

Vile 111

Chapter 111: Ramy Richards Returns

“Now tell me, are you willing to pay that amount? If yes, we’ll have that duel right now! I’ll make sure to teach you properly this time.”

Eren said all that in a scolding tone laced with a mild threat. He had never used this harsh voice before. He was always calm and cool-headed. That’s why his little agitation came as a shock to him.

His team members were confused and surprised by his uncalled-for harsh response.

Some of them didn’t know what was said and done between Eren and Renita as they were busy duelling among themselves. But they had understood that whatever the latter said had rubbed their leader off in the wrong way.

Renita remained silent and her cheeks had gotten red. She knew she was pushing her luck. But she did it because she thought there were no consequences. How was she supposed to know Eren would take a simple joke so harshly?

She also felt guilty for pestering him so much. She lowered her voice and head a little and spoke up:

“Of... of course, I’ll pay. And Eren, I’m sorry if my little prank..”

...

“Steve, Ewen, hewe you aawe. Take me in your team, guys!”

Renita wanted to apologize to Eren but was interrupted by a weird sentence thrown their way from somewhere. She followed the source of that voice and saw a medium statured student heading their way.

“I finally found you hewe. I heawd that you aawe in Steve’s team. Take me in it, won’t you? I won’t disappoint you.”

Eren’s team members saw Ramy Richards asking about joining their party out of the blue. Nobody had seen it coming, including Eren.

“Ramy Richards, what are you doing here?”

Eren was already irked by Renita. His head was starting to calm down. But then Ramy came with his sudden demand wanting to join their party. He felt like he had a headache.

The butcher grabbed his forehead to soothe it a little with a light massage and waited for Ramy to answer. The latter told them that he had been looking to meet him and Steve ever since his defeat by Eren’s hands in the intra-class ranking war.

Ramy was immensely impressed by Eren’s performance with him. The fact that his opponent had figured out the way with which Ramy’s spell worked without knowing about it spoke volumes about Eren’s expertise.

Ramy was going to join a relatively well-established party before his defeat. But that match with the butcher had made him realize that there was always someone superior in everything you do.

And like this Eren had his first fanboy! A fanboy with a lisp!

Ramy's will to follow Eren was so strong that he didn't budge when he was told that they already had seven fixed members in their team and he could only join as a forever reserve member. He was dissatisfied, yes. But that didn't discourage him from committing to the team.

Eren wanted to oppose this idea. But then he kept quiet. He pondered a little before okaying Ramy's demand. There was no loss to be had to him and his team if they were only taking a reserve member in their team. The problem was for Ramy.

Since he'd be treated as a reserve member, Ramy would have to take part in minimum ranking war battle separately from his team if he didn't get to play. He'd also get less share or no share at all in their winnings depending upon his involvement, which was going to be dicey for the most time. But Eren's team itself had no problem keeping an extra member around.

Eren nodded to Steve on which the latter okayed Ramy's verbal application.

"By the way, Ramy, what is your class and what was the spell you were trying to cast on me?"

Eren couldn't help but ask. He needed to know about the newest member in his team to formulate how to make the best use of him:

"Oh, that! Hehe!

My element is sound. And my inherent nature is dissonance. I practice a wanking technique related to sound as well. My class is that of a knight. But

My spell's name is Suweel Sound Swords. It lets me form two spectral swords made of sound vibrations compressed into sword forms. These swords, formed in the area around me after a successful completion of silent incantation, can attack my opponent as per my will. I can also wield them to perform basic knight moves. Pweety cool, ain't it?"

Eren's and his team members' brains stopped working trying to decode what the hell Ramy Richards was trying to say using so many Rs in his speech. It was like the guy wanted people to make fun of him.

But Steve couldn't help asking with suppressed laughter almost breaking past his control:

"So you have a lisp. And your elemental affinity is sound?"

"Yeah. What's wrong?"

Ramy asked with part confusion and part anticipation on his face.

"Wrong he says! Hahahaha! Nothing... oh my god. Nothing's wrong here. You are hilarious, Ramy. I'm glad you are part of our team. Now if we could just hire a translator to understand what you said just now, that'd be great! Haha!"

Steve started laughing out loud while holding his stomach. Ramy had said too many lisp-influenced words in one go for him to stay in control. But not everybody followed his lead.

Eren was again put into deep thought after hearing about Ramy's characteristics. The element of sound indicated derived elemental affinity. The sound element users weren't usually found around. But they weren't extremely rare either.

Therefore, there were plenty of techniques for the user to choose from. And yet, Ramy didn't harmonize his class and its spell at all when he had so many right choices he could make use of.

'What the fok this guy was thinking when he was trying to attack me with a mid-range spell. He is a fokin Knight for devil's sake!

Haah! Most teens are stupid. I should lower my expectations. And who am I to judge anyway? It wasn't like I never made mistakes in my past timeline.'

Eren had this thought as he shook his head and smiled mirthlessly. Now he had another task that lay in front of him. Fine-tune Ramy into a better reserve member of their team.

What the butcher didn't know was that his upcoming training would birth an exceptional sound element Knight in the future, in the form of Ramy Richards!

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AN: Hi. I know, Ramy's speech can be painful to read. I have to show the intended lisp in his speech after all. Hope you can read the words by replacing irregular Ws with Rs in words.

Ramy is going to be a fun character in the VEH-verse. He is talented, fearless, and not shy of his lisp at all.

But let me know if it's too unbearable. I'll either not show the lisp in writing at all, reduce Ramy's dialogues overall, or make him talk in the third person.

Chapter 112: Marla's Criticism

Four days before the inter-class ranking war!

Eren could be seen trying very hard to beat Marla!

He was in the courtyard of a medium-sized house. Located at the edges of the Lionhearts Beasts Sanctuary. Just a few minutes away from the check-post that allowed entrance to the forest.

This was where Marla lived when she was on LA grounds.

The butcher was using every trick in his sleeves to land one good blow even when he knew he wouldn't be able to scratch her. And unsurprisingly, all his attempts had been in vain so far.

He had expected this to happen. But that didn't change the fact that he was also feeling miserable because of the power gap between them.

That's right. The butcher's combat training with Marla had begun just four days before the upcoming team match.

Even Eren's Sedated Perception of working on hyperdrive didn't give him the edge he fantasized. The gap in their BTP value was too huge after all. With that much difference in the power, not even a transcendent spell could do much.

Marla was at the peak of the D-Rank. She had been so for a while now. So handling a brat in the F-Rank wasn't a big deal for her.

Still, the lady was impressed by her apprentice's battle talent. She would have never thought that an ordinary and plain looking guy like Eren would keep on surprising her till today.

Eren was dwelling at his wit's and body's physical limits. Marla would only attack him passively while regulating her strength to her student's level. But one light blow from her was enough to send him meters away from his initial position.

The battle continued to rage. Eren then drew his katars. The Diceros Left and Right made their eventual appearance. But Marla only chuckled a little in response. She raised her hands and asked the out-of-breath teen to "come and get it" with her index finger.

Eren imbued his dual-wielded weapons with his lightning mana before diving right in for a head-on frontal assault. Marla didn't even try to defend and....

Long story short, the butcher lost. The weapons wouldn't help him. They hindered his movements and attacks as he wasn't used to their handling yet.

"I think this should be enough for the day, don't you think? Hehehe! Or you want us to continue?"

