

## Vile 401

### Chapter 401 "The Winners Define the definition of Justice!"

'Sadly, we can't. You'll have to get out of this mess by wading through it.'

Layla said and looked at the Hexen Bee that was immersed in an excessively large cauldron filled with a strange potion placed beside her. She sighed when she saw the bubbles still forming in the concoction her flying artefact was dipped in.

She carried on speaking without Eren asking her about it.

'I'll tell you before you ask. I can only guide Hexen Bee to a certain level, but I can't control it the way I want to. Let's just say that it has its consciousness that gets fatigued the more I use it. It is because I'm technically not someone who can use it effectively.'

Eren smiled mirthlessly after hearing Layla's explanation. It sounded more like what used to happen to Alephee. He didn't understand how that stuff worked. But he at least realized that the young witch's flying artefact would remain inoperable for some time. It won't be the escape card he wanted it to be.

'You can't always have what you want in life, huh? Heh! It's not like I counted on things to get changed for me. So that's also fine.'

Eren sighed and retrieved his spatial artefact from his storage. He had Layla summon it in her own space shortly thereafter. Before preparing her makeshift array, she checked the artefact first.

If Eren could see Layla's personal space and what she was doing in it, he would see that Layla had emptied a couple of vials on the floor. Then used her powers to control the contents of the potion poured on the ground.

Soon the potions began to mix. A circle was drawn under Layla's guidance using the mixture of potions as its ink. The runs started getting drawn inside the circle. An array-eye started taking place around the area Layla was standing.

Layla appeared outside the array but she had left the butcher's artefact inside the array eye. She sat outside the array and closed her eyes. In the next second, the runes within the array start lighting up.

'It'll take us a while. Buy us some time.'

Layla commanded Eren while continuing to operate on the array. The latter did not have to do anything. Claho started speaking right after he confirmed that everyone from his team apart from those who were stationed to keep the array running had been summoned to the place.

"You vile devil, I knew there was something wrong with you the second I met you. The way you killed my soldiers. Don't think you'll die an easy death after doing something like that. We'll skin you alive before slowly killing you."

We already know that you use fire and lightning element spells and have taken countermeasures against you. You can't do shit in your current..."

Claho had let go of his previous plans to keep his identity hidden and make it look like the bandits did it. He confessed his identity by coming in front of Eren without a mask on. His intentions were clear. There would be no mercy shown for Eren. Not anymore.

Eren raised his hand and Claho stopped talking. Then he gripped his hands hard on his dual weapons before responding:

"No need to offer excuses. We are all rankers here. We know how it works.

I'd say the same thing I had said to someone before. At that time, I was the one who had ambushed him and he was the victim. He had done nothing wrong to me and yet I had gotten rid of him. Now, I'm on the receiving end of the so-called "unjust" treatment.

Things come full circle. Such is life, hehe."

Eren chuckled to himself as he spoke. He took a long breath before continuing.

"You want to kill me now because our truths are different. And I want to kill you because you brought that difference up of your own accord. Nothing more. Nothing less.

Despite all my efforts, if you can kill me with your setup and your advantage in numbers, you will prevail in our clash of truths. And whatever you say will be right.

If I can manage to kill you all despite the odds that are stacked against me, then whatever I say will turn out to be right.

The winners define the definition of justice after all!"

Eren pulled out a vial of potion from his storage. He uncorked it in no time and drank it quickly while keeping his gaze fixed on Claho. This was a mana recovery potion that he had consumed. But since it was the one he had gotten from the dungeon as the reward, it had other attributes as well.

Eren did not have any active ranking techniques at the moment. So even his passive mana recovery was a bit slower than usual. So he had to depend on the mana recovery potion to compensate for that.

The latter narrowed his eyes when he saw Eren using potions. But he concluded that Eren's desperate struggle was going to be in vain. Claho had an overwhelming numerical advantage after all.

So he let the guy drink his potion while commanding a few of his soldiers to change their positions and stay on standby. They'd move to attack Eren soon after this stalemate ends. Claho was cautious of the potion bombs Eren had used.

Although Eren couldn't use his elemental spells, Claho had come to realize that a few of his soldiers would die if they approached him carelessly. So he was buying time to attack him so he could launch a surprise attack. Coincidentally Eren wanted to buy time off too.

Claho started laughing maniacally after listening to Eren's speech.

"Hahahahaha!

"The winners define the definition of justice."

I like that.

We at least agree on this thing. We had first thought of just messing with you a bit and testing all our gears at the same time. But I'll be damned if I let you walk out from here without facing the consequences of killing our comrades."

Claho gave a few orders to his squad members after he said this to Eren. The members started showing signs of movement while keeping tabs on their targets.

Claho continued his speech shortly afterwards.

"Maybe you were right in defending yourself. Maybe my comrades died because of their incompetence. And yet, what you said also makes sense. If we kill you here, whatever we assume to be or say out loud would become the truth.

On that note, I'll make sure that you are labelled as a cultist after we kill you. I'll make my brothers martyrs that died protecting ordinary citizens from a maniac like you."

Claho started closing down his distance from Eren bit by bit.

"It's as easy as snapping my fingers, you know. The army has special rights when it is given the reins to handle a particular region.

I'll just say that you were supplying the potion bombs on the black market. And when confronted, you killed my fellow squad members before you were subdued and brought to justice. The potions bombs are getting out of hand in Edinburgh. The laws for that have gotten stricter.

Look, we have a few potion bombs ourselves that we can say we seized from you. We could say that you were planning to do something in the city of Osan with these things found in your ID storage."

Claho showed a vial of potion bomb he had retrieved from his storage. He dangled it in front of Eren to make him see the supposed incriminating evidence behind his legally justified murder. The latter didn't get angry.

Now it was Eren's turn to laugh maniacally.

"Hahahaha! You bunch of numbnuts."

Claho stopped in his tracks when he saw Eren reply weirdly like that instead of getting flustered as he wanted. He heard Eren speak up next before he had a chance to demand an explanation.

"Those are counterfeits."

## **Chapter 402 Buying Time**

"Those are counterfeits. Hahahahaha!"

Eren said before drawing a few potion bombs from his storage. He dangled them the same way Claho did before speaking up.

"These are the real deals. Some of them have yet to hit the market. Come and get some."

