabs on the half-bloods across the entire continent of Anfang. It prevented the half-bloods from ever prospering in the world. It hunted everyone and killed them all without any distinction to prevent a so-called demonic rise.

One could say that the half-bloods belonged to the demon realm from the moment they were born. They had many advantages over normal rankers. They were as powerful as the demonic rankers of their generation without the side effects that the demonic rankers were used to facing.

The half-bloods didn't have to worry about demon soul fragments taking hold of them. Plus, they had mortal bodies that were supported by the worlds they were in, allowing them to enjoy the benefits of both worlds.

Eren had too many questions to ask Nira Nightshade. However, after analyzing Sage's previous words, he decided to prioritize a specific one.

"Sage Nira, what do you mean by the kingdom of Edinburgh getting established by demonic rankers? Do you mean..."

Nira flashed a cunning smile at Eren before confirming his doubts.

"Do you think four Sages would serve the first king of Edinburgh— Emil Edinburgh von Renar because they found joy in servitude? Emil was just the puppet we decided to use as a face.

I, Ivar, Yuffie, and Lin. We were all demonic rankers who had decided to create a kingdom for ourselves so that it would serve as our foundation. All four of us wanted to break our shackles and seek new horizons in new lands.

We couldn't do what we wanted as long as the Anfang alliance was still active. And we couldn't do things covertly either as long as we were not in power. So we had to hide our demonic powers and chose Emil to lead a rebellion against a then-giant kingdom known as Silvermoon."

Eren was quickly reminded of the city of Silvermoon as soon as Nira spoke. The latter nodded at him before proceeding.

"That's right. The city of Silvermoon that exists today in Edinburgh does have a connection with the previous kingdom. After all, Edinburgh and Layos were once part of the same kingdom before it was partitioned."

Nira looked upwards and stared at the ceiling as she recalled the past. Eren didn't need to ask her anything at this point. She smiled lightly before speaking in a casual tone.

"Emil von Renar played his part as the leader of the rebellion well. He invoked a sentiment in humans' minds that they were being oppressed by their elven rulers. This half-truth became the fire that we needed to carve out our own piece of land from the kingdom of Silvermoon and form our puppet government."

Nira started walking towards the stairs, hinting at Eren to follow her. She shrugged her shoulders before speaking further.

"Even as an elf myself, I'll go ahead and say that humans were indeed less privileged to some degree than their elven counterparts. However, Emil played smart. He exaggerated the oppression and downplayed the good that the then-rulers of the Silvermoon kingdom attempted to do.

Many people like to see themselves as victims of their circumstances. It's like they need some kind of reason to justify their failures. It becomes easier to manipulate them once the concept of oppression has been cemented in their minds.

The rebellion picked up the pace for over a century. Things got so out of hand that even most of the elves felt like they didn't want to do anything with the human rebels."

Eren had heard bits and pieces about the history between the kingdom of Layos and the kingdom of Edinburgh. Nevertheless, he didn't know they both hailed from the same place of origin.

Eren had his head down while following Nira. He narrowed his eyes and commented.

"So the rebellion that King Emil von Renar led was successful."

[Chapter 1068 Edinburgh's Formation](#)

Nira nodded her head adding further.

"Things like rebellion are just like a wildfire, Eren.

It takes courage to chop down an entire forest to stop the fire - getting rid of critical resources to prevent further damage. The party tricks to quell the fire are only meant to delay the inevitable and make matters even more complicated in the long run.

Anyway, the kingdom of Silvermoon understood the truth very well. It just couldn't implement countermeasures the right way. After all, the rebellion was backed by rankers like us.

As a result, the Silvermoon kingdom suffered through a rough patch when the rebellion was becoming increasingly violent. One side wanted humans to stop demanding more than they could chew. The other side wanted to have an uprising against their oppressors. And both sides were joined by prominent figures of their time.

Things kept getting heated even after the Anfang Alliance's intervention. Then one fine day, the kingdom of Silvermoon was split into two smaller kingdoms— the kingdom of Layos and the kingdom of Edinburgh.

Even after they failed to squash the rebellion, the elves were still a powerful force. They managed to keep the most fertile lands of that time. The kingdom of Layos was established by uniting those lands under one jurisdiction.

Thanks to us four Sages as well as others who shared our vision, Emil also managed to keep a large part of the land for himself. Compared to the lands of current Layos, Edinburgh didn't have many resources to cultivate right after its partition.