Marla giggled and passed a remark. She knew the boy was spent. But his fierceness at the F-Rank had shocked her a little. She knew she couldn't do much better than him if she was the same age and rank. And this even though all the amazoness was blessed with an exceptional talent for a close combat type.

"Why don't you go ahead and of my head straight away instead of killing me in instalments?"

Eren lowered his voice while he talked. Almost whispering. But he knew Marla would be able to hear him. He wanted that to happen anyway.

"Hahaha! I was just testing your limits, silly boy. I need to know what you are capable of right now before gilding you in your path further.

I must say, I'm impressed. When it comes to spell execution and timing, you are beyond any normal F-Ranker. Even a talented kid who has been groomed from their birth would find it to beat you in one or two moves.

Plus, there's no hesitation in your moves. You see an opponent and you stop seeing anything more about them. I can tell that man or woman, young or old, all those things cease to matter to you when you identify someone as your enemy.

That's a good approach to have. No hesitation to take care of your problem that's in front of you. A close combatant's mindset needs to be at least this firm for them to succeed later on.

Those are all your plus points. Now comes the criticism.

Your control over your body's movements is also good, but it needs some refinement. To be honest, it feels like your body is used to fighting like a berserker.

You are a close combat warrior, so act like one and get at an arm's length from your opponent. And only then unleash your attack spells for a maximum impact. What's the use of maintaining a mid-range distance? Are you thinking about creating a safe distance to retreat in case your moves fail you?

It's like you subconsciously want to execute a mid-range spell before following it with another attack. This is opposite to a close combatant's instincts.

Then there's your habit of wanting to go behind the enemy's back to catch them off guard. That is again a berserker move after they use speed enhancement potion. They do that because they can't breach their enemy's defence with finesse and grace like us. So they strive to avoid their defence entirely.

It is not a bad strategy per se. But that's not how close combatants fight. We are frontline warriors who target the enemy's vital spots while looking them right in the eye.

We don't normally try to avoid the enemy's defence. We clash with it upfront and poke holes in it. In short, you haven't developed a close combatant's instincts yet.

I can teach you the moves. I can guide you when it comes to your weapon handling. But the instinct part is something you need to develop on your own.

I'm not even sure if you've selected the right class for yourself now. Will you not be better off as a berserker?"

Marla looked at Eren seriously and concluded. She knew the boy had a talent for being a close combat expert. It was just that his talent as a berserker was even more apparent. She'd like to have him as her apprentice. But she wouldn't guide him on the wrong path because of that.

Therefore she spoke what she spoke truthfully. Now it was the butcher's turn to decide. What she didn't know was that Eren already knew his shortcomings. He had lived a long life in his past timeline being a shitty berserker. Of course, his habits weren't going to be that easy to get rid of.

What Marla had considered a talent in berserking was merely his experience from the past timeline.

Chapter 113: White Raven Crew

What Marla had considered a talent in berserking was merely his experience from the past timeline.

But he needed to admit that whatever else that she said was the truth. Old habits die hard. And in his case, he had already died once. So in a way, his berserking habits were more persistent than him.

"I'm sure about my path as a close combat expert, Master Marla. It's just that I try to copy my friend Steve sometimes who is also a berserker. But I'm sure your guidance would help me get rid of those habits for good."

Steve would have coughed blood after knowing he was being used as an excuse like that.

"I'm not sure how you can copy someone in a test and still score more than them. Anyway, it's good that you are steadfast in your current path. So we'll go ahead with our training from the next session.

I'll include some more exercises to increase your body's flexibility. We'll focus on that first before moving on to the katar arts. If you don't have any questions, you can consider yourself dismissed for today.

And be sure to answer my calls when I summon you next. Hehe! I have a surprise for you."

Marla said this and went inside her abode, leaving her apprentice to his devices. The butcher dusted his clothes off and found his way outside his courtyard. He was thinking about ways he could get rid of his berserking ways or implement them in his current battle style in such a way that they don't come off as a hindrance.

"Ron's Raiders 1/A vs. White Raven Crew 1/C!"

The teams are requested to approach the battle ring and prepare in the corners assigned to them. The battle will start in five minutes."

Two groups of students could be seen approaching the battle ring surrounded by a crowd. Both teams had seven members each. One of the teams belonged to the class of 1/A while the other was from class 1/C.

Ron Valencia was the team leader of his team Ron's Raiders. He was confident in his team's strength. And most of all, he was confident about himself.

Ron boasted the BTP value of 17 while his other team member Dino Moretti was flaunting the BTP value of 16. They both were exceptionally talented than their peers and had started their ranking journeys much earlier with abundant resources.

Ron's team had an unusual setup. It had two berserkers namely Ron himself and the other being Dino. The team had discarded the inclusion of a close combat expert to achieve this. But it didn't lose its battle prowess in the process.

That's because Ron and Dino worked excellently as a pair. The coordination between them had been fine-tuned for years. That's because they were instructed in the path of a berserker by the same teacher that had taught them from their adolescence.

The team focused on Ron and Dino getting prepared for their attacks while the other team members handled the first few minutes of the battle in a defensive mode. Then when they were ready, the other team members would retreat in the back followed by the duo launching its sync attack.

Ron had tried and tested this strategy many times now. They even conducted mock battles with other teams in total confidentiality. Their team battle practices showed promising results.

Therefore, Ron's team didn't pay much attention to the team they were up against. This team was only going to be their stepping stone to reach a higher stage of battles after all.

What Ron and Dino didn't know was that there was someone in the other team whose eyes shine with cold-blooded brutality when he saw them.

Eren couldn't stop himself from showing that glint in his eyes after he saw who his team was up against. The butcher looked down so that nobody would see the hate in his eyes. And nobody did. Except for Becky. She was the most sensitive towards Eren's aura which had gotten even colder than normal ever since the other team made its appearance.

'What is this guy up to now?'

Becky thought to herself. Of course, she wanted to ask about the issue. but she figured this was not an appropriate time. And even if it was, this deep schemer would not necessarily tell her the truth.

He'd just spout half-truths and half-lies coated with thoughts of euphemism to steer away from the topic. One had to say, Becky had an uncanny ability to judge a person's character.

Ron Valencia and Dino Moretti. The two berserkers would get pretty famous for their feats later on in their lives if things proceed as they've been usually ordained. They were the same students who had harassed Eren in his previous timeline after Selena Slughorn started spreading rumours about him.

In the previous timeline, Eren had to attend compulsory battle classes meant for all the berserkers. That's because he had changed his path from being a potioneer to that of a berserker. These battle classes were held from the third academic year onwards and nobody was allowed to skip them.

There, Ron and Dino would always pick fights with him and trash him up real good. They were all berserkers at that time. So it was still technically counted as a fair fight. It wasn't Ron and Dino's fault the guy had to switch paths in his third academic year after all.

But today, at this time, this place, and in this timeline, things would be different. The butcher would make sure of that.

'Hmm! What did I promise myself back then? That I'd fry these guys' balls, huh? Well, I obviously can't do that thing here. But I'll at least give them a small taste of hell heading their way.'

Eren thought to himself and sported the most cheerful smile on his face. To the rest of the team members and onlookers, it looked like Eren was trying to build confidence in them for their upcoming match. But to Becky, it felt like the smile of a devil before he commits his vile deeds.

"The five minutes are up. Both the teams should step into the battle ring now."

The battle between Ron's Raiders and White Raven Crew was about to start.

