

Vile 1111

[Chapter 1111 Eyes Of A Passerby](#)

Unbeknownst to both sides, the fight that was getting fought inside the Blue Fire Domain had a spectator.

This spectator kept a safe distance from the battlefield and used one of the observation-related Perks to keep tabs on the rankers involved in the fight.

This particular Sansara Perk allowed him to have a bird-eye view of the nearby area. The only limitation to using this Perk was the fact that the user couldn't move from the spot while the Perk was active.

Keeping an ideal position in one place for longer while spying on two teams might not turn out well for most solo rankers. However, this man had no such trouble. That's because he was wearing a beaked mask artifact that hid his presence from everyone's senses, protecting him from potential altercations.

'She did a good job killing those rankers right off the bat. It was such a shame she stopped her insanity after that.'

Eren said to himself and sighed while watching Becky fight.

Becky couldn't break the siege without the incoming enemy group not knowing of her presence. So she got rid of the two rankers right away using the element of surprise to her advantage. The two kills allowed Becky to reduce the enemy group's team strength and prevented it from overwhelming her as soon as the battle started.

As glass-cannonish as her class made her out to be, Becky wasn't a weak ranker per se. She understood that one needed to fight if one wanted to survive in and outside the Sansara World. It was just that she couldn't convert her understanding into much-needed aggression.

Seeing Becky starting to struggle alone against the six rankers, Eren watched in a neutral stance as she started to exert more strength.

Till this point, Becky had relied on her team to provide her with protection while she executed AoEs. She didn't have to deal with the incoming enemies herself for the most part.

As a result, Becky began losing ground once the enemy rankers started getting close to her. Her Blue Fire Domain allowed her to dominate her opponents when she started. But eventually, the enemy rankers made their way toward her slowly and steadily.

Becky used various mid- and long-range Blue Fire spells to attack her opponents. And her enemies were getting injured bit by bit. But the damage she dealt them wasn't enough to keep them down.

A familiar voice sounded in Eren's head as he kept himself busy watching the fight.

'Not everybody can enjoy the mortal combats that are thrown their way like you, Eren. Not everybody can deal with a life-and-death situation like some leisure activity. They fail to use them as a whetstone to sharpen themselves.'

Rebecca's survival instincts kicked in after she killed those two rankers. Instead of continuing her frontal assault, she began playing defense.

The kamikaze frontal approach would have served her much better than hoping for the enemy team to leave her alone. Just two kills alone wouldn't deter anyone but the possibility of two more would.

The key is to be seen as an uncontrollable maniac or a cunning monster— either through your performance or through your aggression. You could do that. This was why Gondel let you go even after you killed three of his teammates.

The geek just didn't think fighting with you would be worth it because of the collateral damage he might incur in the process. The same thing would have happened in Rebecca's case had she proved with her aggression that the fight wouldn't be worth it for the enemy rankers.

Some battles are half-won with one's conviction alone. Sadly for Becky, she didn't nurture anything like that within her all her life.

Hence, she fails to mold her survival instinct into the aggression she needs at the time.'

Alephee commented in Eren's mind. She was another silent spectator to the battle.

The homunculus had nothing to do while she was inside her pendant abode— recovering from her poor state by immersing herself into a blood pool of unknown origin. The speech she gave to Eren was while she was neck-deep in the blood pool with her eyes closed.

Alephee decided to use Eren's senses to learn about the ongoing situation inside the Sansara World. She knew what Eren was going to do at this point. As a result, she couldn't help feeling intrigued.

At this point, Rebecca White was doing everything she could to keep her enemies away from her. She was using forbidden techniques and burning her life essence to harm her opponents.

As a result, two more rankers were critically injured. However, the enemy team still had its healer safe and sound. It was only a matter of time before they made a comeback.

It wasn't that Becky didn't understand the need to eliminate the healer. But the problem was the fact that the healers of any team were usually well-protected. This was why Eren had to target two rankers first before he could get rid of Oshawa.

Becky failed to perform at the same level as Eren. Plus, her lack of experience dealing with opponents in close combat made her an easy target for a group of capable rankers.

Becky couldn't maintain her Blue Fire Domain after she started running low on mana. She had various injuries on her body and her eyes had become crazy and bloodshot. She had finally found the aggression hiding deep within her. But at this point, it was too late.

Eren's fight with Gondel's team and Becky's fight with the current team were the same in the fact that one side was hugely outnumbered by the other. And yet, there was so much contrast between the two battles because of the way the supposedly weaker side decided to deal with its opponents. With or without the Sage artifacts backing him, the butcher would have achieved the same results.

It was clear that Becky expected things like this to happen to her from the moment Eren talked about the siege breach. This was the reason she had asked Eren to give up his claim to the items obtained from Sage Legacies despite knowing it was an absurd idea.

Eren watched with a stoic expression as Rebecca took her last stand against her opponents. He showed no interest in playing spoiler in the battle. He didn't enjoy seeing Becky's condition no matter how much she opposed him while being on the same team. He also didn't feel any pity for her.

The butcher watched with the eyes of a passerby— as if he had nothing to do with Becky's fight. One could say that he was okay with the battle going either way.

[Chapter 1112 Spoiler Title](#)

Eren was using Becky's opponents as litmus paper to test her resolve.

If she passes the test and breaks the siege, he would help her get rid of her pursuers. After all, he had invested a lot in the mage. She was more useful to him alive than dead.

Becky might be able to transform herself after suffering through such a life-altering ordeal. She might be able to fix her attitude, allowing her to become a capable member of Eren's team. The butcher wouldn't have to deal with her as a nuisance when that happened.

But if she fails and gets killed in the test, he could make use of her in a different way. Either way, he could gain something from this fight.

At this point, Becky had come to understand that nobody was coming to save her. And the aggression she had found within her had no use anymore. Scared and lacking hope, the mage started to flee the battlefield.