Eren said and taunted the leader of his enemies. The latter was even more on Eren than he already was because of his unfazed attitude. He didn't understand what Eren was trying to say. But he had come to realize that Eren was determined to harm some of them no matter how cautious they got.

'Commence the attack. Don't forget to attack in pairs or groups. Finish this fucker off. We'll grieve about our dead comrades later.'

Claho sent orders via ID-stone-linked voice communications. He maintained a safe distance from Eren while guiding the others in his team.

He saw a group of four rankers attacking Eren while a pair of ranger rankers got close to him. This was complete bullying without considering the rankers' code.

Eren could not use his movement spell and create a distance from his approaching enemies. He couldn't get much away from them anyway considering he was surrounded. So he let go of playing defensive. The butcher activated the only spells he could activate at this point.

Stunning Speed

Sedated Perception

The time-element spells could still be cast for Eren without any problem. He couldn't use them to their fullest potential because his other spells were getting disabled for him. But his enhanced perception and his entire body experiencing time differently allowed him to see how his approaching opponents were planning to attack him.

In an almost stagnant world, Eren saw a bulky guy running straight at him. He was accompanied by two rankers on either side. The last of the four rankers was moving around him— probably aiming to attack Eren from behind.

A party attacks from all directions. Eren also saw that two ranger rankers had pointed their ranged weapons at him. The male ranger was using a crossbow while the female ranger was using a bowsword. Both of their gears looked top-notch because of the distinct mana pulses they generated.

Eren smiled when he saw the setup Claho had used to take care of him. No matter what he did, no matter how skillfully he made his moves, he knew that he would not be able to come out unscathed from this attack.

'Layla! I can't delay things any further. You might want to speed things up. I'm going to have to start the party early.'

Layla preferred concentrating on activating and maintaining the operation of her makeshift array instead of replying to Eren's update. But she chanted some incantations a bit faster than she had been previously doing.

A switch was flipped inside Eren's mind as he said this. He gripped his katar in one hand and played with two vials of potion bombs with the other hand.

Claho saw that their team's berserker was charging toward the butcher with ferocious momentum. His stature and his muscular build had already made his presence intimidating. Plus, the semi-transparent tiger-head created with the berserker's wind-element mana added extra impact to his charge.

Claho was glad that they had prioritized activating the element restrictions array before dealing with Eren. The guy's reaction time was no joke. Lightning-element rankers were known for their exceptional speed. But Eren stood out the most out of all those rankers Claho had come across.

Claho found joy in the fact that Eren was locked in his position. But he didn't allow himself or his team to be easy on him. The only way the butcher couldn't hurt them was when he was dead and stayed dead after all.

Claho watched as his team's berserker clapped his hands together while releasing his mid-range offensive spell. The giant wind-element tiger head that had surrounded him opened its eyes and started approaching its target with equally overwhelming momentum.

Eren stood in front of the approaching spectral tiger's head and began moving about his katars at exceptional speed. He seemed to have realized that the tiger-head was a cluster of wind blades stacked together. The offensive spell was linked with the wind-element armour the berserker wore. He had also progressed enough in the way of the elements to be able to use armour as he did.

Claho's vision was blocked because Eren was caught in the middle of the swarm of wind blades that had assumed the shape of the tiger head. The wind element mana had also created a cloud of dust around Eren.

Claho or anyone couldn't properly get a read on Eren's condition because of the peculiarity of the mana pulse generated by the artefact-linked spell the berserker had released. All they could hear was a distinct sound of metals clashing against something that seemed tangible.

Clank! Clank! Clank!

Then all of a sudden, all the soldiers suddenly sensed Eren outside the cloud of dust. The ranker near him quickly continued on his trail, thinking he had a chance to land another blow on the running butcher in his injured state. The target had gotten sucked into the wind blade storm of that magnitude and was injured as a result. This was not an opportunity a soldier like him would miss.

Eren's appearance after he got out of the wind-element blade storm was bloody and pitiful. He was injured. He had cuts all over his body. His blood had started to paint his clothes red.

His hands were injured the most. That was because he used them the most to dodge or defend against the wind blades that targeted his vital organs. And since he had been using unelementalized mana to protect and defend himself, the severity of each of the injuries was higher than usual.

Eren quickly found out that the ranker soldier closest to him was hot on his trail and others would follow soon. However, he did not attack the person who approached him just now. His target lay not too far from where he was standing.

Claho had fucked up by not prioritizing Stephan's safety the way he should have been. He was currently being attended by a Novice ranker who was making him drink the healing potion.

Claho must have thought that Eren would be too messed up in the wind blade storm to reach for Stephan who was critically injured because of getting bombed by Eren. but he wasn't completely taken care of yet.

But thanks to his time-element spells that weren't taken into account during the elemental restriction array, Eren was able to avoid getting critically injured. He had already predicted that big attacks would always leave an opening for him to act on as long as he could weather them without getting incapacitated.

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The illustration for the bowsword will be uploaded on Insta handle soon.

### **Chapter 403 "Finish Him!"**

There were only a few exceptional soldiers in the enemy group. And the mute spectator was one of them. Eren couldn't let him get back in the game.

Swoosh!

The Novice ranker who was treating Stephan didn't understand why his vision suddenly changed. Eren cut off his head and threw it behind him.

Claho watched in horror as the bloodied devil continued to attack in such a ferocious manner despite getting caught in the storm. He also couldn't believe that he could move like this without any movement spell on him.

Claho saw his Novice ranker soldier getting beheaded by the demon. The soldier following behind Eren saw that the head was coming toward him.

The soldier's eyes turned bloody as he saw one of his juniors getting beheaded in his presence. He subconsciously tried to catch the decapitated head. But he heard Claho's panicked voice soon after.

"You fucking idiot. Dodge that thing."

Yet, it was too late.

Boom!

Another bomb blast resounded in the vicinity. Eren had planted a bomb inside the decapitated head before throwing it towards the ranker trailing him.

He didn't have a way to survive the blast even though he wore a defensive artefact on him. That's because just as Eren had said, the potion bombs he had used hadn't hit the market yet. It was the expensive variant of the same recipe that had spurred the black market. Since it was costly to manufacture, Eren didn't choose to mass-produce it. But its enhanced output had compelled him to store a few of them for his personal use.