Chapter 114: Raising the Bet

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The battle between Ron's Raiders and White Raven Crew was about to start.

"What's our plan, Steve? Which formation are we going to use against them?"

Becky asked Steve who in turn looked at Eren, hinting that he was going to be the one who decides. The butcher didn't take long to reply:

“We’ll go with the first formation. I’m not sure about the rest but those two, Ron and Dino, are both berserkers. The defensive stance will put us in passive. That is enough for the two to overwhelm us given enough time.”

Eren concluded swiftly before stepping into the battle ring. When all of the team members of the battle entered the ring, the battle ring erected an energy shield to seal them all in from the crowd watching outside it.

The first formation Eren’s team had practised focused on offence. In the first formation, Eren will start an all-out offence against their mage while the rest will keep the other members of the opposite team busy.

Renita will be in charge of long-range attacks to support Eren when he needs it. Becky will halt the advances of the enemy berserker. And Jake will defend their side and provide a zone for them to fall back to.

Steve would be given time to prepare and would only be utilized as a follow-up after Eren’s retreat. The first formation was the most ideal for the team they were up against. But it had a flaw because of the enemy team’s formation.

The enemy had two berserkers. That meant Becky had another berserker in her platter. Steve could help her take care of the other one, but as a result, he won’t be ready to initiate his charged attacks.

But since Eren had told them to go with the first formation, nobody had objected to it. They also knew no matter how many formations a team comes up with, a template won’t necessarily match the scenario with 100% accuracy.

“5... 4... 3... 2... 1...”

“Hold on!”

The referee was about to announce the beginning of the battle. But Eren interrupted him. He raised his eyebrows and was about to ask what was the hold about. But Eren cleared that for him in the next second:

“Ron Valencia of the Ron’s Raiders, our leader Steve wishes to talk to you.”

Eren put forward Steve’s name for his plans. Ron was confused but he nodded anyway. But nobody was more confused than Steve himself who had no idea what Eren was talking about. The team leaders and one of their extra members each met at the centre of the battle ring:

“Well... we are listening.”

“Hmm. Steve wants this battle’s stakes to be raised.”

“Hahahahaha! Ron, these fools think they can win this battle. Can you believe it?”

‘A lackey would always act like a lackey.’

Eren thought to himself and sighed at Dino’s taunt. He didn’t pay attention to him but focused his eyes on Ron before continuing further:

“If you are so confident in winning, I don’t see any harm for you to accept Steve’s demand. You might even profit big if you raise the bet and win the match.”

The devil whispered into its victims’ ears. And the victims fell prey to his trap as he had expected:

“Hmm, you are right. So how much raise are we talking about here?”

Ron asked curiously. He didn’t mind raising the stakes if that would help their team win big in their very first inter-class match. He was expecting “Steve” to raise the compulsory betting amount of 200 to 1000 Merps at maximum.

“10,000 Merps!”

Ron started coughing hard. Dino was stunned as well. And even Steve felt like he was having an out-of-body experience with his soul flying over him.

But the butcher said this with a plain face.

“What the actual fok! Ron, these idiots have gone crazy.

I’ve checked their credentials and earlier battle records. This Eren guy is good and their mage Becky and ranger Renita are decent. But this Steve here is total trash. He lost without even casting a spell. Hahaha!

Let’s accept their deal. If this bunch of idiots want to hand all their Merps to us, so be it. Who are we to stop someone from committing an act of benevolence? Haha!”

Ron had figured out there was something fishy when he saw Steve’s reaction after Eren said that huge number. But he was distracted by Dino who made a fair point. He too had studied a lot of students’ performances.

Eren was good. But there was nothing special about Steve or Jake. Frankly, he didn’t understand how he got to be a team leader in the first place.

But the thought of earning 10000 points in one go finally blinded him. He checked with his members. They could collectively raise 11K Merps, just barely able to fulfil the raised bet’s requirement.

Eren had already come prepared. He had liquidated some of his wealth into Merps. He did the heavy-lifting in his team and put 5K merps into the pool. The rest of his team members begrudgingly put forward the remaining amount.

If they lose now, Eren’s team will cry rivers of blood. It was their hard-earned resource. Doing a part-time job while taking care of their curriculum was not easy after all.

The team leaders from both sides approached the referee and made their intentions known to him. He couldn’t believe the two teams would appear at the beginning of the inter-class ranking wars and raise the betting amount to 10000 Merps.

But he had no power to stop these students anyway. His only responsibility was to send the system prompt to the two team leaders about the raised amount. And once they accepted from their end, the money would get automatically deducted from the loser team leader’s account and get credited to the winning team’s leader.

Both the team leaders accepted the prompt sent their way.

“Eren, I hope you know what you’re doing. Otherwise, we all will be fucked royally here.”

“Steve, my man, stop being a wuss and play your character well. You are a berserker, for devil’s sake. Act like one. Your emotions influence your path as a ranker you know.”

“It’s just...”

“Later. Now we have the battle to win, 20K Merps to gain, and some scores... hehe!”

Eren laughed cheerfully as he clapped his hands.

Chapter 115: First Casualty?

“Later. Now we have the battle to win, 20K Merps to gain, and some scores... hehe!”

Eren laughed cheerfully as he clapped his hands. Steve had never seen Eren so joyful before. Somehow he felt that the joy had nothing to do with the possibility of 20K Merps they might gain.

“For the second and final time: 5... 4... 3... 2... 1... 0! Commence the battle.”

The crows started clapping as the counter hit zero. Both teams started with their frontline fighters.

Eren bolted to the opposing team’s mage without looking at his back. The mage was going to cast spells using the grimoire he was holding in his hand. This school of spells made use of the words, abstract designs, and runes written on a grimoire’s page using the ink imbued in one’s magic.

It would take a long time for things to go correctly in writing a spell’s intended effect down in a grimoire. But once done, it would allow for a quick and effortless spell casting without worrying too much about the mana circuits within one’s body.

There was only one drawback in this school of spells. All the spells were dependent on the grimoire. If one can take the thing away or destroy it from a distance, then the mage of this school would be like a lump of meat on the chopping block.

Eren had seen the opponent’s mage checking their waist and confirming the existence of the book before the start of the match. He had figured out that the guy was going to use a grimoire.

The butcher already knew the weakness that comes with using the grimoire for spell casting. So he already had plans to tackle him first and foremost.

But the enemy team wouldn’t let him have an easy way of dealing with their mage. Its tank raised an earth wall of 10m in one go and secured its mage behind it.

Marla’s advice was ringing in Eren’s head.

‘It’s the close combatant’s job to tear down the enemy defences and attack them head-on.’

He didn’t stop his advance as a result even after seeing a long stretched wall getting raised out of nowhere. Retreating means losing the advance that they had gained. And going around the wall would mean falling into a trap. Because he knew by now the team was ready to tackle him if he approached them from either side of the wall.

'What about upwards then?'

Eren activated Blitz Steps and stepped fiercely on the vertically stretched wall. He tweaked his movement spell a little to grant a penetration power to his steps and climb the wall. The feet created a straight line of footholds in his path. It slowed down his speed but allowed him to continue his assault in the same direction.

The butcher climbed the wall effortlessly. But it seems that the enemy team member had studied him. They had drawn the possibility of him climbing over the wall to meet them.

So the tank dispelled the spell just at the right moment as Eren climbed it up and changed it into a giant fist manifestation spell.