Edinburgh at that time was much like the barren land you had bought from House Remus. Or more correctly, that land was the original state of the Edinburgh kingdom until we intervened and started using the Water of Leith more extensively than before."

Eren was stopped in his tracks when he heard Nira talk about his city. It seemed that the Sage was in touch with the current happenings outside. The kingdom of Edinburgh must have kept her in the loop, he thought. Or the Sage had her own means to get information about the outside world— just like Eliza.

Eren immediately followed Nira as she continued.

"The rulers of the previous kingdom became the royalty of the Layos. And the face of the rebel army became the first king of the newly established kingdom of Edinburgh.

This is how Edinburgh started having royalty from thin air. Just like every other royal family anywhere on the land of Anfang.

Hehe.

I pity these so-called royal scions who think they are entitled to barge into my place and demand some form of reward. And for what? Just because they have Renar as their surname?

They don't know that the first king of Edinburgh was nothing but a puppet in our hands."

Eren sighed as he thought about what Nira must have done to the royal participants who thought they deserved something from this place-- just because Nira Nightshade was seen as the follower of the first king Emil Edinburgh von Renar. If his guess was correct, there would be fewer royal participants remaining in the event after the first legacy's trial is over.

Nira supposedly didn't care that she had gotten rid of a few nuisances. She climbed the stairs and stopped at the first gallery. A throne-like chair was summoned out of nowhere before the night elf sat on it.

Nira reclined in her chair and tucked her off-golden hair behind her ears. She looked at Eren pensively and took a long breath before continuing.

"The Layos' royalty thought that it had banished all the forces of rebellion into the barren lands. Which was true for the most part. Edinburgh at that time was relatively small, restricted to the land that is now the Duchy of Lionheart.

It was us Sages who settled the disputes with the Anfang alliance and other kingdoms. It was us who cultivated the lands by re-harnessing the Water of Leith.

It was us Sages who penetrated deep into the Badlands and claimed the parts for ourselves. We liberated huge plots of land from monsters' control and stretched Edinburgh's borders to its current standards.

That's why three out of four duchies are always in constant conflict with monsters more than anywhere else on the land of Anfang. The monsters feel that it's their land that we stole from them.

The region I wrestled away from the monsters is now called the Nightshade Duchy. Lin and Yuffie pursued their own ways and freed some more lands, which became Edinburgh's remaining duchies and were named after them.

We had decided that Ivar would deal with the elven forces that belonged to the newly established Layos. So he stayed on the original piece of land that was freed from the kingdom of Silvermoon. As a result, it was named after his title-- the Lionheart duchy."

Eren had stayed at the bottom of the stairs. He smiled at Nira before commenting.

"We were told it was the first king Emil Edinburgh von Renar that gave you those pieces of land to govern. He turned you into four archdukes.

It was said that he gifted you those duchies to honor the contribution you had made towards him."

Nira shrugged her shoulders before answering with a simple word.

"A classic case of whitewashing.

It was us who told Emil to run with that story.

After all, it's fine for history books to have a few bloody pages. But you need some sort of emotional angle to invoke a sense of belonging in the hearts of the common populace. A rebel hero and his loyal followers. That kind of story always sells well.

Emil wasn't much of a fighter. But he was a very capable leader. He was smart enough to know his limits and never disrespected our wishes in any way. For public consumption, we agreed to be seen as the benefactor under his control. And I have to say it worked out well for all of us in the long run."

Eren smiled mirthlessly at the cunning with which the four Sages had carved a piece of land for themselves in the past. It could be said that they had taken the same route as him. However, the scales on which they operated were much larger.

[Chapter 1069 The Art Of Manipulation](#)

'Haah! I wonder how Rodrick would feel after I tell him about Emil's real condition back then.'

The butcher wondered how the royal scions would feel if they heard about the real history of how Edinburgh was formed. He wanted to see their faces after finding out their ancestor was nothing but a convenient pawn in the hands of these Sages.

Eren even had a serious urge to tell Rodrick about these things and see him deflate like a balloon. Because he was sure that most royal scions wouldn't have acted this cocky if they just knew how things really played out in history.

Nira felt like the scenes of the past were appearing one by one like a moving montage of pictures in front of her eyes. She sighed and added further.

"Our success was a huge accomplishment for Emil on paper. The most infuriating thing for the elven royalty was that it lost its capital city in Silvermoon's partition.

Emil knew that I still had close relationships with a few of my people from the elf community. I guess he didn't want to upset me by taking it too far. So he didn't harm the previous capital city that much. Instead, he made a few changes to it and renamed it the city of Silvermoon.