Two spiders died within a few moments of Eren emerging from the cloud of dust. And soon that number turned into three when he pierced Stephan's heart.

Life Drain!

Eren used his ability on Stephan right after he stabbed him. But he couldn't indulge in the feeling of revitalization for long. That's because he sensed a heavy projectile flying toward him at breakneck speeds.

This was a flying sword launched by the woman ranger's bowsword gear. The butcher lifted Stephan's injured body and placed it in front of him before ducking to the side. His extended nails were still digging in Stephan's half-burnt body as he kept on using Life Drain on him.

'Something's wrong. His movements seem unnatural. Is he also a... time-element user? Plus, this weird mana pulse he releases. This guy is a cultist, no doubt.'

Claho and his teammates linked Eren's Life Drain to the spells of the cultists. They were now even more determined to kill him.

Eren suddenly felt that his Life Drain had almost stopped working on the guy. He realized the guy had finally succumbed to his injuries after being subjected to bombing, his ability, and the short sword that had pierced his left eye. The tip of the projectile protruded from the back of the guy's head.

"You fucking devil. I will chop you into a million pieces."

Another ranker approached Eren as he dodged another flying sword made of water-element mana targeting him. But before he could worry about tackling the guy, a projectile pierced Eren's left shoulder near his neck.

"Epic fucking job, Kelmar! Kill this fucking abomination."

Eren was surprised he couldn't sense Kelmar's attack at all even with his Sedated Perception and Stunning Speed. Then he realized Kelmar's mana bullets were unique—made from the element of space. They were shapeless, invisible, and didn't generate any mana pulse. One had to admit that the projectile was a very effective assassination tool.

'Hahahaha! That's why I love hunting young foxes like these. They never know what hits them when I target them. The expressions on their faces when they get wounded or killed by my bullets are just priceless.

Plus, this army-issue artefact is just a perfect match for me. I'll enjoy all my hunts to their fullest with these babies.'

Kelmar thought to himself and chuckled internally after he saw expressions on Eren's face with his vision-enhancing spectral display produced by his eye gear. He had to admit that the army hadn't pulled any punches in equipping the soldiers with the finest gear when they were assigned to the city of Osan. Maybe the kingdom was anticipating something big to take place after knowing that it was Osan Woods Butcher's home city. Yet the preparations made for the OWB and to counter other cultist activities were being used against Eren. It had turned the battle into a hunting game for soldiers.

Kelmar chuckled internally because he didn't want his teammate to feel he was heartless for laughing after his teammates' deaths. He was heartless and twisted in his mind. He just didn't want to make it seem that obvious to his teammates.

Claho watched as Eren was being targeted by so many rankers and their spells all at once. He would evade, dodge, or run away from one attack only to face another executed by another soldier who was nearby him. The guy's enhanced perception had kept him alive otherwise he would have been dead a long time ago.

'Eren, the array is working. The potion is ready. Drink this. It'll automatically make your body compatible with the filtered mana source I've opened through this array.'

Just when despair was beginning to set in, Layla's voice was heard by Eren through voice communication. He was in a very poor state by now. So he didn't waste time asking or saying anything to the young witch. He just dodged another bullet aimed at his vital spot with instinct.

The three rankers that had earlier approached him were closing in on him. It would be only a moment's delay before he was hit by either the flying sword or void bullets.

Gulp! Gulp! Gulp!

Claho saw Eren gulp yet another potion from his position and chuckled hatefully. He had already concluded that the butcher's attempts to stay alive were only delaying the inevitable.

He saw Eren standing motionless again. And he had no potion in his hands. His insidious method of bombing people had alerted those surrounding him. They wouldn't fall into the same trap a third time.

The berserker guy with his wind element spells was one of the three rankers that were battling with Eren at the moment. There was a thin swordsman who would clash with Eren's weapons and create a stalemate. The third ranker was another woman with the class of a Ninja.

She would use the stalemate created by the swordsman ranker to target Eren. so far she had been able to injure Eren's right thigh and right forearm using her ice-element kunai.

Even after drinking his potion, Eren's condition seemed to be getting worse. Claho figured out that Eren's end was near.

"Finish him!"

#### **Chapter 404 Collateral Consequences**

"Finish him!"

Claho instructed the three rankers who were taking turns targeting Eren to attack at the same time. Three rankers understood their assignments and seemingly vanished from their respective positions at the same time using movement spells.

"You are dead you fucking rat!"

Eren was greeted by the berserker right in front of him. He caught both of Eren's katars with his gauntlet-protected hands and waited for his teammates to finish the job. His teammates understood his clues and launched their most powerful attacks against Eren. The swordsman targeted Eren's back while the ninja targeted his neck.

"No. You are!"

Eren said and smiled with a bloody mouth. His appearance was that of a man that was subjected to various tortures. He looked beaten and on the verge of dying. But when he stared into the berserker's eyes and spoke those words, the latter subconsciously believed him.



Claho watched as the unthinkable happened even though the element restriction array was still active. Lightning sparks bloomed in the middle of the battlefield-- prevailing over the faint moonlight and washing the surroundings in a purple hue.

Blitz Shield

Blitz Bolt

Blitz Steps

Blitz Storm

A cloak of lightning was the first cast over Eren. It rendered the two rankers' attacks ineffective. Then came the execution of Blitz Bolt. As the butcher's offensive spell ran through his weapons, it zapped the berserker that was holding them with confidence.

Eren didn't hold back with his offensive spell-- fearing the guy's attack-type armour might have defensive properties as well. But contrary to his belief, the spell worked fine on him.

"Aaaargh!"

The berserker was brought down to his knees after getting electrocuted in the way he did. He opened his mouth to shout to deal with the havoc Eren's mana was creating in his body.

But maybe he shouldn't have opened his mouth to shout. Because that's what Eren used to finish the guy off.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Pinhook

Claho watched in utter horror as Eren chopped out the berserker's left cheek entirely. Eren then pierced the guy's head through his open mouth with the same form of artistic handiwork his katars had displayed so many times now.

The berserker's shout had indeed relieved him from his sufferings. But Eren made that relief permanent by finishing the guy off for good.

"Noooooooo!"

Andy!

You... you monster!"