The surface right beneath Eren's feet turned into a giant palm before it closed in on him quickly. Everybody saw Eren getting squeezed and trapped inside that fist.

The enemy team was about to celebrate and Eren's team was about to panic. The match hadn't even lasted a few seconds and the White Raven Crew had its first casualty.

Nobody had accepted this. The plan was to allow Renita to cover Eren's path with her long-range spells from behind him. But the guy just rushed to the mage without coordinating with the ranger at all.

"Hehehe! That guy..."

The mage was about to speak when he felt that someone was standing beside him. When he looked at the visage, he was utterly surprised before feeling someone had just twisted his guts by landing a brutal punch on his abdomen.

The mage was going to cast a defence spell but found out that his grimoire was nowhere to be found. It was already taken away from him.

The punch on the abdomen was so strong that it didn't trigger the gag reflex. Instead, it made him lose his footing and curl up like a freshly caught prawn.

Eren smashed the mage's head with his feet to make him completely lose consciousness.

'One down!'

The butcher said to himself and smiled. He was having fun bullying these kids. His BTP was superior to all of them in these two teams. Of course, he'd have an easier time dealing with them individually.

And even with so many advantages stacked together, Eren didn't like to take risks. There would be no enemy coming back from their slumber after he had taken care of them. If it was a real battle, the butcher would have killed this defenceless mage then and there, only leaving his side after making sure he was gone for good.

He kept the grimoire in his storage. Even if the team has a healer now and they heal him after some time, this mage would practically be useless without his book.

Eren was in enemy territory. The team's dual berserkers had already gone ahead to engage with his team's members. That left two more members for Eren to take care of.

He was going to approach the closest person to him and get rid of him. But a round of wind bullets approached the girl standing blankly looking at Eren's visage.

The butcher looked behind and found that it was Renita. She had followed till here at last. He nodded at her before approaching the enemy tank. He had given the feeble character for Renita to take care of.

The ranger didn't like to pick on the butcher's leftover meal. But the team's benefits came first. So she approached the enemy girl with dual mana guns in her hands.

The enemy girl snapped out of her reverie after she heard the swooshing of bullets going right past her ears. Her class was that of a ninja. She opened a scroll at her disposal and tore it and immediately she was covered in tough, shining snake scales.

The bullets hit her but they couldn't do much damage. She readied herself for the battle with the enemy team's approaching ranger. But the butcher wouldn't know anything about this ninja vs ranger battle. Because he had stopped paying attention to it.

His next target was the enemy's tank.

'We face the enemy head-on.'

Marla's voice was still guiding Eren's actions.

Chapter 116: Chink in the Armor

'We face the enemy head-on.'

Marla's voice was still guiding Eren's actions.

The enemy tank felt an unprecedented level of danger after he saw that butcher was approaching him. He quickly cast an earth armour spell on himself that made his body get coated with a rockish layer of earth.

The coating was almost done when Eren reached the tank. He had already drawn his katars. Although he wasn't great at handling them, his experience and expertise in weaponry were enough for him to handle a teen.

Katars were called punching daggers for a reason. They came with exceptional penetrating capabilities that would get unleashed when the user just punched at their opponent wearing them. Their hack-and-slash performance was only subpar at best. But their piercing lethality in close combat range was unmatched.

Eren punched at the opponent's torso which the latter defended by bracing his arms in front of him to form an X. one of the katars pierced the layer of earth armour and lodged itself into the victim's folded wrist.

The tank cried loudly in response. Eren knew he didn't have a lot of time before the dual berserkers returned to take care of him after knowing about their team's situation here.

And yet, the butcher didn't slow down his assault. He targeted the tank's lower waist with his other katar. He pulled out the lodged katar from his opponent's wrist and was about to bend a little to inflict injury on his waist but by then his opponent had cast another spell.

This spell was a small version of what the tank did after the butcher was standing over the edge of the wall he climbed. Another earth arm appeared right in the middle of the two students and it tried to grab Eren.

Eren's first instinct was to retreat and think of a counter move. But he was fighting against those instincts to continue his attack. The close combatant needed to find an opening in any case it was possible to find an opening for.

Eren activated Sedated Perception at this time!

Earlier, he was using Sedated Perception as an experiment to see how he can use it at the right time. Thanks to his experiments, he had learned that activating the time element spell at the beginning didn't give him maximum benefits.

He needed to wait for the right moment. He needed this spell the most when he was thinking about the next move while fighting his berserking instincts. He thought to himself as he saw the earth arm closing in on him slowly:

'Let's look at the facts. This guy is an earth element user. So my lightning element attacks won't deal him good damage. The lightning effect damage would just get neutralized by his earth element mana. At least most of it would.

Out of all the element users, this guy could have been, he just had to be an earth element user, a type I'm naturally weak against. Guess, I need to start collecting spells that belong to other Great elements to at least cover my weakness.

For now, if my lightning element spells are not that effective, I'll just save my mana for those two numbnuts. That means going completely hand-to-hand against the tank.

A close-combat expert finds a chink in the armour, huh? Let's do that. This guy's earth armour spell is strong in defence. I could only lodge the tip of my katar into his wrist after applying so much pressure.

But that armour also makes him slow to move in a fluid motion. I, on the other hand with my higher BTP, Blitz Steps and Sedated Perception, can dominate him.

If I can only lodge the tip of my katar with this guy's armour activated, I'll lodge it to a place where it'd matter the most."

The tank was already on guard against Eren by this point. He had already made the area around his groins and joints extra protected by deploying a thick layer of earth armour at the places. Only his face was partially covered in earth armour.

With his speed advantage still by his side, the butcher used his katar again to punch at the tank. This time it wasn't the lower waist like his opponent was expecting an attack to approach from.

Eren punched the guy's face with his katar and the tip of the Diceros Right pierced the left cheek of the tank without almost no resistance before coming out from the other cheek.

Thanks to Eren's controlled piercing, the katar had only pierced the cheeks while keeping the insides of the tank's mouth in a relatively safe position.

The guy was about to shout horribly but was stopped by Eren's uppercut that the latter had given him with his other hand after retracting the katar. But contrary to his belief, the uppercut was meant to lessen the damage not increase it:

"Keep quiet or your cheeks would be torn some more than they already are. You'd require more potions, more resources, more care, and more recovery time if you shout now. You'd have to retire from the match should you get released by me without dealing you more damage, of course. Nod if you understand?"

Eren had stopped the execution of Sedated Perception by now. He had dodged the earth fist coming his way easily and found an apt angle to attack the guy's cheeks. This was the most vulnerable spot he could find to attack on without getting penalized for injuring a student with malicious intentions.

Eren always had malicious intentions regarding his enemies. He just didn't like to suffer himself because of it.

The guy looked at Eren angrily after listening to his demands. He didn't even let him register his pain by shouting his heart out.

But the tank still had some sense left in him. He understood what the butcher said was true. There was no point fighting this demon. Even with his agile earth hand spell acting as an offence and diversion at once, the small-statured and weak-looking butcher could dodge his attacks at point-blank. He was just a superior fighter than him in every aspect, except maybe for his element.

Therefore, the tank sighed and nodded his head. Eren looked at the referee after hearing the tank's confirmation. The referee was paying attention to these two. He just nodded his head and hinted at the tank to step away from the ring's active field.