Eren shook his head as he watched Becky turn her back on her enemies. This was a sign of her metaphorical inner demons getting the better of her. This was what the enemy wanted Becky to do all along. They all pursued her and attacked her at the same time, making her efforts at fleeing as useless as they could get.

Becky's back was attacked with various spells at first. The first barrage of moves was followed by a series of attacks dealt with a bunch of weapon slashes.

The mage screamed in agony when that happened. Her banshee-like screams eventually dimmed when she lost her balance and fell face-flat on the ground. She had officially run out of everything within her to fight her opponents.

Becky took her last breath while lying on the ground. It looked like she was embracing the earth as she welcomed the arrival of eternal slumber.

It could be said that a ranker like her finally found the peace she was looking for.

"Hahaha. We did it. We fucking did it. We killed this bi..."

Blink. Swoosh. Chop.

The female ranker who was laughing at Becky's sorry state suddenly found out that she had her vision changed. Her vision turned upside down and she started seeing her own body in the third person.

She also noticed that her still-standing body was missing a head. In the next moment, she saw a blurred image appear behind her body.

There was still some fading consciousness in the female ranker's chopped head. She saw the blurred image taking the shape of a man with a beaked mask on his face.

The micro runes on the beaked mask dimmed as a display of the artifact getting deactivated. They eventually disappeared, allowing the female ranker to get a clear picture of who had killed her.

The female ranker looked around in dismay and saw that the healer on her team had also lost her head. With her consciousness gradually deteriorating, she could neither scream nor curse her killer. She only took solace in the fact that she would be accompanied by her teammates on her journey to the afterlife.

Eren became visible after he killed the healer and the female ranker. He could only voice his dissatisfaction at how quickly Sage Loxley's artifact had run out of juice even after his efforts to conserve its operability.

One could charge the artifact with their mana. But it would take a considerable time for Eren to do so. There were other ways to charge the artifact or expedite the charging process as well. But he could use none of them for the moment.

However, it was not like Eren needed the artifact to be done with his newfound opponents. It didn't take long for Eren to get rid of the remaining rankers. They were already battered in the battle with Becky. They couldn't handle someone like Eren in their situation.

Swoosh. Swoosh. Swoosh.

Eren used Unlimited Knife Works to get rid of the blood on his weapons before storing them away. He then stood in his position and closed his eyes before taking a huge breath.

Lightning struck and Eren appeared beside Becky's corpse. He bent his knees and kept his hand over her cheek, caressing it a bit.

Eren had to be honest with himself in admitting that he didn't like a lot of things about Becky. He was most bothered by the fact that she could see through him for who he really was under the veil of normalcy.

However, the butcher had never really hated the mage for it. He decided to convey his thoughts to Becky, assuming her soul was listening to them.

"I... I wouldn't say it was fun arguing with you... but I would miss it nonetheless.

Your criticisms could never hurt me, Becky. Sticks and stones and all that shit, you know.

It was only your way of looking at certain problems that bothered me as a leader of your team. A leader you didn't like having because you wanted to become one yourself.

Your death put an abrupt end to our arguments. I..."

Eren stopped himself from saying any more. He pondered for a bit before finally concluding his thoughts.

"That's it, I guess. I won't say anything else to make you uncomfortable.

Arguments are boring when only one side is allowed to talk, after all.

Farewell Becky. Find your peace in eternity."

Eren gave his eulogy to Becky in a voice seemingly devoid of any emotion. He took a long breath and captured her face in his memory forever before activating his bloodline Ability.

The mage's body was soon covered in a slime-like mass before it started getting dissolved in it. It only took a few minutes for the process to be over.

Becky was also provided with a unique burial service by Eren. But unlike the previous case with Ken, he felt Becky's death more closely.

The butcher didn't think he was responsible for Becky's death in any way. His choice to not take action certainly made her prone to enemies' attacks that led to her death. But he believed that what ultimately killed her were her own inadequacies.

The butcher got up and remained motionless.

He closed his eyes and started digesting Becky's gains. He started seeing himself through her eyes with the help of her memories. He was made to relive his early academy days, enabling him to see Becky's perspective on his seemingly random and radical actions. It managed to put a mirthless smile on his face as a result.

It seemed that Becky was also okay with Eren's devouring of her. Because just like Ken, Eren found it easier to digest her gains.

When Eren opened his eyes after a while, it was an indication that he had finished making Becky's experiences his. In his recent devouring, he digested Becky's elemental aspect and attainment, making them his own.

Eren raised his right hand and concentrated. Soon, his hand was covered in a cold blue fire that didn't radiate any form of heat. Instead, it started sucking up the heat in the surroundings making Eren feel a bit of chill coating his hand.

'This cold fire... This is something.

These blue flames have the potential to counter the Enderflames. I just hope I can make proper use of them when the time comes.'

The butcher thought to himself and sighed before covering himself with tongues of lightning. A buzzing sound was heard before the butcher disappeared from the scene.

[Chapter 1113 Perspective Management](#)

Day 29: A mountainous region close to the fourth and final testing ground for Sage Legacy.

The sky was painted in shades of orange and yellow even though there was no sun to be seen, indicating that it was evening time. The winds created howling sounds as they carved their way through green valleys. Even then, the world felt completely silent because of the absence of wildlife in the region.

A group of rankers was gathered on the cliff of a 3000 meters tall mountain. A nearby mountain served as its perfect companion. The adjacent mountain had a ramp-like long cliff as well. The two cliffs were only a few meters apart, making them look like part of a broken bridge.

The group needed to reach the cliff on the other side to get to the final Sage Legacy. It was the fastest way for them to get there. Of course, the rankers had to come here after taking so many detours. Due to the siege, they separated from each other and went in different directions.

The group of rankers used this place as a rendezvous point to gather and discuss a few things. They needed to talk before they moved on to claim the last Sage Legacy.

The talk reeked of unspoken heaviness. It was because one of their teammates had died in the process of breaking the siege.

The gathered rankers had gloomy expressions on their faces. The group's healer had bloodshot eyes and her cheeks were still wet even after wiping the tears. Everyone needed some kind of closure.