The ninja woman seemed especially shaken by the berserker's death. She got into close range without worrying about anything-- training to target the back of Eren's neck that didn't seem protected by his defensive spell.

Claho's heart was racing as he saw Eren being able to cast his spells even while under the constraints of the array. Now he just wanted the guy to die at the cost of any number of soldiers that was necessary to bring him down.

To accommodate Eren's wanton use of spells, Layla had created a potion that would allow his body to get attuned to a different source of mana linked to the spatial array, and also strengthen Eren's mana

circuits so that they were able to sustain his spell casting. She had also added mana recovery properties to the potion, enabling him to replenish the mana reserves he was beginning to feel depleted. Now he could fight an extended battle.

"All... all of you. Attack the bastard. Kill this cultist monster and avenge our fallen brethren."

Claho ordered all of his teammates that were watching the battle taking place with equal amounts of horror and shock plastered on their faces. Even after listening to Claho's orders, none of them reacted for the time being.

This allowed Eren to take care of both the rankers that were on him. He first released his lightning element AOE and stunned the swordsman and the lady ninja. Then he swung his katars vertically upwards between the lady ranker's legs. All while his time-element spells were active.

Claho saw Eren swing his lightning-clad katar to vertically chop the lady ranker up. He had swung his katar upward from the space between her legs but couldn't go beyond the lady ranker's ribcage.

As a result, her torso was almost vertically cut in half right in the middle. Her guts and internal organs started falling. The katar was stuck in the lady's torso so the butcher let go of his weapon to deal with the swordsman.

"What kind of monster cuts someone like this?"

Claho mumbled to himself as he saw the lady ranker still trying to get close to the berserker's mutilated body in her current condition. The butcher was not there to stop the couple from having their final reunion. He focused his attacks on the swordsman next.

Only now did the swordsman realize that Eren had been fighting with him all this time without strengthening his weapons with his spells. That's why the stalemate had taken place in previous rounds of exchanges.

But now, Eren was cutting various parts of the swordsman's body with any form of opening he could find in the swordsman's defence. The only reason the swordsman was able to fight Eren was because of the cover fire provided by two rangers soon after.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Eren dodged most of the projectiles he was being subjected to all at once. As if the rangers had just awoken from their shock at the same time. The rest were taken care of by his cloak of lightning.

Yet the void bullets still managed to hurt him since they twisted the spatial fabric around the cloak of lightning. Eren wanted to go toward Kelmar right away because he had realized that he needed to take care of the pest as soon as possible. But the guy was firing shots from a tree that was beyond the siege that he was subjected to. He would have to take care of more rankers before he could kill Kelmar.

'Fuck it.'

Eren strengthened his defensive spell even further and stopped thinking about the collateral consequences of everything else raining down on him for the time being. He ignored the projectiles coming his way and concentrated on the swordsman.

Clunk! Clunk! Clunk! Clunk! Clunk!

Pichook!

Eren fought through another round of weapon mastery battle with the swordswoman. Then he court-martialed the soldier and relieved him of his duties for life by driving his katar through his right ear.

Eren took the swordsman's runic sword from his hand as he was shocked by how he had been killed. The butcher's katar was stuck in the lady ranker's rib cage after all. And he couldn't get it back in time due to his ongoing battle.

Eren wielded the sword in his left hand and resumed his fight. It was not how he wanted to face the battles he was struggling through. But he also couldn't face the crowd with only one katar in hand.

Pich! Pich! Pich!

A flying sword managed to lodge itself into Eren's left shoulder just when he was done dealing with the swordsman. A few void bullets had riddled his back. A cost he had to pay for ignoring the attacks of the rangers and focusing on the swordsman.

Eren didn't even bat an eye as he looked at the wound created by the sword projectile. The swordsman's body in front of him was just about to fall to the ground. His brain had been pierced but his body was alive and breathing— hinting to the butcher that he could still execute his ability on it.

Life Drain!

#### **Chapter 405 Image of a Successful Ranker**

Eren used Life Drain on the swordsman to recover some of his stamina and mana back. His injuries would heal as well after using the ability. But he felt like he wasn't utilizing the Life Drain to his fullest potential. Plus, the two rangers were making it difficult to exercise his power in peace.

Claho was terrified after seeing Eren's battle presence and the way he had handled the whole thing. Technically, Claho held all the advantages. And yet, Eren was beginning to fight back in such a way that he ignored most of those odds that were against him.

"Attack... Fucking attack him, damn it. Kill him using whatever gears you have been given. Bring me the guy's head. That's an order."

As Claho shouted in real-time as well as in voice communication, the remaining rankers surrounding Eren snapped back to reality. The rankers looked at each other and then toward where their rangers were placed. They were looking for some kind of assurance and support as they faced what they believed to be a cultist monster.

Then most of them attacked Eren at once after making a quick decision. Their army training kicked in and allowed them to come up with a solid strategy to battle the monster as a group. Some of the rankers still stayed behind and spread around. They were now either trying to help the ones already attacking Eren, supporting them, or trying to find an opportunity to join the battle.

Eren had made full use of all his spells. The Hatchlings of the Flame spell he had executed at the right time allowed him to kill three more rankers and injuring three more. The Solid Spark spell enabled him to prevent his enemies from casually approaching him.

His other spells also made their due appearance at the right time at the cost of damaging his mana circuits and straining his mana core. The mana core was now beginning to develop a tolerance to the mana recovery potion. As such, the concoctions were bound to become less effective the more he used them.

Yet, Eren didn't stop. He couldn't stop. He shut off his thoughts and completely depended on his instincts and his experiences so far to guide him.

He killed another two rankers using his close-combat moves. Then injured some more while facing injuries himself. The more he killed, the more furious the soldiers would get at him. They also had let go of their safety net and were attacking Eren based on their styles and openings.

But there was only so much one Ace ranker could do against an army squad of Ace rankers who were equipped with all sorts of artefacts.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

Kelmar finally found a clear shot of Eren's legs and took it. By firing at the correct timing, the latter struck both of his calves with void bullets. Furthermore, a flying sword had pierced his right forearm.

Eren's injuries finally accumulated on his body. He prevented himself from completely falling to his knees by planting the sword he had borrowed from his victim into the ground. He looked to be in a terrible state. But his presence felt even more dangerous than before.

"Wait!"