The city of Silvermoon saw the least amount of violence even after the kingdom of Silvermoon was split into two. Overnight, the city protector and people in the administration changed. This was how Emil managed to conquer his enemies' capital without shedding much blood."

Eren remembered the city of Silvermoon perfectly, thanks to both his timelines. He could tell that the city had a lot of history hidden deep within its core. The Elven clans were always known to be eccentric. However, the butcher could tell that the elves living inside the city of Silvermoon were not that attached to the kingdom of Edinburgh. He could also understand why someone like JJ Edgar was attracted to the city of Silvermoon so much. Only now did he know the reason why.

Still, there was something that was bothering Eren.

"Sage Nira, if the city of Silvermoon received the least amount of harm from the rebellion, how come it is not— let's say— as important-looking as it should have been supposed to be?"

I mean the city of Silvermoon is definitely one of the top-tier cities in the Duchy of Lionheart. But it pales in comparison to Edin. And I don't think the previous rulers of the unpartitioned kingdom would have handed the city of Silvermoon in its current condition to Emil."

Nira could tell that Eren was just like her and the other Sages by the kind of questions he was asking her. Just like them, he understood the value of owning a cash cow and staying under the establishment's radar. She smiled subtly before answering his question.

"Emil had patience if nothing else. The man was willing to wait by the riverbank and watch the bodies of his enemies float by, no matter how long it took.

Cajoling the elves with pleasant words and promises.

Managing perception in the elven community by paying prominent elven clans.

Threatening the elven rebels who wanted to push forward the old royalty's agenda.

And lastly, using treachery and diplomacy to divide the enemy elves into multiple groups before getting rid of them.

Emil used every move in his books. The sporadic cases of rebellion within the city were neatly put down by Emil. He then offered the elves special rights. He offered them prestigious places in his royal court and turned them into his allies."

Eren could tell that Nira acknowledged Emil's talent for politics. The man had managed to establish a kingdom for himself. The fact that he had Sages like Nira backing him up didn't take away from his accomplishments. He even incorporated ego-centric Sages into his plan and used their names for his benefit.

Nira took a brief pause before continuing.

"The elven families that hadn't left the city due to various reasons were encouraged to stay at the place by Emil. The city of Silvermoon served as a beacon of hope for all the elven citizens of the kingdom of Edinburgh. These citizens were indecisive about whether they should stay where they were or move to the kingdom of Layos. However, they all found comfort in the existence of the city of Silvermoon.

Of course, Emil knew that he couldn't use the city of Silvermoon as his capital city anymore after letting the elven community stay there. So he chose to build his capital city over the ruins of the past era and named it Edin. Parts of the ruins can be seen inside Sansara World.

Emi started reducing the city of Silvermoon's importance. He did things moderately and spanned them over a long time, allowing people to get used to the new change.

Since the last century, the city of Silvermoon has been just another peaceful city inside the Duchy of Lionhearts. It completely lost its extravagance and turned into a place where the elves could gather and enjoy quality family time. And the most important thing to note is that the elves are happy with the change."

Eren had to say that Emil was even more of a master manipulator than him just by hearing his feats through Sage's mouth. The butcher liked to believe that he could have achieved the same thing as Emil if he was put in his shoes. However, he would have ended up creating unrest in the future after he abdicated the throne.

Emil was better than Eren at the art of manipulation because his results were long-lasting. Because the fruits of his labors were still being tasted by his current extended family. The butcher wasn't sure if he could have done things better than Emil.

He didn't try to rise above the Sages that supported him. In fact, he accommodated them as much as he could and made use of their names to strengthen his hold over the kingdom.

"Some people just have a knack for politics, Eren. I'm sure you can understand. Your smell tells me you are not that different from the first king of this kingdom.

Hehe. How about it, boy? Want to raise another rebellion and split the kingdom of Edinburg into even more pieces?"

Eren had only one thought deep in his mind when he heard Nira's question.

'Stop sniffing me.'

[Chapter 1070 Silvermoon's Demonic Connection](#)

"Hehe. How about it, boy?"

Want to raise another rebellion and split the kingdom of Edinburg into even more pieces?"

Nira asked playfully as she rested her head on the palm of her hand in a forward head posture. She looked at Eren intently as if trying to read the mystery that was surrounding him.

The butcher smiled before responding.

"This pond is already starting to get smaller for me. What will I do even if I conquer it? I'd rather enter a much larger pool like the one you guys are currently swimming in."