"How... how did she die?"

Steve asked Eren while lost in his own thoughts. Just like Renita and Jake, he refused to believe that Becky had died at first. It took a while for Eren to convince them that she was one of the casualties in the Sansara World.

Eren told his teammates that he intercepted Becky's fight after he had dealt with his share of enemies. He had run away from his enemies after killing three rankers and found Becky's battlefield on the way, which was a half-truth.

The butcher told them that he had already taken care of her killers and had also provided her with last rites. This was so that Steve and the rest wouldn't get distracted by feelings of revenge at the time of claiming the last Sage Legacy.

The butcher knew how the human mind worked. Nobody alive and logically sound could be completely devoid of emotions. He wasn't an exception to this rule either.

However, not everybody channels their anger and hatred in the right way. It is not possible for everybody to turn negative emotions into a driving force for success. Instead, their emotions would blind them and make them unable to do what was in front of them.

The butcher guessed that Steve, Jake, and Renita would eventually come around to make peace with his deed even if they knew what he had done. However, he reckoned that the rest of the members wouldn't be able to digest his actions. They would subconsciously start putting themselves in Becky's shoes and feel terrified by the butcher's coldness.

Most rankers liked the idea of camaraderie even if it came across as impractical in certain situations. The butcher was not there to change people's mindsets about that idea.

It was better to provide these rankers with limited information for their own good. It was better to make them wear metaphorical blinkers, which would allow them to focus on the current tasks at hand.

Eren's actions post-Becky's death could be seen as the necessary evil that held his team together. He didn't mind using tactics based on untold facts and half-truths if they helped him retain them.

Just like Edinburgh's founding Sages in the shadows, Eren was a master in the art of perspective management. It was not to say that he liked manipulating his teammates. But it was a task he would do nonetheless if it could bring him desirable results.

After all, a Sage Legacy was at stake. It was crucial that everyone was on board and motivated for the same goal.

After killing them, Eren had come to know that there were three elven infiltrators in the group who had fought with Becky. She could be said to be the victim of the political power play that was taking place between the two kingdoms.

However, it didn't matter which side killed Becky. The fact that she was killed was unchanged. So that's what Eren focused on while addressing his team.

"Well... Looking at the scene... I can say that Becky killed two rankers from a team of 8 and critically injured another two. But the remaining four managed to overpower her before I intercepted the fight.

Of course, I killed the remaining four rankers. I take no credit for killing them. They were easy to deal with because of their situation. Still, I am glad that I was there and finished what my team's mage had left incomplete."

Another short period of silence was observed by the team. It was Renita who broke the silence by asking her question.

"Eren, couldn't you have approached the fight sooner?"

The butcher smiled mirthlessly at Renita. He didn't want to lie to his teammates no matter how expertly he could pull something like that off. However, he also knew that his teammates weren't capable of understanding his point of view. There was a difference between his reality of life and theirs. So he chose to take the middle way.

"What do you think?"

Eren walked up to the edge of the cliff and stopped just before his next step dropped him down the mountain. He held his hands behind his back before speaking in a clear and steady voice.

"I know what some of you may be thinking. That I saw Becky as an eyesore. That I might have let her die because I didn't approve of her constant objections to my decisions. I am here to tell you that couldn't be further from the truth."

[Chapter 1114 Trying To Find Closure](#)

As thought-provoking as they were, Eren's words were elusive.

Yet he said them with conviction because they were his version of the truth. It allowed the rankers to draw their own conclusions from his words.

If Becky was here, she would have pointed out to Eren that he wasn't really answering Renita's question but confusing all of them with profundities instead. But fortunately or unfortunately, Becky could no longer indulge in banter with Eren about various things.

Eren took a long breath before concluding the matter.

"When she was alive, I dared to say this. I certainly won't hesitate to say it again after her death, no matter how callus it makes me look.

The truth is that Becky was too scared about the future. She ultimately got paralyzed at the sight of overwhelming adversity, which ended up taking her life.

Don't get me wrong. There's nothing wrong with feeling fear. I have said it before and I will say it again. The amount of fear I have felt is greater than all your shares combined.

But when fear starts dictating your every action, then maybe it is time you rethink your life as a ranker in this world. It is okay to feel overwhelmed by your adversities. But if you can't bounce back from the feelings of despair, then your survival holds no meaning."

Eren looked down at the valley beneath his feet and stared at it for a while before continuing.

"Becky's death teaches us that we can't take things for granted. And that nobody is totally infallible.

Don't let fear stop you from challenging yourself. Feel alive in your attempts to better yourself.

When you succeed, you will learn many things about yourself. And when you fail, you will realize your shortcomings. But that is only true if you have what it takes to face your fears.

Knowledge of the past and planning for the future is indeed essential. But we can't live our lives in them because they don't really exist.

If you only remember mistakes from the past, they become regrets that you can never get rid of.

And if you only worry about what will happen in the future, they become the worries that weigh you down.

Instead, you should focus on the present. Put everything you have in the 'here and now.'"

Eren expressed what he truly felt about Becky's death.

He had been following his own advice too. He would have been paralyzed after learning about the existence of Demon Princes and the gods that were after him if he had the same mindset as Becky. That kind of information would have turned him into a cooped-up chicken.

After all, the Demon Princes and the gods were not entities he could deal with in his current situation. But they were also not relevant to his current reality. That's why he chose to live in the present, telling Alephee to do the same.

The White Raven crew knew what Eren was talking about. They remembered how Becky was okay with letting the items from Sage Legacies go because they were getting targeted for them. They started remembering other instances in the past that highlighted Becky's nature as an overly cautious ranker.

Eren turned around to face his teammates and spoke calmly.

"I know my words may sound like the words of a cold-blooded leader who is okay with his mage's death. And maybe I am just that.

But that doesn't make anything I have said less true. Becky's parting is a lesson for all of us.

And don't think that I am not putting myself through the same standards as the rest of you. If anything, I allow even fewer concessions to myself.