Just when Eren turned back to look at what his teammates were doing, he saw Dino heading his way at full speed. He was just a few meters away from him. Ron Valencia was still engaging with Steve, Jake, and Becky who had opened a combined front against him.

The duo must have observed by now that Eren had ploughed through their side. If he comes and joins his team, things would get extremely one-sided. That's why Ron told Dino to handle Eren and Renita both.

The dual berserkers had already emptied the berserking potions inside their systems. They were stronger, faster, sharper, and overall more lethal than their usual selves.

Renita ran towards Eren after seeing that he was going to fight with the berserker. Normally, a close combat expert would be at a disadvantage when it came to a close-range fight between them and a berserker. Therefore, she wanted to support Eren on time.

She had already taken care of the ninja she was fighting with. The girl was left unconscious on the ground after Renita shot a dull, close-range wind bullet at the back of her head and dispersed the same right after the impact was made.

Of course, the girl now had a blunt wound and the blood had come out. But the referee had observed that it was not a serious wound simple recovery potions couldn't treat. Plus, the blood loss could be covered with a few specific mana potions too. So there was no worry.

"You fokin bastard, what did you do to...?"

Dino wanted to diss Eren while they were about to engage with each other. But the latter wasn't interested in the same old "you threaten me and I threaten you" chitchat. He used Sedated Perception straight away along with Blitz Steps and almost vanished from his position.

Dino wanted to find Eren using mana sense but he quickly dropped that idea after seeing Renita had sent a volley of wind bullets his way. The ranger didn't hold back this time the way she did with the ninja. She couldn't afford to.

Eren approached Dino from his left side. He had already waited long enough to teach these numbnuts a lesson. Now it was time to act.

Dino's element was copper metal. He had coated himself in a layer of copper metallic armour. And there was a copper greatsword resting on his right shoulder. The sword's edge had Sharktooth-like protrusions that looked like they were spinning. This was a custom-made, rune-carved artefact specially made to be used in conjunction with a particular elemental spell.

Despite the heavy-looking appearance, Dino was pretty nimble on his feet. It seemed that the metal armour granted by the guy's spell didn't restrict his movement.

'Aaah, I forgot. Dino has a copper metal affinity and Ron has an affinity for iron metal. That's why these guys stay together after all. They could attack their enemies without worrying about each other's safety. Plus, their spell combos work well when they are together.'

These numbnuts are looking for people who are experts in casting armour spells on themselves. That tank must be one of their permanent recruits.

Time to show them that the numbnuts can still be crushed even when they are made of metals.'

Chapter 117: Zapping the Berserkers

'Time to show them that the numbnuts can still be crushed even when they are made of metals.'

Eren had consciously selected Dino's left side. The copper berserker had kept his weapon to his right. So his left side was less guarded and he'd face difficulty to launch an attack with that arrangement in response to the butcher's approach.

For the first time since the fight started, Renita became useful to Eren. She kept Dino busy while maintaining a safe distance from him. She knew a berserker's charged attack wasn't something to be scoffed at. The gunslinger made full use of her long-range expertise to keep the metal mean machine at bay.

This was all Eren needed at the time. He approached Dino who had already detected him because of the former coming into his mana sense's range. But that didn't matter. Because Eren was too fast for Dino to respond on time at this close range.

Eren reached Dino's left side just when the latter dodged an array of wind bullets and was prepared to break into his next sprint move.

Eren activated the Blitz Bolt spell and let it run through his katars. Then he adjusted his stance before launching himself directly onto the moving metal slab he knew to be Dino.

The katars lit up with blue electric tongues. Eren found an opening at the guy's left underarm and aimed his katars for a brutal punch. Dino was still trying to find balance after he had dodged Renita's attacks. So even when he knew Eren was going to attack him, he couldn't do much about it. That, and the fact that Eren had been crazy fast.

A distinct metallic clunk sound was heard as soon as the tip of his katar made contact with the berserker. The katars couldn't pierce the metallic skin at first. But then the electric tongues made contact with the shiny skin.

And then... Dino was zapped!

If the earth was the worst elemental affinity for Eren to deal with, then affinities like metals were a huge blessing for him and a curse for his opponents. In his previous timeline, Eren was bullied by these two numbnuts only because he had to regress in his path to become a newbie berserker.

But this time he was a close combat expert with all his perks stacked together. Plus, he had his past life's experiences. And with his enhanced BTP value, he was practically an overpowered character if he fought one on one with these kids.

Dino's irises were scrolled upwards and his eyes turned white for a second after experiencing that lightning spell. And thanks to that, his metal armour spell was broken. The katar that was trying to create pressure on the skin suddenly found reduced resistance.

The katar pierced the skin and made its way inside. It breached the skeletal protection by utilizing the space between two rib bones. And the tip of the katar was only an inch away from piercing Dino's heart.

The referee was caught unaware of Eren's brutal move. He was about to intervene in the fight when he saw that Eren had retrieved the katar.

The attack was just to scare Dino. And apparently, it worked. Because Dino had dropped his greatsword after being pierced by Eren's katar. He was about to declare his bail-out when he felt a punch heading his face that couldn't be blocked by him on time.

Eren too retracted his katars in his storage after seeing that the guy had dropped his weapon. Otherwise, the referee would have gotten the reason he needs to intervene in the battle. He didn't want that to happen at this time.

Dino could only watch as that punch landed squarely on his nose. And the attack didn't end there. It was followed by a barrage of punches, all aimed at his nose that had been long broken by now.

Yet, Eren wasn't satisfied with simple punches. So he executed the Blitz Bolt again on his fist and connected the said charged fist onto Dino's pretty face. The guy nearly passed out after facing the effects of the lightning spell and force behind Eren's punches head-on.

Dino fell to the ground. Renita was about to approach Eren and Dino's little battlefield. But their de-facto leader warned her with his eyes that she needed to join the rest of the team instead of coming here. This little precious metal man was his to play with:

Renita saw a strange spark in Eren's eyes at that time. The butcher's emotional condition was influencing the way his spells and their effects behaved. The Blitz Bolt spell that he meant to only run through his fists had made his eyes shine with lightning in them. Even his open mouth seemed like he was hiding a sparkly source of light inside.

The ranger wanted to argue with Eren but she wasn't even given a chance. Eren sat on Dino's chest and started punching at his face with all the energy he got while running Blitz Bolt at maximum potential.

The streams of lightning flew every time his fists connected with the guy's now-beaten-to-a-pulp face. The butcher was enjoying the moment. The same rules of the LA battles that these guys had used to beat him to a sorry state every time were now helping him vent his frustration of a lifetime.

Dino would have passed out long ago now. And that would have relieved him from his misery as the referee would have announced his exit from the battle in place of him.

But Eren didn't let that happen. Whenever the guy was about to pass out, the butcher would launch a controlled Blitz Bolt at Dino's vital spots to trigger the body's do-or-die response and keep him awake. Then he would follow with another barrage of fists aimed at his nose.

Dino didn't know things would turn out like this. This guy who was sitting on his chest, punching him over and over again while keeping him conscious was a demon incarnate. He didn't understand why Eren was so fixated on making him suffer so much.

Eren was about to throw another punch when he noticed a great force was heading his way. He looked up from his current smash-all-you-want assignment to find out that Ron was using berserker's charge to approach him.

'Come, if you want to come.'

Eren smiled merrily at the sight of the incoming enemy. He launched another spell by spreading his hands in a welcoming gesture just when Ron was a few meters away from him.