Nira became speechless after Eren's response before breaking into a peal of laughter. She knew Eren's background. The guy had established a prominent city in the Nightshade Duchy. It was like his mini kingdom.

Nira had played the same game. As a result, she knew how astute one needed to be to achieve something that Eren had achieved. Furthermore, he had done that in a very short time— while he was not even a high-ranked entity. With no background and no financial blessing from anyone.

Therefore, Nira didn't think that Eren was bragging in front of her when he said what he said. She chuckled before adding further.

"So where was I? Yeah... Emil's move was politically motivated. There's no doubt about that.

However, it prevented further escalation of conflict within the kingdom. The kingdom of Layos was also pacified when the city of Silvermoon stayed intact despite the flames of rebellion surrounding it.

That move cemented Emil's self-proclaimed belief that the rebellion had taken place not to hurt the elven community but to nurture so-called oppressed humankind.

The two kingdoms eventually managed to form diplomatic ties. The elven royalty would visit the city of Silvermoon in a hush-hush manner every so often to relive their past. Some would even stay, promoting the city's growth with their contribution.

That brat Jian was one such elven royalty who decided to stay inside the city of Silvermoon. He couldn't handle the royal games so he decided to change sides.

Jian stayed in the city of Silvermoon for a long time before deciding to move to the city of Curar. There, he would go on to establish Healers' Nirvana.

Hehe. I find it funny that the brat who was most passionate in his generation about becoming Layos' King was the first one to call it quits. He stepped out of that quagmire and never looked back.

Jian and his wife both managed to break into the Sage ranks just recently though. So I guess nobody can question their achievements anymore.

Incidentally, the kingdom of Layos doesn't know about the couple's breakthrough. So some of Jian's enemies dared to attack his guild to smoke it out."

Eren wasn't shocked to learn from Nira about Jiana's connection with Layos' royalty. However, he was shocked to learn that her parents had managed to break into the Sage rank.

Only now did Eren realize why the Layos' royalty was at odds with Jiana and her guild. The Jihang couple must have been seen as an eyesore by the Jian royal contestants of his time. After all, he managed to thrive in the enemy kingdom and proved Emil's point right.

Nira's eyes shone with a crimson hue as she continued.

We four Sages wanted to create a safe haven for ourselves by creating this kingdom. It would support us until we either manage to break through our current ranks or find a way to leave this world.

After all, it would be foolish to mess with the Anfang Alliance. It has an army of Sages loyal to its cause. We wouldn't have stood a chance.

So we let Emil become the face of us. He aligned his kingdom with the Anfang Alliance and the kingdom of Layos followed in his footsteps. As a result, both kingdoms started taking a hardline stand against cultists, rogues, and demonic rankers.

The deep states of both kingdoms recognize that their origin kingdom, Silvermoon, had demonic connections. In fact, Silvermoon thrived on that connection until Emil's rebellion.

Both kingdoms kept these things dark to prevent the Anfang Alliance from taking action against them. But both kingdoms aimed to amplify the demonic connection in the shadows to gain an edge over the other.

Sansara World was created by collecting spatial fragments of ruins from the past, an era that predates us. Lin created this special spatial dimension to hide the demonic connection it has."

Eren knew what Nira was talking about just fine. Alephee had also told him in the beginning that the Golden Globe hanging motionlessly in the Edinnica Arena was giving her demonic vibes.

His immediate thoughts, however, revealed a sense of curiosity before he asked.

"What kind of demonic connection?"

Nira Nightshade flashed a cunning smile before answering.

"This place hides within itself a one-of-a-kind demonic altar. A demonic altar dedicated to a very powerful demon I might add.

The kingdom of Edinburgh reported to the kingdom of Layos that it had destroyed the altar when both kingdoms still shared active diplomatic ties. However, Edinburgh's traitor Isen Osan informed the kingdom of Layos that the altar had been kept intact.

Can you guess what Layos did after finding the news from Isen?"

Eren met Nira's eyes and answered without a moment's delay.

"Send in the infiltrators into the Sansara World to confirm Isen's intel. And gain access to the altar, if possible."

Eren realized why the kingdom of Edinburgh didn't take extreme measures against the infiltrators at the beginning. This was a secret shared by both kingdoms and they both wanted to keep it that way. After all, neither side wanted to provoke the Anfang Alliance.

However, he knew that all bets were about to be off once Edinburgh's side found out that the infiltrators had managed to kill Rufus. He had added oil to the fire by using the demonic altar for himself as well.

It was only a matter of time before both sides turned openly hostile.