I may not be proud of all the things I have done. But I feel no shame in saying that I have zero talent and all my achievements are the result of my diligent work alone. And I could only do that because I dared to.

You are different from me. Your talent will shine one day because it exists. But that is only if you learn from Becky's mistakes."

Steve and the rest looked at each other when Eren stopped speaking. They had to admit that Eren's words had a certain weight attached to them. That's because they had seen him walk the talk he was giving them.

Eren used a consumable Sansara Perk to summon a bottle of wine. The chalices were also summoned using expendable Karma points.

The butcher poured wine into everyone's glasses and made sure they were filled to the brim before continuing.

"Rebecca White was an enigma.

She was nothing like the elemental aspect she had unlocked for herself. She was warm and caring. And yet her words were like sharp needles when it came to criticizing someone."

Eren took a brief pause and chuckled before continuing.

"Hehe. Who am I kidding? Let me correct that— when it came to criticizing me.

Still, she obeyed my orders when they mattered. And did everything she could to support her team."

Eren managed to get a chuckle from his audience when he said that. The butcher pursed his lips and raised his glass before concluding his toast.

"What has happened cannot be changed. Becky is resting in eternity. And although her death has already been avenged, we can still make it up for her by winning the last Sage Legacy for ourselves."

Steve smirked when he heard Eren's toast.

"Selfish... you are truly selfish, you bastard."

Eren shrugged his shoulders before admitting straight away.

"Heh! I don't mind the tag to be honest.

It's true. I intend to use Becky's death as a motivator to win the fourth Sage Legacy. The goal of doing that is to find some kind of closure for all of us.

Is it really wrong to immortalize her name in Edinburgh's history by making her team get all four Sage Legacies to themselves? I think not.

Death doesn't have to make sense for the living. Nevertheless, we attempt to explain it by coming up with a variety of explanations. These explanations keep emotionally deficient guys like me striving for more in life. I hope you find it within you to ignore that deficiency of mine.

That's about it. Those were my two eddies.

To Becky..."

Eren gulped down the contents of his glass down his throat right after he finished speaking. It prompted all of his teammates to do the same.

Another round of toasts was initiated. The rest of the members told a few anecdotes about Becky one after another before concluding the impromptu ceremony. They used their movement spells and leaped to the other cliff, supposedly leaving the matter of Becky's death behind them. After all, time was ticking away and the show had to go on.

[Chapter 1115 \[Bonus \] Maya](#)

Day 30: Sage Lehan's test ground.

This was a barren expanse with no object or objective in sight. It made Eren remember his guild's property before it was turned into White Raven City.

The participants had been summoned here after they had passed through the spatial tunnel. They kept a safe distance from each other while trying to find out more about the location.

Representatives of the 11 teams that had initiated a siege against the White Raven crew were also there. Gondel was one of 11 representatives.

These 11 representatives looked at Eren as if they would attack him at any time. The butcher didn't react to their silent aggression. It wasn't the right time for him to do so.

"Welcome, participants."

A calm and clear female voice was heard by the participants all of a sudden, which made the participants stop in their tracks. They looked at each other before trying to find the source of that voice using their senses. All of them turned in a particular direction in the distance when they felt an unknown presence appear.

This young woman looked to be in her early 20s.

She had a graceful figure and a relatively tall stature. She had black hair, clear skin, and attractive facial features. She wore an elegant black dress with golden embroidery on it. She was holding a staff in her left hand that seemed quite mysterious.

This young woman looked at the participants with an expressionless face. As if their existence didn't make a difference to her mood.

There was certainly a peculiar intelligence reflected in the woman's eyes. However, the butcher felt that she was not as lively as a real woman. It was as if someone was talking to the spectral image of a dead woman who was made to move. However, the difference was so minute that almost nobody could spot it.

While keeping their distance, the participants abandoned their positions and gathered around the young woman. They were all amazed by the fact that it was a young woman who had come to greet them.

"Hm? Sage Lehan is a woman? I thought..."

"Cut it out, you bastard. Don't make us suffer by saying something absurd about a Sage."

"But..."

"Don't assume anything. Let's hear what My Lady has to say first."

The participants whispered among each other while making their own assumptions at first. But then it was mutually decided that they would let the staff-holding woman speak.

The young woman smiled lightly before speaking up.

"I am not Sage Lin Lehan. My name is Maya. I am one of Sage Lehan's creations. I have been given the responsibility to conduct Sage Lehan's Legacy."

The participants looked at Maya with puzzled expressions. They certainly had a lot of questions to ask her.

"Lady Maya, are you a homunculus?"

Eren was the first person to ask Maya a direct question. He felt like Maya's presence was a lot like a homunculus, but not quite. Having dealt with two homunculi closely, the butcher could spot the difference between the two kinds right away.

Maya looked at Eren peculiarly and looked him in the eyes. She took her time answering his question.

"No. Not really. A homunculus creation requires an existing soul. The body and consciousness I possess are both created by Sage Lehan- completely artificial. So I can't be called a homunculus.

The Sage calls me his daughter. One that he birthed into existence using all his expertise as an array master."

Eren was taken aback when he confirmed his guess. The others were also shocked to find out that Maya's consciousness was artificial.

The injection of artificial intelligence into arrays wasn't a novel concept. The capital city of Edin's security protocols were run by arrays with artificial intelligence installed in them.

However, one could always tell the difference between artificial intelligence and real consciousness. It was the first time the rankers encountered an artificial body containing artificial intelligence speaking to them without giving away its unnatural origins.

"Where is the vestige of Sage Lehan's soul? Will he not bless us with his presence?"

Gondel didn't want to create a fuss in front of Maya. But he also didn't want to stay behind Eren in asking questions. He felt that this test was his turf— his platform to showcase his skills. He wouldn't let a close combat brute overshadow him in Sage Lehan's test.

Maya looked a bit irritated when she heard Gondel's question. As if she didn't like the idea of participants not being satisfied with her presence alone. She looked at the geek with a tinge of annoyance before answering his question.