Claho's order was heard by his teammates who were about to resume their attacks on Eren. The guy used his movement spell and approached Eren while keeping his guard up. He stopped once he concluded that the distance was ideal for him to talk with the target.

"Heh! So you are not invincible after all. Eren Idril, you are a calamity for the mortals and rankers around you, the city of Osan, and the entire kingdom itself. We deem you too dangerous to be left alive.

Team Claho has exceeded expectations in all its missions. Many of them were not what one would call morally correct. But we did them anyway for the kingdom's safety. Although our intentions at first didn't align with that goal, killing you would help assure that all the same. You are a cultist after all.

Any last words before you are sent on your final journey?"

Claho questioned Eren and drew a runic dagger from its sheath. This was also a unique, army-issued artefact that could be used by rankers of any element, thanks to the runic inscriptions etched on it. The team leader had saved the most unique artefact for himself.

Eren didn't bother accepting or denying Claho's claims that he was a cultist. He just narrowed his eyes on Claho and his dagger while taking deep breaths. He couldn't sense anything about the dagger but figured out it too would be something special.

He coughed and spat blood. Then he chuckled loud before responding.

"Hahahaha! Not invincible? Danger to the city of Osan and the entire kingdom? I thought I was the master of bullshittery. But you sir, put me to shame. I humbly admit my defeat if it's the contest of shamelessness between us."

Eren said and started laughing. That made him cough out more blood, which he spat out again. Claho was getting angry at the butcher for Eren pointing out the statements that didn't sit well with him. But he kept quiet and started running his unelementalized mana through the dagger.

Everyone in the vicinity was waiting for Eren to get killed at this point. The target, surrounded by many injured rankers, continued speaking.

"Last words? We'll see who else gets to have the last words. Heh! If I can't win, so be it. I'll just make sure that the survivors will remember me forever. Hahaha!"

Eren laughed and looked around him. His intentions were as clear as day. The first person to approach him will face his kamikaze attacks. He continued speaking after he got the effect he was hoping for.

"I'm not angry at you guys for ambushing me just for a hunting game masked under the garb of petty revenge. I'm not even angry at my situation or my luck. The one who can kill people without any reason shouldn't be shocked when someone tries to do the same thing to him."

Eren said this and shook his head as if he was disappointed with someone before continuing.

"I'm angry at myself for overthinking things because of my distraught mental state. Like some naive ranker who hadn't seen the world, I was pondering whether I did the right thing by taking revenge on people who hadn't done me any harm in my second chance at life. I wondered if it would have been better if I had just let things be instead of trying to pacify my old self.

I started doubting the most ideal image of a successful ranker that I had created for myself.

Was it correct?

Did I achieve anything worth being proud of?

Or was I just being a douche like you guys are?"

#### **Chapter 406 "Have You Ever Met a God?"**

"I started doubting my ideal image of a successful ranker that I had created for myself. Was it correct? Did I achieve anything worth being proud of? Or was I just being a douche like you guys are?"

Eren dissed himself and his enemies. Then he chuckled and verbally marched forward:

"Having a broader perspective changes you as a whole, you know? It makes you think that all the things you had done were of no significance in the grand scheme of things.

Never meet your heroes, they say! Do you know what's an even more soul-crushing experience?

Meeting gods!

Their presence makes you feel inferior. Their mere gaze is enough to let you realize you are nothing but a speck of dust. Feelings like these make you restless because they keep on growing in your head no matter how many times you try to get rid of them.

Tell me, Claho, have you ever met a god?"

Eren asked the enemy leader while looking him in the eyes. The latter raised his eyebrows before responding grimly:

"What are you even trying to say here?"

Eren threw his head back and laughed loudly before speaking up once again.

"I'm saying that I'm angry at myself for being so naive.

But I'm also thankful.

It's thanks to you guys that I could finally clear up my head. This battle was a much-needed experience for me to see the obvious truth that was eluding me for quite some time now. It helped me re-learn the things I had begun to forget."

Claho was seriously agitated by Eren's creepy thoughts. He regretted allowing Eren to say his last words. But now that he had, he wanted him to continue what he was saying. His curiosity got the better of him.

"What the fuck does that mean?"

Eren slapped his head as if a realization had dawned on him and struck him like a eureka as a response to Claho's question.

"It's thanks to you guys I came to realize how fucking stupid I was.

Yes, my revenge on people who haven't done anything wrong to me doesn't make sense if I only consider the current me. But now I've realized that it doesn't have to make sense. I should do this as a tribute to the old me. Nothing more, nothing less."

Eren said this and tried to get up on his feet using the sword as his support. He managed to do so after a while and spoke again.

"The world won't become a better place just because I decided to act as a model person. And it won't change much even if I decide to strive for my goals at the cost of harming others. It would continue to work the way it has, with or without me, no matter what I do or don't do. In reality, we are just balls of flesh inflated with egos, running all around the surface of this earth until we are eventually defeated. The world doesn't give a shit about us. By us, I mean all of us low rankers.

Then I might as well forge ahead and exploit everyone and everything to its fullest. Because that's also something this world has deemed to be alright."

Eren's deep breaths stabilized a bit as he got up. He stabilized his stance and continued.

"I've also realized that a broader perspective doesn't help much if you are not capable of having one in the first place. What use is learning the ways of the king is it to someone who is just another thug in the streets? A thug like him is better off learning how to survive from other thugs.

Thanks to all of you, I've realized that I had been carrying so much shit in my head. Never will I ever doubt the decisions I have made since my second chance. I'm now ready to accept all the rewards and consequences that come with me pursuing my goals.

I'm ready to accept myself for who I am. And what I am is someone willing to deal with any obstacle that blocks their way. Someone willing to pay the price for their selfishness.

Someone who won't care about ruining hundreds or thousands of lives if it could help them propel me forward to the pinnacle of this world I've been yearning for. I guess one needs to have this realization if they are striving to stand above the others."

Claho believed that Eren was delirious due to the fight and the serious injuries he sustained. Laughing, he spoke up.

"The mindset of the gods? I see you are preparing for your afterlife. Care to tell me which god did you meet before you die? Maybe we can meet them too. Hahaha!"

The soldiers started chuckling when they heard Claho taunt Eren. The subject of that laughter laughed with them before responding:

"Hahahaha! Careful what you wish for."