Blitz Storm!

This was Eren's AoE spell. It created an area of the dense lightning field with Eren and almost-passed-out Dino at its centre.

Ron was already running on fumes after fighting with Eren's teammates all by himself. Although he stood his ground, their attacks had still affected him. He was able to fight and keep his senses only because of the boost gained from the berserking potions.

But all that boost couldn't save him from Eren's Blitz storm. The butcher was the bane of their metal armour spell. Ron couldn't see the whole thing but he had realized from Dino's state that Eren's spell countered their body armour spell perfectly.

It wasn't like Ron and Dino weren't aware of the natural element weaknesses they shared against Eren's lightning. That's why their initial plan was to let their earth-element tank handle the guy as the dual berserkers kept on pressuring the enemy team's remaining teammates.

But that plan fell apart when their tank tanked on handling Eren. they would have never realized that Eren was this decisive in his approach to tackle them.

Ron was trying to keep calm as the head of his team. But after seeing that Dino was brutally getting his ass handed to him by Eren, he knew their chances of winning this match was zero. Eren had all his teammates standing in the battle ring while he only had himself to count on.

Even if this lightning maniac doesn't participate in the fight anymore due to running out of mana and watching the whole thing from the sides, his teammates were enough to wear Ron down with each passing moment. And no amount of berserking potion consumption was going to change that. It would only delay the inevitable.

Therefore, Ron had used another berserking potion in the heat of the moment. Not to tackle Eren's teammates. But to deal maximum damage to Eren. this was a kamikaze move meant to make Eren pay the consequences of terrorizing his berserker teammate.

But the terrorist himself was already prepared for Ron. Eren knew about how Ron thought. He was aware the iron-metal-man would target him as soon as he figured out the battle's eventual outcome.

That's why Eren was so miserly with his mana expenditure. He allowed Ron to come into his AoE spell's range before executing it at the right moment. But he knew that was not going to be enough to deal with a charged berserker.

Eren's Blitz Storm made the guy whose chest he was sitting on finally get his due rest. He passed out. But the butcher stopped caring about him as soon as he saw Ron approaching.

Sedated Perception was activated!

Chapter 118: Squeezable Nuts

Eren got up from his initial position and headed straight to meet the berserker's charge who had been slowed down to a snail's speed from his perspective. The butcher ducked down and let the guy's fists pass from above his head.

Ron was a knuckle user. And his element was the wind. He would create quakes in the surroundings even with his fists landing on the thin air. That's how he had deflected the barrage of incoming attacks from Eren's teammates despite being surrounded.

And he was going to make the same fists to tackle Eren before the latter got a chance to execute his lightning-based spells on him. But he had underestimated the little terrorist in front of him.

All Ron could see was Eren seemingly vanishing into nothingness before appearing right under his torso. And the guy had already launched his attacks before he could change the position of his fists.

Eren grabbed Ron's almost-metal-like balls and executed Blitz Bolt once again.

This vile creature didn't care about any decorum. Or a silent agreement between men not to target each others' groins. He just grabbed the nuts and let his lightning run loose in that sensitive region.

No matter how charged a berserker was after drinking their potion, they would physically and mentally get frozen in this situation. Ron wasn't an exception to this statement either. And the fact that his metal element spell worked against him in this condition made things even worse.

The metal armour spell was broken. The guy's nuts became squeezable again. And squeeze Eren did. Without a moment's delay.

Ron's sharp scream was heard by the entire crowd. He was kicked from his standing position because of Eren's way of manhandling him in a close combat range.

'Although I must have made a lot of mistakes, this close combat style is fun! I'm enjoying it. Hehe!

The butcher was quite happy with himself. His grin could be seen by his current victim and it created a deep impression in his mind.

'Whose evil spawn did we just battle? Is he even human?'

Ron had a fleeting thought before being overwhelmed by his pain receptors. Because Eren started doing the same thing to Ron as he did to Dino. His punches found a new face to land on.

The skin on Eren's knuckles was thoroughly mutilated despite coating the fists with mana. But he didn't care.

Yet, Ron wasn't helpless like Dino. Nor was he that weak. And he was also wearing his knuckles at the time. He too punched Eren's face. But too bad, the punch couldn't land. The terrorist was still too fast.

Eren knew his Sedated Perception was taxing on his mana storage which was now running out of juice. Therefore, he deactivated his time-element spell and let some punches hit him and his face.

But that didn't make him back away either. He replied to those punches with even more punches powered by his Blitz Bolt.

All the students standing in the crowd as well as those who were inside in the ring at the time could see were two guys locked in a fistfight with each other. With one laying flat on the ground and another sitting on his chest. The other unconscious guy was sleeping his ass off just beside them.

Eren's face had also gotten bloody with only a few punches landing on it. This was due to the knuckles' blunt force. But that didn't discourage him.

Eren had reserved a separate portion of mana for his healing spell at the end of the fight. So he wasn't worried about getting hurt. He smiled and showed his bloody teeth to Ron before launching another spell. The last additional spell his liquid-stage mana-core could support before almost running out of mana.

Blitz Shield!

Eren activated his only defensive skill at the last moment. It made him impervious to Ron's knuckles for a limited time. Of course, the force behind the fist would still register an impact. But that was not enough for the terrorist to stop terrorising his victims.

For the next few moments, only Ron would get injured due to Eren's punches. And he would throw blood in the air from his mouth. Ron's punches only pushed the butcher away and made him almost get up from his chest.

But that vile creature would just use that chance to punch right at his chest before resuming his earlier position. This time, Eren didn't have the luxury to keep Ron awake. His own mana was running out.

He needed to wrap things faster. He wouldn't get completely blind in his revenge and get injured severely for his stupidity. And he didn't underestimate Ron.

That's why Eren dealt a decisive blow to the guy at last and launched the last Blitz Bolt while grabbing the guy's forehead. Of course, he controlled the output to make him only lose consciousness.

Ron stopped moving after Eren's last attack was launched. Eren let go of his victim's forehead and sat right beside his unconscious body.

The butcher took a deep breath. And smiled devilishly.

'Those who say revenge is foolish haven't enacted it in the best way possible. I just took my revenge and I feel great. Upbeat even. Haha!'

The butcher executed the healing spell in his arsenal next.

Blitz Heal!

It had become his habit to think of countermeasures. So he had already made sure to reserve the last vestiges of his mana for this.

His facial injuries started repairing themselves as the tongues of lightning danced over them. It took a while before the major injuries became the minor ones before almost vanishing from their spots.

Eren had closed his eyes during this time for a better spell execution. He only opened them when his spell was completed and there was no more mana inside him to support the spell any longer.

The first thing the butcher saw was that he was surrounded by his teammates. It looked like they were trying to not meet his eyes. All except Becky. And Renita would only peek at him from time to time. Seemingly when he wasn't looking at her.

"Why are you looking like all of your cats have been killed at the same time? We won. Put a smile on your face."

The butcher tried to act normal while trying to ease the tension. He didn't care about his teammates' feelings. But they were needed for his next set of plans after all. And he had done all that he had done in public. Although total anonymity wasn't possible, the butcher still wanted to underplay his character's brutality in his audiences' heads.

"See. Didn't I tell you? His aura has always been cold like the cold-blooded maniac he is.

We could have finished this match easily without him delivering this much pain and suffering to our opponent. But look at what he did.”