"Why would Sage Lehan harm his soul to leave his Legacy behind on the continent of Anfang? He is not like the rest of the three Sages.

He created me as his representative to do his bidding in this world. Let me tell you that my father is doing much better outside the world of Anfang than the other three Sages.

Do you know why he was given the title of Sansara Sage? He is trying to create his own real mini-world with the Sasara World array as a foundation. His projects keep him very busy. So he obviously doesn't have time for you.

I, his daughter, am perfectly capable of handling trivial matters like these. But you may wish to quit the test if you are not happy with Sage Lehan's absence."

The participants were too stunned to speak.

They had expected the fourth Sage Legacy test to be handled by the vestige of Sansara Sage's soul. After all, they had seen that happening with the previous three Sages. However, it looked like Sansara Sage wasn't as interested in the land of Anfang as the other three Sages. Or it may be that he just wasn't interested in passing down his Legacy to the younger generation.

Either way, Sansara Sage was a different kind of Sage than the land of Anfang had ever produced. It looked like he was trying to research the genesis of Creation by creating someone like Maya.

[Chapter 1116 Sansara Sage's Ballbusting Test P1](#)

Maya's subtle way of asking him to leave the test scared Gondel.

The geek quickly tried to correct his position.

"I... I am perfectly fine with Sage Lehan's absence, Lady Maya— we all are. A Sage like him shouldn't waste his time on anybody like us. I get it. Please... please let us know what we are supposed to do to claim his Legacy."

Eren couldn't help laughing when he saw the geek bowing in front of Maya like one of her well-behaved servants. He had to say that the guy was pretty quick-witted despite his momentarily spontaneous actions and words.

"Alright."

Maya said to Gondel, relieving him of a crisis of his own making. She then looked around and observed other participants before starting to explain how Sage Lehan's Legacy could be claimed.

"The participants are required to find an array key inside a city. The one who finds it and hands it over to me wins the Sage Legacy."

Maya brought her empty hand forward and opened her palm to project the image of a small golden sphere. The surface of the sphere had various runic patterns over it that would exude multi-faceted lights intermittently.

This golden sphere looked a lot like the miniature version of the giant golden ball that was hanging over the Edinnica Arena.

Maya's description of a city confused Eren and the participants. They looked at each other before looking around themselves with puzzled expressions. One of them couldn't help raising a question straight to Maya.

"Lady Maya, which city are you talking about? Where is it?"

Maya smiled before answering simply.

"Here."

Saying that Maya raised her staff a bit before slamming its butt on the ground. In the next moment, the participants were intimidated by the surge of mana happening around them. They felt like they were caught inside a huge mana storm they couldn't control or get out of.

The earth rumbled and the participants felt like they were standing above water, riding waves. It was as if someone had cast a Sage-level earth-element spell that resulted in the creation of Earth Spikes all around the participants.

The Earth Spikes started taking shape under another wave of mana. They molded themselves into various architectures, creating another wave of earthquakes in the process.

Maya's action resulted in the creation of a city in the blink of an eye.

The participants found themselves standing in the center of an abandoned city. They were stunned by the city's sheer size. A city as massive as Edin was created in the barren land in a matter of seconds.

'Damn. Mana and magic truly don't have any limits. They are only limited by their users.'

Eren thought to himself as he looked at the tall buildings and solid constructions. He felt that he should have hired Maya to create the city of White Raven for him. He might have saved a lot on labor charges.

"You have 24 hours to find the key. If nobody finds the array key within that time frame, then nobody will win my father's Legacy."

The city has array traps and maze structures full of dead ends. Constructions that appear solid may be as fragile as feathers.

Likewise, you'll want to be aware of the residents of the city. They will attack you as soon as they see you.

Plus, most of these city residents will match your ranking status and elemental attainments. So it would be better for you to make sure you don't get attacked by their horde.

This is a preliminary warning. Considering Sansara World's current changes, you might even die inside the city at the hands of city residents. You can choose to quit now if you are not up to the task."

The participants started to sense some faint mana signatures around them as Maya spoke. They guessed that they were city residents Maya was talking about.

The faint mana signatures disappeared immediately, indicating that the city residents knew how to hide inside the city. Meaning it wouldn't be easy to dodge all of them completely while looking for the array key inside the city.

Eren also realized something else.

Unlike the other three Sages, Sage Lehan's test had a time limit. Meaning Sansara Sage didn't care if none of the participants managed to claim his Legacy within the required time. It highlighted his callousness as a researcher and demonic ranker.

Sage Nira Nightshade might have had different intentions before she met Eren. However, once she met him, she played with everyone to get his Spirit Beast. So her test couldn't really be counted.

However, Sage Lufthansa and Sage Ivar both seemed genuinely interested in passing down their Legacies to participants. The participants died attempting in previous tests as well. However, most deaths were temporary because the tests allowed the defense mechanism of Sansara World to kick in. As a result, not many participants died for real while being judged by previous Sages.

There was another thing that worried all the participants. A majority of city residents could match the participants' current ranking status and elemental attainments, so they couldn't treat them as an easy mob.

It was already going to be difficult to navigate through the city because of the array traps and mazes. The faulty constructions couldn't be sensed using one's mana sense either.

The possibility of having to face multiple powerful opponents in a restricted urban setting shot the test's difficulty to crazy levels. Additionally, it seemed that the city residents might continue attacking the opponents even after they were critically injured, not allowing them to be revived by the Life and Death altar.

The number of participants had already dwindled to 17 at this point when the graduation event was about to get over. These 17 rankers were the cream of the crop of the current generation. However, none of them was arrogant enough to underestimate the difficulty level of their current test.

The participants started to understand the test's horrifying nuances step by step. They couldn't help but feel that the Sansara Sage was excessively cruel to them.

[Chapter 1117 Sansara Sage's Ballbusting Test P2](#)

Maya didn't care about how the participants were assessing the difficulty of the test she had given them. She took a brief pause before speaking further.