Eren said this before vanishing from his position. He appeared right beside the closet guy from his position and aimed to hit the back of his neck. But Claho and his teammates were ready for something like this. They attacked Eren all at once using precise attacks from their spells and weapons. The rangers also supported their teammates by shooting the right projectile at the right time.

Eren stopped caring about the attacks coming his way unless they weren't targeting his vital spots. Because it was impossible to dodge all the attacks. He prioritized killing as many rankers as possible without worrying about the injuries.

The battle continued and another two officers were killed by the butcher in the most brutal way possible. But by now, Eren's body had also been brutally injured. He had fractured his right forearm which was pierced by multiple rounds of void bullets. His left shoulder was dislocated. And there was blood coming out of every pore of his body.

Eren again found himself in the middle of Claho's teammates. The leader himself also traded a round or two. He had to admit that without his teammates' and rangers' support, he would have died tens of times in his short battle against the butcher.

This whole time, Claho was channelling mana through his unique dagger. Although it could be used by any ranker by using their unelementalized mana, the channelling of mana itself would take a considerable amount of time.

Finally, the runes etched onto the metallic blade of the dagger lit up— indicating it was ready to be used.

"Good riddance, Eren Idril."

Claho said before throwing the dagger toward Eren using his rogue-class spell. The weapon cut through the air and approached the butcher with threatening momentum.

This was the time Eren was most exhausted and most beaten down. The fingers of his fractured right hand had been cut off by a ranker. So he couldn't hold the katar properly. His left hand wasn't any better with the gaping wound in his forearm.

Eren's knees had already suffered damage due to Kelmar's void bullets. Plus, his incessant movements aggravated the injuries.

One had to say that Claho had chosen an apt time for his unique weapon to make a debut.

The butcher's vision was beginning to blur. But he never gave up fighting the fight. His anger and his dissatisfaction with himself kept him focused in the battle even during his pitiful state.

He narrowed his eyes, stretched his mana senses, and braced himself for the incoming weapon. He was very confident in deflecting the projectile if not completely dodging it.

But something weird happened when he was expecting the dagger to hit his weapon. It vanished into thin air. Eren had already stretched his mana sense but he couldn't get a read on the weapon's location.

Warning bells sounded in Eren's mind and he re-cast his defensive spell. The butcher's responses were pretty impressive. Plus, they had been enhanced by his time-element spell combo.

Yet all of that couldn't keep him safe from the weapon's attack.

Pichook!

The dagger appeared right in front of Eren's chest by distorting the space fabric. It also seemed to have twisted Eren's defensive spell and pierced his chest where his heart was.

Eren's heart was pierced by a space-element dagger.

### **Chapter 407 Demanding Sacrifices**

Eren's heart was pierced by a space-element dagger.

Eren looked down when he felt an unbelievable amount of pain in his chest. He could feel that the dagger had pierced about three inches into his heart. It would have completely pierced his chest and came out from the other end had it not been for the enhanced protection his cloak of lightning had granted him.

"Hahahahahahahahaha!"

Claho let out a burst of cheerful laughter when he saw Eren's current condition. Within that joyous laughter, there was a feeling of relief mixed in.

The other rankers surrounding Eren also breathed a sigh of relief when they saw that the dagger had pierced Eren's heart. It should only be a matter of time before the guy drops dead on his own. There was no need to face his suicidal attacks anymore.

Kelmar also shot another bullet right at the hilt of the dagger to show off his marksmanship. He had stopped targeting Eren's vital spots because his guard used to be always up. Plus, his cloak of lightning was something he couldn't easily get rid of using his long-range attacks. For that, he needed to close the



distance. But Kelmar knew that as soon as he entered the battlefield, the butcher was about to target him.

But now that Eren seemed frozen in his steps, it gave him the chance to target the guy again.

Zoom!

The flying sword zipped through the air and cut off Eren's right hand from its joint. She saw that Eren's cloak of lightning was fluctuating because of his current condition. She saw the chance and took it.

'Damn it, Eren. You couldn't even handle these low lives. I'll stop maintaining the array and come...'

Layla wanted to stop maintaining the array and come out of her personal space to help him. He was an extremely crucial piece in her master's plan after all. She couldn't let him die. And the way he was heading, it wouldn't be long before he hit the dust. Therefore, she grabbed a unique potion from her collection intending to use it on him as soon as she got out.

'There'

"Hehehehehe! Hahahahahaha! This is fun. Never did I imagine the feeling of anger could be so addicting.

If indulging in this feeling is sinful, so be it.

If indulging in this feeling is evil, so be it."

Layla was stopped by Eren. She didn't understand what the guy was thinking. Any more delay and he'd drop dead. Yet she sensed something really strange. His pierced heart was pounding more than usual. It was not oozing out blood like it was supposed to.

Thump!

Thump!

Thump!

Thump!

The stabbed heart that was supposed to pour out gallons of blood was now beating more aggressively than before. Layla felt that if one was within a meter's distance away from Eren, they could hear his heartbeats.

Eren's aura kept on changing as the heartbeats grew louder.

Eren started hearing foreign chants spoken by various voices in various ways as he felt the ache in his heart. But he could tell that there were other emotions mixed with the feeling of pain.

He remembered Nina's description of foreign mana sources, spells, and abilities. He subconsciously processed that information along with the feelings in his heart and got a hint of what he was supposed to do.

Slowly the foreign chants started to make sense to Eren in his subconscious mind. They were asking something from him.

Eren closed his eyes and concentrated on the chants. He felt everything around him go black the next moment. Suddenly, he found himself in an ethereal place where he saw a giant heart beating with war-drum-like thumps.

The sound each of the thumps made was very intimidating. Yet, Eren didn't feel threatened by it. He felt that it was something that belonged to him.

The void didn't contain anything. Or more precisely, Eren couldn't see anything in space apart from the giant heart.

Now that his consciousness was summoned into this place, the butcher could hear the chants clearly. He could understand their meaning on a deeper level.

'These voices. They are talking to me. They are asking me if I'm ready to bear this sin and all that it means. They are asking me if I'm ready to bind this power to my existence.'

Eren mumbled to himself as he listened to the chants. He also understood what he needed to do at that time.

"Let my wrath scare them beyond anything they've ever felt.