Becky wasn’t happy with Eren’s way of handling things. She voiced her displeasure with her harsh words in the spur of the moment. But she had forgotten that there was someone in their team who could be harsher with his words. With the same glib tongue that he had used for various purposes till now.

“And whose fault was it that I had to act the way I acted? It was yours. Almost all of you. Except for Renita. You couldn’t even prevent one guy that was given to you.

Ron not only managed to break a three-person siege but also covered so much distance between me and him without you being unable to interrupt him. At all.

I did what I did to take care of these guys faster. You are underestimating them if you think that they’d go down easily just because they were hit by some of your spells. And that’s what happened with you guys.

Becky, Jake, and especially you Steve. I’ll sum up all your performances in one word:

Pathetic!”

Jake and Steve dropped their necks after listening to Eren’s berating. They weren’t totally at fault. They were inexperienced at fighting battles after all. The books and the training won’t necessarily make you a great fighter unless you keep on fighting and gaining experience. An experience that they lacked.

But Eren didn’t pull back his punches even this time. He created a false standard for them to match up to. So that they’d work even harder than before. All while making peace with his way of handling things.

The tank and the berserker kept quiet. But the mage still had some spunk left in her:

“Oh yeah? You say all that was necessary. But why did you keep Dino awake and make him not fall unconscious?”

We were still fighting but we could still see that because it was going on for so long. You could have joined us to handle Ron if it wasn’t for the madness that you unleashed on Dino.”

‘Oh! This feisty fish is too intelligent for her own good. Should I, let’s say, take her out of the water later on?’

Eren thought to himself before shaking his head inside his mind and in reality. He shouldn’t act impulsively just because someone questioned his actions. Otherwise, he’d spend his life burying dead bodies and covering his tracks.

“That was also because of you guys.”

The compulsive liar came up with another blend of bullshittery and truth right on the spot.

Chapter 119: The Protagonist is Back

“That was also because of you guys.”

The compulsive liar came up with another blend of bullshittery and truth right on the spot.

“What do you mean?”

Becky didn't let go of her inquisitive tone. But her luck was on her side. The butcher didn't finalize on making her disappear.

“You see, I could handle Dino on my own. But things would have gotten difficult for me if he had joined hands with Ron and you were still far too away to help me.

It was clear that you couldn't handle Ron even with all three of you combining your forces. What chances do I have to go against both of them? Even with my element advantage, I could only delay the outcome.

Their combined attacks shouldn't be underestimated. And especially Ron. You saw how surgically he fights despite being a berserker. With him around to guide his lackey, Dino too would have turned into an absolute menace for me and Becky.

That's why I had to put on a show. A show that would provoke Ron into doing something stupid. And it worked. He drank his berserking potions and used the effects on me instead of tackling you guys into a one sweep move.

You know you guys are weak and inexperienced right? He could have wiped the floor with you guys had he put his mind into it.

Ron overestimated you and you underestimated him.

You could argue that it was still going to be our victory since he still had me and Renita to deal with even after defeating you. But Renita with her ranger skills is almost useless against berserkers like Dino and Ron.

All she could do to Dino was keep him busy and annoy him. He didn't get injured by her wind bullets at all. But the impact would hinder his movements. So all he did was try to dodge some of the sprays of incoming wind bullets coming his way.

But that act wouldn't be enough when two berserkers are eyeing us.

I played to Ron's rage so that he could use berserker's charge on me, using a good amount of portion from his potion boost to cover the distance between us in a jiffy. So that when he approaches me, I'd have a half spent berserker to go against.

I didn't want to criticise you because you were inexperienced. But now that it has come to this, let me say that the other team was better than us as a team despite having lost. You guys spent too much time on playing it safe and almost caused us to lose our first interclass ranking war.”

Everyone looked at Becky after they heard what Eren had to say. They felt that she had opened her mouth unnecessarily.

Eren had a habit of extending his speeches so much that he'd force the other party to rage-quit on him. This time too he went above and beyond to highlight his team members' inefficiency and incompetence to hide his terrorising side.

And another reason Eren went into detail about his way of dealing with things was that the referee was listening. He wanted to make sure that there are no penalties for him and his team for his bending of rules just enough not to make them.

Thankfully, the referee found some sense in Eren's talk. He nodded his head at him before announcing the results of the match:

"The White Raven Crew wins this round. The amount of 10K merps would be deducted from the leader of Ron's Raiders group. And it would get deposited into Steve's account, the leader of the winning team.

Battle points would be allotted individually as per the performance of the students belonging to both sides. And a random battle pass would be credited into a student named Eren's account in a short while."

The referee looked at Eren and his team after he announced the match's results. He also declared the appropriate rewards to them and everyone else present in the crowd.

Then he got close to Eren and spoke up in a normal tone that wasn't meant for the battle's audience:

"Kid, you fought well. And your explanations are mostly valid. But they are drawn on assumptions. That meant you unleashed so much violence on your opponents because you assumed their leader to be too strong to deal with normally.

And you targeted your opponents' sensitive body parts without any hesitation, knowing full well they are also students like you and not your enemies in real life.

But you are clever as well. You would stop just before it was enough for me to intervene.

You say that your violence was to counter your opponents' strategy to use tag-team battle moves on you. But your battle performance speaks otherwise.

It seemed like you had planned this. I don't know what these guys have done to you. But I'd suggest you don't settle your grudges in this way. Otherwise, things will only get difficult for you.

About the battle pass. You know you would have gotten two battle passes instead of one right? I can not penalize you by serving punishment to you. But it is still within my right to reduce your battle awards."

'Fu*k you, old man! Take those passes and shove it up your wrinkly ass. My revenge tastes sweeter than honey right now. This was worth it.'

Eren had this thought on the inside but acted apologetic from the outside. He gave a courtesy bow to the referee to show that he agreed with his view.

The referee turned and went away after seeing that his speech had brought a student on the path of righteousness. He had a smile on his face as he went away, thinking that he had succeeded yet again in guiding the youth in the right direction.

Unlike the intraclass battles that were held in quick succession, the interclass wars would have some time between two matches. So the crowd left after a while.

Ron's team had already been retrieved by LA's medical team even before Becky started speaking. So Eren's team was left alone in the ring.

Soon Ana, Bel, and Ramy joined them on the ground from the spectators' stand. Ramy couldn't stop praising their de-facto leader as soon as he got close to him:

"Eren, you were awesome. How can you fight like this at our age? Who taught you?"

Hahaha! My decision was indeed right. I chose the right leader to lead me. Now if you could just teach me..."

Ramy started speaking in his lisp. But by now his team members had gotten used to his way of speaking. They would autocorrect his Ws and Rs whenever he spoke something absurd.

Ramy had started painting Eren in the limelight. As if only he had fought and defeated Ron's Raiders and others who battled with him were mere spectators. Of course, nobody liked that.

"Ramy, we took part in the battle too, you know."

Jake couldn't help but register his complaint. But the fanboy was as blunt with his words as the target of his worship was:

"Haah! You could have fooled me. It was Eren who did the heavy lifting. Without him, Ron's Raiders would have raided your ass..."

Ramy butchered Ron's team name with his lisp because it contained Rs. But he was interrupted by Becky again because she knew he was going to say something very inappropriate:

"Enough Ramy. You should watch what you say around ladies, you doofus fanboy."