"Do whatever you want to get your hands on the array key. I won't stop you.

But make sure that you don't step outside the city. Otherwise, your claim for Sage Legacy will automatically be forfeited. You will no longer be able to enter the city and search for the array key if that happens.

Additionally, you can always use stepping outside the city's boundaries as your exit strategy. You can use that exit strategy in case you are surrounded by a horde of city residents or think that the array traps are getting too difficult for you to continue.

Various spatial channels and non-offensive array traps are available within the city that allows you to get outside the city borders. Use them in a pinch and save your life. Don't expect me to intervene and do that for you."

All participants were relieved by this news. They wanted to give it their all in claiming Sansara Sage's Legacy. But they didn't want to die in the process. Some of them had decided that they would memorize such exit points for themselves in case things get too difficult for them to continue.

They had all come to realize that their mana senses were going to be compromised when they were made to explore the city. So remembering the city's streets and landmarks were going to play a crucial role in their exploration and survival.

However, it seemed that Maya was not done explaining the test completely. She continued in a clear and emotionless voice after taking a brief pause.

"Also, note that I will only accept the array key from you at the 23rd hour. If you find the key within the first 22 hours, you will need to protect it until I accept it from you.

There are various spectral screens available at various points inside the city. These spectral screens would allow you to see the location of the participant if and when they find the array key.

Meaning everyone would know about the key's possession when one finds it. That's why I said you need to defend the key when you find it.

To prevent idle behavior, the array key's location will change a few minutes after its discovery. This teleported key will appear at a random location anywhere inside the city and remain undetected for a while before it can be found again.

So I advise you to get your hands on the array key as soon as you find it. You can't go looking for the key at the last minute to avoid trouble heading your way. That's because the key might not be where you found it.

I will wait for you here in this city square. You will need to hand me the array key personally if and when you find it.

I will declare you as the winner if you satisfy all the conditions I have mentioned."

Another metaphorical explosion was detonated inside the participants' minds.

The male participants felt as though their gonads were shrinking in their sacks. The female members also felt as if their private parts were drying up.

'Why don't you kill us all quickly and be done with the whole test? It would be easier for both sides that way.'

Eren couldn't help cursing the test's setup as he understood the last condition of the test. He looked at the other participants to see their ashen faces, indicating that they had understood what was going to happen even if someone found the array key.

Being lucky during the test seemed like a crime. The participants, who managed to find the key, will find themselves in a thicker pickle than before.

And leaving the key where they found it was not an option. They had to get their hands on the key to not let their efforts go to waste.

Maya knew what the participants were thinking about. Her black eyes turned a shade darker and her face had a tinge of excitement as she spoke.

"As I said, Sansara Sage is not like his three colleagues.

My father served as their leader in the land of Anfang for a reason. So I advise you to not treat his Legacy as being on the same level as the rest of the Sage Legacies you have come to know about."

As Maya lifted the staff, she spoke. It was clear that she was proud of her father and everything he had accomplished. She moved the staff gracefully around her before speaking further.

"Your Sansara interface will keep you updated with the time limit. What's more? You won't be able to use the mapping feature as well.

I think I have explained enough. You can figure out the rest of the stuff yourself as you explore this test site.

It's about time we started the test. Your time starts.... Now!"

Maya said and created a magnificent city fountain with a wave of her staff behind her. She sat elegantly on the circular ledge and looked at all the participants one last time before closing her eyes. The staff in her hand disappeared and she assumed a meditative state as if trying to practice an art that was unique to her.

Maya's subtle gaze made it clear to the participants that she didn't want to be bothered by them anymore unless they had found the array key. The participants didn't have time to ask her anyway because they could see an update on their Sansara interface.

There was a 24-hour timer introduced in the interface, and it was updated every second, highlighting the urgency of the issue. The participants looked at each other before heading in separate directions.

The city square they were in was supposedly in the heart of the city. And it was connected to various big and small streets. These paths allowed the participants to pursue their own guesswork.

After all, they all wanted to avoid each other as much as they could before any of them got their hands on the array key. Mayhem was going to ensue inside the ghost city shortly. And fuel will be added to the fire when the array key is found.

[Chapter 1118 Shadow Creatures As City Residents](#)

Bzzt. Swoosh. Kick.

Eren was busy fighting it out with city residents.

The city residents were nothing but human dolls made from the shadow element. And since they were made from such an element, they could mimic the properties of other elements depending upon the participants they were fighting.

It was clear to Eren that the Sansara Sage was a shadow-element user. He had created various shadow-element arrays and subarrays that supported the functions of these shadow-element human dolls inside the testing ground.

The human dolls had human-like bodies and features. But they were genderless, clothless, and faceless entities. It looked like a shadow had turned solid after looking at these human dolls.

At its foundation, the shadow element mimics other elements. The Sansara Sage used that property of the element as a foundation to create these human dolls. And the results he obtained from doing something like this were outstanding.

Eren figured out that the participants had already been scanned by various inspection arrays. The Sansara Sage's arrays converted the information about the participants into their concept avatars. The human dolls were then given these avatars, serving as the appropriate counter to the participants.

What Eren was fighting were his own two avatars that had been attacking him persistently. The other human dolls did their best to support the two damage dealers, attacking the butcher whenever they could at the right time.

The butcher had to say that it was a pain in the ass to fight his avatar. Fighting two of them at the same time increased his difficulty.

The human dolls were almost as good as him if not better. Plus, they had a number and variation advantage. They could match him in speed and agility. What's more? They moved just like him, leaving very few holes in their offense and defense that could be used against them.

Shadow beasts were also among the city's residents. These beasts moved like their real-life counterparts. Plus, their shadow-element mana bodies granted them enhanced resilience. Most of these beasts were nimble on their feet and quick to attack the participants as soon as they saw them.

Additionally, the shadow creatures knew how to attack the participants using team play. The human dolls and beasts would come together and launch various battle tactics on the participants as if they had been training this their whole lives.