Let them come within the measure of my wrath

And burn to cinders, illuminating my path.

This ability...

This binding...

I accept it.'

The surroundings resonated with Eren's voice with an unnatural echo. The next thing he did was to drive the dagger deeper into his heart with his own hand.

BZZZZZZZT!

An otherworldly mana pulse was released into the surroundings with Eren acting as its origin. Rankers surrounding him were blown tens of meters from their previous position by the release of that mana pulse.

Layla understood what had happened the moment she felt the changes happening outside. Eren had awakened one of the seven sin marks. The dagger was driven into his heart to bind his ability with this act of self-harm.

Eren's heart was chained into various runes when he drove the dagger deeper. In the next moment, he opened his eyes as he pulled out the dagger.

Eren realized how the ability would work the moment it was bound to him. It was now bound by the action of his heart getting pierced. It meant that he needed to pierce his heart and experience the pain the action entailed every time he wanted to use the ability.

'You... You are a masochist, Eren. Why did you bind your ability like this?'

Eren ignored Layla's question and looked at his surroundings. He wondered why nobody had attacked him while he was standing still with his eyes closed. So he checked up on Claho and his team as well as himself. And he finally understood the reason behind it.

All of the rankers had been driven away by the mana pulse that was released from him. The rankers were stunned, shocked and were beginning to dread Eren even before that. His presence now had become so ominous that they were subconsciously scared of closing in on him.

Eren saw Claho's dagger in his hand that was now coated with his blood. Then he felt the wound that was made by it with his own hands. The gaping wound was still there. The pain was still there. But the blood didn't come out of it anymore.

Eren shook his head when he understood what he had done. Maybe he truly was a masochist. But he kept those thoughts aside and concentrated on his current tasks at hand.

Now that Eren had gained this otherworldly power and understood how to activate it, he needed test subjects to use it. And they gathered around him.

Eren caressed the wound on his chest as he looked around trying to find Claho. He chuckled when he found him lying on the ground with his legs spread out. The guy was using his hands to crawl away from Eren as he watched him with horror-filled eyes. The leader of his team had come to realize that he along with all his teammates were going to be put in mortal danger soon.

"You lot... Didn't you want to meet God?"

Maybe it was because of the ability's binding effect. Or maybe because of the otherworldly mana pulse that was released not too long ago. But Eren's voice somehow sounded deeper than it was supposed to. Claho and his teammates were frightened by his question, which sounded like the voice of something sinister.

Only his spectators felt this change though. The butcher raised his hands and spread them to both sides as he spoke his next words.

"In this place... At this moment...

I AM YOUR GOD!

And I demand sacrifice.

Mark of the Seven Sins: Domain of Wrath!"

## **Chapter 408 Domain of Wrath**

"Mark of the Seven Sins: Domain of Wrath!"

A dome-shaped mana layer, made of the same otherworldly mana pulse that was released earlier, was birthed into existence around Eren. At the same time, Eren's appearance started changing into his new-normal form. His hair turned white and his eyes turned red. Plus, the runic inscriptions on his body which looked like abstract tattoos started spreading over his torso and limbs.

The red-tinted mana layer started spreading further under Eren's guidance. It soon encountered the array-generated mana layer. The layers seemed to have a conflicting presence with each other. Finally, the red-tinted mana layer managed to override the array-generated mana layer before spreading past it.

The mana-dome covered where the two rangers positioned on opposite sides of the battlefield were located. It only stopped growing further when it included distant enemies. The runes started floating over the dome's surfaces as soon as it was stabilized. It separated the environment inside the dome from the world outside.

Kelmar and the bowsword ranker, who were too stupefied to react to the dome-shaped mana layer, were finally snapped into reality. They had ominous feelings in their hearts as they watched the mana dome stop only after bringing them inside.

Kelmar was the first to act on his instincts. He tried to run away from the battlefield without worrying about any of his soldiers or Claho's order. He cast his movement spell and tried to breach the mana-dome and reach the other side.

"Aaaargh!"

Kelmar's voice could be heard in the nightly silence. The dome-shaped mana layers had been stretched by the ranger's movements only to throw him back with greater momentum than his approaching speed.

That was not all. Kelmar's skin that had touched the mana-dome began melting on its own. As if he had touched an intense form of mana acid. His hands, the skin on his knees, and some of his face started melting first. Soon, signs of skin melting appeared on other parts of his body.

The front of Kelmar's body soon had no epidermis whatsoever. He looked like his skin had been surgically removed and his red muscles were exposed out in the open.

Kelmar's suffering didn't end there. The red-tinted mana that had come into contact with him through his touch started invading his mana circuits. The mana soon reached his mana core and interacted with it.

The next thing Kelmar felt was his mana core getting imploded from within. The implosion ran through his mana circuits and burned it away too.

Kelmar continued screaming in an attempt to cope with the excruciating pain he was experiencing. His teammates were keeping tabs on him through their stretched mana sense as well. A cold shiver ran through all their spines as they realized the consequences of trying to get away from the battlefield.

Claho was terrified by Eren because he observed the devil gazing directly at him with a smile plastered on his face. His pitiful condition was the stuff of nightmares for him.

So when he observed Kelmar's state with his mana sense and heard his screams, Claho started shivering on his own. His mental state was already affected by the mana pulse that was released a few moments ago. Kelmar's condition only cranked up those feelings of fright to eleven.

But what happened next was even more bizarre. Everyone observed as Kelmar's body started changing post his mana core destruction. He started to appear as something non-human in appearance.

Kelmar was getting consumed by the anger that he felt due to the insurmountable amount of pain he felt. The feeling of "I don't deserve any of this" had made the seed of anger sprout in his head which then bloomed into full-fledged wrath.

Kelmar's body started growing taller as the wrath inside his head started growing. He lost all hair on his head and it began showing signs of deformity. His musculature also appeared to be changing. It now had warts at the most prominent muscle definitions.

Kelmar's epidermis was destroyed by now. His red muscles were getting puffed up as warts over them grew with each passing moment. His left hand also started changing all of a sudden. He lost his palm and his fingers as the radius and ulna bones of his arm fused before becoming a large fang-shaped bone.

Kelmar's muscles grew around the fang bone with rapid but unstable regeneration. The muscle fibres of his body were showing signs of getting torn because of the stress they were feeling.