"As Eren says. What you got between your legs doesn't matter when you are on the battlefield, Becky. You'll keep on losing if you keep on thinking of yourself as a woman first and a ranker later.

And anyway, you don't like a lady to me. Not yet."

Becky was left speechless again. Not by the lord of bullshittery. But his newly acquired stooge. Her nose flared and her cheeks reddened. Agreed, her feminine features were lacking. But this fanboy didn't have to say that out loud.

And it seemed that Ramy had also acquired Eren's taste in women when he decided to follow him. The butcher didn't say anything in the whole conversation but just laughed. This Sound Element Knight was worth putting effort into after all.

Ramy didn't just stop at criticising Becky. He grilled Jake and Steve too. But let Renita off the hook because she had played her part in helping his idol.

Ana would just laugh at Ramy's witty remarks laced with his unavoidable lisp. The guy was hilarious at roasting someone.

Bel on the other hand would only let escape hushed laughter from his mouth. He was afraid of offending his teammates too much.

Jake knew how to take humour and criticism well. So he didn't mind too much. But all the failures accumulated on Steve made him feel disheartened. He promised himself that he would do everything in his power to at least suit the position he was given in this team.

Becky had a headache of her own. She regretted speaking anything critical about Eren.

The guy himself was enough of a problem. But his sidekick was equally a pain in the ass.

"I saw the feed of your first inter-class war, Eren. Not bad, not bad at all. You are indeed improving.

Reshaping your basic instincts is not easy. And it can't be done in a few days.

But you've taken steps in the right direction. But it looked like you had some personal vendetta against Ron's Raiders. Is there something I should know?"

Marla had called Eren over to her place near the check-post a few days after the ranking war. She raised her eyebrows at the end of her question, expecting an answer from her apprentice.

But the latter just shook his head negatively, telling her he doesn't want to talk about it. Of course, she respected his wishes. Rankers had a right to have a private life after all.

"Alright, then. There are a few immediate changes you need to make to improve your battle prowess. Your katar handling is shoddy. It needs major work. So we won't focus on that right now.

What you need right now are constant hand-to-hand combats with someone of your calibre.

Oh! There he is!

Eren, I gave you a hint about an upcoming surprise the last time we met, remember? Hehe! Now's the time to reveal it.

Meet your combat buddy, Ken Riverine. He is going to be another apprentice I'll be having apart from you from today onwards."

Eren turned back to where Marla was pointing and saw a handsome hunk making his way towards them. He was none other than the justice fanatic he knew from his previous timeline, the white knight, Ken Riverine!

'Fu*k my life!'

Eren cursed his luck again while plastering a smile on his face to meet his so-called combat buddy.

Chapter 120: Lovers & Rivals P1

Eren cursed his luck again while plastering a smile on his face to meet his so-called combat buddy. The protagonist also had his signature cheerful air around him that the butcher hated so much.

"Yo, Eren Idril. Nice to finally meet you, man. I have heard a lot about you.

You are doing great in the ranking war it seems. And I also heard that you've broken through the liquid stage of the F-rank after coming to LA.

They say that you had help from Adapt Levine. But making people help you is also a form of strength in my eyes. I'm looking forward to working with you and learning from you."

'Where does this airhead get so much energy from to speak to a total stranger like this?'

Eren had this thought right after Ken stopped talking. Ken was also a talker but not like Ramy. Ramy's speeches were laced with sarcasm and wits. But Ken's speeches oozed self-importance and judgmentalism.

And the worst was that the protagonist was clueless about his manners and pompous behaviours. It looked like he had considered everything he did and said as something natural and just. At least Ramy knew how he came across as a person.

But all that didn't deter the butcher from coming up with perfunctory words to reply to Ken:

"Aah! What a surprise to meet one and only Ken Riverine from the earl house of Riverine. The pleasure's mine, the pleasure's mine. Hope we can serve our apprenticeship well and learn from each other.

Frankly, Eren didn't want to deal with Ken just yet. He was superior to him in every way. Plus, his background was not something to be scoffed at. The guy was a ticking time bomb if someone with ordinary background decided to go against him.

The butcher had thought that snatching Ken's opportunity from him would be enough to deal a blow to him while keeping his distance in check from the justice freak. But naturally, he had underestimated the guy's downright plot-armour luck.

Ken had not only bounced back from his injuries dealt by the senior students but he and his earl family also came out on top in his political battle with Roody Orton and his viscount father.

The Riverine earldom wasn't to be taken lightly. It pressurised Roody Orton's father from its various sources so much that the latter was forced to relent from his position in the royal court.

Now Roody Orton's father was only a viscount. And a weakened one at that, due to his sudden absence from the royal court. of course, viscount Orton blamed his son Roody for making him take the fight he couldn't finish.

As a result, Roody's gigantic support from his family was cut off. Now he had to struggle like a commoner in the academy. It wasn't that Roody was lazy in his studies and efforts to gain Merps. But the family's support had always helped him.

Losing that was akin to creating a hindrance in Roody's path. The Roody household had a rude habit of blaming their mistakes on someone else it seemed. because Roody too blamed Ken for his misfortune.

But that was not all. By now, Roody and the other senior students who had targeted Ken for his "rude" behaviour had realized that they were set up by someone else.

And their act of “making a better man out of Ken” had harshly backfired on all of them in some way or the other. Now all the victims of this incident were looking for the real culprit who they had met and talked with that day inside Besanc’s hall.

Roody had decided that first, he would find the guy who had pretended to be Ken that day and use him as a punching bag for days on end to vent his frustration. Then, he would target Ken in silence and settle his scores with the guy as well.

But the culprit too wasn’t feeling too good either at this time. Maybe all those curses spoken in abundance by his victims had finally landed on him.

“Ken here wants to be a weaponless martial arts expert. And he has chosen the path of a fist saint. His elemental affinity is earth and his innate nature is tenaciousness.

In a way, he is a perfect counter to you.

Since I’m an expert in punching daggers, I can of course teach him the basics about the path of a fist saint. And you both will be able to sharpen your skills against each other by participating in practice duels under my observations.

I want you to polish your skills to the best of your abilities during these few days. We will soon leave for our outside mission and you will follow me as my apprentices.

But before I proceed further with my plan, I want to ask. Ken, with your element and calibre, you can be a stellar tank or an unyielding berserker. So why are you choosing the path of a fist saint particularly?”

Marla threw a question at Ken about the choice of his path. Eren couldn’t hold himself from making a serious face. That is because he knew Ken was going to spew rainbows out of his mouth with his answer:

“Adapt Marla, I thank you for caring about my future and well-being. And I’m also grateful for allowing me to respond to your apprenticeship offer this late.

The reason I want to be a fist saint is that they don’t use weapons in their fight. They fight with their bare hands and that is something I’ve always admired about them the most.

Blunt force attacks won’t be as lethal as the injuries inflicted by the weapons. And I... I want to avoid killing anyone if I can. I would defeat my opponent fair and square and then force them to find errors in their ways.

I believe if given enough time, even the vilest of evil can be made to change its ways.”

Ken looked at Eren after he said that. He saw a serious-looking butcher and thought that the former was impressed by his thoughts and way of handling things. The protagonist was again pleased with himself for making another friend in his path towards greatness.

But Marla found Ken’s naiveness to be cute. Although she didn’t agree with his views, she did find some trace amount of logic in them. That’s why she didn’t try to correct her second apprentice’s approach to the ranking journey anymore.