Each attack by the shadow creatures was specifically designed for the person they were fighting. As a result, these attacks were highly effective against participants despite their exceptional battle prowess.

Eren was no exception to one-sided bullying either.

He soon figured out that fighting these shadow-element city residents was a waste of time. Even if he could kill them after an intense fight, there would always be more from where they came.

So it was better to fight these shadow creatures only when it was absolutely necessary. The most effective strategy was to explore the city without using any strategy. That's because the shadow creatures could recognize the patterns of the grid search operations carried out by the participants. They would lie in wait for the participants to come to them before attacking them with all they had.

The ambush of shadow creatures was no small matter. No one could come out unscathed after experiencing such an ambush. They had to learn about shadow creatures the hard way as they explored the city for the array key.

The only saving grace for Eren and most other participants was the fact that he could use soul sense. There were only three more participants who could use their soul sense inside the event, which set them apart from the rest.

The soul sense didn't help Eren or the other three rankers locate the presence of city residents. The Sansara Sage must have predicted that his test would be attempted by the exceptional rankers of their generation. He could guess that because of the way he had set up the Sansara World. Therefore, he used techniques to make city residents immune to soul sense detection.

However, it wasn't like the soul sense wasn't useful at all.

The butcher's soul sense had saved him from falling prey to several array traps. It also helped him identify faux constructions and hidden spatial channels. These strategically placed traps could be used against shadow creatures to gain an advantage.

And that's what the butcher used to get rid of the shadow creatures attacking him.

Bzzt. Swoosh. Kick.

Eren kicked the human doll, who was attacking him from the front, right on his chest. He grabbed his inky-black hand and pulled him to his side before he could fly away from him. The butcher directed the trajectory of the shadow creature's flight to the second shadow coming at him from behind.

Eren blocked the attack by the first human doll using his Blitz Shield-coated arm and dodged the elemental arrows shot by the second human doll using Sedated Perception. He then charged his leg with some more lightning mana before kicking the first shadow creature in his face once again.

Time seemed to have slowed down for the butcher as well as the shadow creatures.

All of these actions were performed in such a manner that they looked like one seamless move. In the next moment, the first shadow creature flew towards the second one. The in-flight shadow creature's

back served as another line of defense for Eren as the elemental arrows the second human doll had shot landed straight on its back.

The second human doll was dragged away from the butcher because of its in-speed collision with the first human doll. The two shadow creatures passed through a faux construction behind them as if it didn't exist before disappearing into thin air.

Eren forced the two shadow creatures out of the city by forcing them to enter a spatial channel hidden inside the faux construction. The creatures' shadow element bodies dissolved into nothingness as soon as they appeared outside the boundaries of the city.

[Chapter 1119 Gondel's Hacks](#)

Around two hours had passed since Sansara Sage's test began.

And things weren't looking rosy for Eren.

'Damn it. I hate running. This is such a fucking waste of time.'

Eren thought to himself as he ran away from another horde of shadow creatures trying to box him in. He had a nasty expression on his face as he did that.

He had been preserving his mana as much as he could since the test began. This was the reason he had kept his elemental spells to their minimum and focused on close combat attacks to take care of the city residents.

However, he felt like he wasn't progressing at all in his search for the array key. He was unable to conduct his search efficiently due to the array traps. The spatially altered maze layout made him double down on his previous path. And the shadow creatures were getting more aggressive by the hour.

Sage Yuffie's test invoked almost the same kind of frustration in the participants. However, the risk of dying for real in this test made everyone even warier of the obstacles.

'I can't do this all day.

I need to see what other fuckbiscuits are doing.'

Eren realized that Sansara Sage's test couldn't be aced with brute strength alone. That's why he decided to check out what his fellow participants were doing at this point.

The butcher got rid of all his pursuers using Blink and Blitz Steps and found an isolated building he could use. He entered the building and quickly found what he was looking for.

It was a spectral display that was asked to be paired with the participants' Sansara interface. Participants were required to pay for the services they could avail of through the spectral screens using accumulated Karma points.

The butcher chose a random participant and asked the spectral screen to show what he was doing in real-time in a bird's eye view. The spectral screen blurred for a fraction of a second and deducted a significant chunk of Karma points from Eren's Sansara interface. This was before the ranker's whereabouts and activities were projected.

Eren had used the spying services offered by the test just when the ranker was about to get killed by a horde of shadow creatures. He died a gruesome death and his body was smashed into a pool of blood and flesh by human dolls and shadow beasts working together.

"Ouch. That must have hurt like a bitch."

Eren scrunched his nose and made a peculiar expression on his face before deciding to spend his Karma points some more.

"That was indeed terrible. Anyway, let's move on."

Eren saw another ranker trying to get rid of her pursuers. She was also conversing with her mana and dealing with the shadow creature only when she needed to.

She had also kept her elemental spells to a minimum. However, instead of focusing on close combat attacks, she preferred using AoE-like Sansara Perks to get rid of multiple shadow creatures at once. Of course, she had to spend her accumulated Karma points on that.

"Not an ill-conceived strategy at the beginning. But how long will the Karma points last? I still have to be inside this shitty test for another 20+ hours."

Eren shook his head and decided to scrap the strategy the female participant was implementing. The butcher used the spectral screen to zoom in on her cleavage as she ran desperately for her life. An under-the-breath "nice" was blurted out before he decided to change his target.

Eren found out that there was one more ranker who was using her soul sense to her advantage. Additionally, she used array traps, faux constructions, and spatial channels against shadow creatures just like him.

pàndá-ňovêl.cóM "Not useful. Next channel."

Eren decided to change his target. He spent another chunk of Karma points spying on Gondel the geek. And what he saw next blew his mind.

Gondel the geek was able to access and modify the nearby arrays that had been used to construct the city. He was also able to alter the shadow creatures' behaviors through the arrays in the region, which had been used to manifest them.

Eren saw that a group of shadow creatures was fighting with another group of its own kind because Gondel had messed up their operating logic. His obstacles fought with each other while Gondel the geek carried on with his search for the array key like a sneaky little raccoon.

Gondel could tap into the spectral array fabric of the buildings and make them disappear into thin air. He could also make them change their shape and use them as obstacles to prevent hostile city residents from approaching him.

Gondel the geek was using various tricks up his sleeves to carry on with his search. He was the only one who could afford to perform a systematic search. He had also received a bunch of clues regarding the whereabouts of the array key. And slowly but surely, he was moving in the array key's supposed direction.

In short, Gondel the geek was hacking his way through the test. And it was a legal form of hacking considering Maya hadn't taken any action against him.

Eren spent almost all his Karma points observing Gondel's moves. He concluded that he couldn't use Gondel's strategy even if he could tap into the array fabric in the same way. He did not have sufficient knowledge of such a vast field after all.

The butcher had to change his position mid-spying, rushing outside the building before using Blink. That's because another horde of shadow creatures was starting to surround the isolated building he was in.

'This test... it was rigged for guys like Gondel from the beginning.

It wasn't about brute force. It wasn't about individual strength or battle tactics. Sansara Sage was looking for a capable array creator like himself to pass down his legacy to. It was either that or no inheritor at all. No middle ground.

I... I need to change my strategy. Instead of working against the wave, I need to fucking ride it.'

[Chapter 1120 Maya's Aspirations](#)

Eren quickly realized the need to change his tactics.

He always knew array creators would have some sort of advantage inside Sansara Sage's testing ground. But he didn't think that the advantage would be so overwhelming.

Eren drew another conclusion from Gondel's performance. That geek would be the one to find the array key— the way things were proceeding. The geek was going to win the Sage Legacy if he was as smart with the participants as he was with the dangers of the city.

However, the butcher couldn't help flashing a smile when he thought of Gondel. He licked his lips and narrowed his eyes before thinking to himself.

'Heh! That's my silly little working bee. There was some benefit to letting him live after all.'

The evenings in Sansara World were often pleasant yet lonely. They lacked a certain vibe to them as if the creator of this artificial world did not know how to breathe life into it.

The golden sky and the low-blowing winds created a serene atmosphere. The entirety of Sansara World as well as Sage Lehan's testing ground was exposed to this atmosphere in various shades.

Maya was practicing a mysterious art while meditating. A thin layer of otherworldly energy was created around her as a result. This seemed to be her usual way of spending time inside Sansara World.

However, she noticed that there was a presence nearby. A participant. She stopped practicing her art and opened her eyes slowly to look at the man who was watching her from a distance.

"What are you doing here? And why are you staring at me?"

Maya asked, puzzled by the man's nonchalant behavior while the test was still in progress. She didn't think the participants who had come this far would be able to stop themselves from taking Sansara Sage's test even if it was a tough nut to crack.

The young man didn't look away from Maya when she stared back at him. His emerald-green eyes shone with mild brilliance as he spoke with a light smile on his face.

"Oh, it's nothing, Lady Maya.

I thought I should spend some time with you. See what you are up to. But I didn't want to disturb you since you were doing something significant. So I just waited."

Maya raised her eyebrows when she heard Eren's answer. The young man in front of her didn't look like he had given up on the test. However, it seemed that he had not invested enough effort in finding the array key either.

There was only one thing she thought he wanted from her.

"Unfortunately, I can't help you with the test in any way or form. My father has told me to take the test with diligence."

Eren smiled mirthlessly when he heard Maya's cold response. He carefully took steps toward her and gave her an elegant bow before sitting beside her on the fountain stone before speaking further.

"It's fine, Lady Maya. I have my own plans concerning winning this Legacy. So I won't bother you about that.

I wanted to ask you about you. Can't we have a simple conversation between us? Is that also prohibited by the test?"

Eren spoke calmly and confidently. There was a certain tone in his voice that made him more approachable. He just hoped his ways with words worked for artificial humans as well.

Maya was curious about Eren's words. She looked at him intently and eventually smiled a bit before responding.

"We can certainly have a chat. It's not against the rules. Tell me... what do you want to know?"

Eren looked like a huge boulder had been lifted off his shoulder when he heard Maya's response. He sat cross-legged over the fountain stone and turned around towards Maya. He had his hands in front of him. His fingers tapped the fountain stone as he asked her.

"Lady Maya, please don't mind me when I say that I am intrigued by your whole existence. Being a student and researcher in the field of potioning myself, I have a natural curiosity about topics like the genesis of life.

So you can imagine my surprise when I heard that you were a completely artificial human being. You are perhaps one of Sage Lehan's greatest achievements while he was in the land of Anfang.

There's so much I want to ask you. Would you be okay answering my queries if it's not too bothersome for you?"

'Hehe. Is this your plan? Take advantage of a lonely woman?'

Alephee's playful voice was heard in Eren's mind. The latter just ignored it and looked at Maya with his expectant gaze.

Alephee knew how Eren's psychological plays worked. He was trying to create a soft corner for himself in Maya's mind by calling himself a researcher. The girl was obviously very proud of her father and his field of expertise.

Maya was a very beautiful woman. And yet, Eren didn't talk about her appearance as an icebreaker. Instead, he appealed to her side of being cherished by her father. He also portrayed her as one of Sage Lehan's achievements— making her feel proud of herself as well as her creator.

The butcher relied on Sage Lehan's artificial intelligence to be as close to the real deal as possible. So he guessed that his moves that worked on normal women would, for the most part, work on Maya as well.

Maya's facial expressions softened when she heard that Eren was also intrigued by the field of life's genesis just like her father. She nodded at him in understanding before speaking up.

"Hmm. It all depends on the questions you ask. But ask away. I'll see what I can do."

Eren's face lit up. He cleared his throat before asking her the question he intended for her.

"Lady Maya, what are your dreams? Artificial or not, you have been given life by Sansara Sage. And all living things aspire for something in their lives.

What do you aspire to have or become?"