He had no clothes on. The ranger was completely naked. Yet there was no sexual organ to be found. As a result of his transformation, he became genderless.

"Kyaaaaaaah!"

Kelmar released an angry scream as his transformation was complete. He stood up and looked at everyone on the battlefield with inhuman-looking eyes.

Kelmar fixed his eyes on the ranker closest to him and released an angry roar at him. The latter didn't understand what was happening at first. But soon he saw the creature that was previously called Kelmar approaching him with threatening momentum.

The guy tried to run away from Kelmar. Kelmar, despite not having the mana core, had become incredibly fast. His speed when he could use mana was nothing compared to what he could achieve with his mere muscles alone. The otherworldly mana temporarily boosted his muscles to an unimaginable level.

The mutant created by Eren's strange ability could not control his actions. That mutated flesh held only a sliver of his previous ego, which was constantly breeding feelings of anger, injustice, and rage toward everyone around him.

'Why didn't you feel the pain? How come you get to be lucky and I don't? Why are you still human and I am not?'

The ego kept on thinking like this as its body attacked the ranker that Kelmar once identified as his teammate. As he approached the man, he used his inhuman physical speed and agility to drive his newly formed fang-shaped bone through his stomach from behind.

"Kiyaaaaah!"

The mutated creature released another scream as it lifted the skewered body of the soldier it had just killed.

## **Chapter 409 Creatures of Wrath**

"Kiyaaaaah!"

The mutated creature released another scream as it lifted the skewered body of the soldier it had just killed.

Claho wasn't sure if what he was seeing was real or just an illusion conjured up by an illusion spell. Or was he trapped in a nightmare? He couldn't be sure.

He watched as Kelmar turned into a mutated creature. The captain looked on as his former vice-captain attacked his comrade. He watched as the creature lifted the victim's body in the air after skewering it on his fang-shaped bone.

Then he watched as Kelmar tossed it aside like it didn't mean anything to him anymore. He then looked around and saw another ranker that was not far away from him.

"Kiyaaaaah!"

The mutated creature made its intention known by releasing an angry cry towards its next target. The ranker knew that running away from the creature wasn't going to solve anything.

"Fight... let's fight this creature together. I won't be able to take it down by myself."

The soldier found the right words to say to the rankers around him. They also understood that they had to put everything aside and prioritize killing the creature.

Kelmar approached the ranker and tried to do the same thing with his new prey the way he had done it with his last prey. Too bad, the ranker used his runic shield and his defensive spell together to tackle the muscle-powered bone-fang.

"Kiyaah!"

The creature released a roar of anger as it found out its prey was trying to evade getting killed. The muscles on its body grew even more exaggerated than they already were as Kelmar indulged in the feeling of wrath.

Claho wet his pants when he saw the mutated creature overpowering the ranker who was well-versed in defence. He watched as the creature got tackled by three more rankers at once. And he watched as Kelmar's body got heated up and released mana-smoke in response to those attacks on him.

Kelmar soon seemed to have killed or incapacitated two more rankers with his inhuman physical power alone. And injured the third one. Only after doing this did his body finally succumb and spontaneously combust.

The shield-wielding ranker was at his limit when the fight ended between the four of them versus the creature. And three of his comrades were already dead. He had thought that it wouldn't take long for the creature to kill him now.

But the shield ranker almost felt like crying with joy when he saw that Kelmar's body had suddenly caught fire. It burned in red flames at an accelerated rate before there was nothing left of it anymore.

The red flame that burned its source wasn't extinguished though. It started compressing and shrinking while releasing a distinct yet weird mana pulse.

The shield guy wasn't sure what he was supposed to do now. But he was glad that the mutant creature was finally taken care of. But something strange happened yet again.

Suddenly, the same red flame that was levitating from the ground flew towards someone that was the root cause of all that had happened so far.

Eren extended his hand as the palm-sized red flame came toward him. It then disappeared into his body through contact with the tip of his index finger.

"Aaaaaaah! These pure feelings of wrath. I like them.

Hehehehe!

Give me more!"

Eren said as if speaking to himself. But somehow his voice was heard by all those present in the Domain of Wrath. They watched in horror as Eren's injuries started healing themselves after the consumption of the red flame.

The wound on Eren's chest stayed open. But he could not feel any pain coming from it anymore. His other injuries were also getting healed. His fractured bones creaked and mended themselves. His ruptured muscles were brought back to their pristine condition. And his open wounds in the other parts of his body stopped pouring out any more blood.

Eren then looked at his cut fingers that didn't heal and realized something.

"I need more."

Eren said and looked at Claho again. He started walking towards Claho at that point. The latter suddenly thought even shitting himself wasn't going to be enough to process the fear he was feeling at the time.

"Stop... stop this devil.

Aaaah!

Team Claho, if you want to see tomorrow's sun, come together as a team and kill him.

He... he is still injured and won't be able to handle all of us."

Claho's survival instincts kicked in and overpowered his fears. He got up and ordered his team to unite under him. The teammates in the surroundings also had come to realize that their chance of survival lay in acting as a team and helping each other out.

Eren was about to be attacked from all sides by the attackers. But they soon heard the voice of the devil as he kept walking towards their leader.

"Heh! Are you sure you can afford to attack me? Look at the bodies of those the creature of wrath killed."

Eren chuckled as he made all the rankers look at the bodies of the Kelmar's victims. Two rankers almost died, while the third one was critically injured.

Their fears came true, as Eren had hinted. They soon started turning the same way Kelmar had passed through a few moments ago.

"Kiyaaaaah!"

"Kiyaaaaah!"

"Kiyaaaaah!"

The three mutated creatures released their cries unanimously as they each chose a different ranker to attack. The rankers had to prioritize killing the mutant creatures again because their lives were put in danger all at the same time.

Just like that, the rankers started battling with their previous comrades for the lack of better choices. But it wasn't a fight they could win.

Because they would soon come to realize that the more they fought and the more they got injured, the more the numbers on the opposing side would rise. And even if they managed to kill the creature before it killed them, it would only strengthen Eren more.

In the domain of wrath, the rankers could feel the wrath building in their hearts. And the caster of this domain welcomed this situation with open arms.

Eren was about to burn everyone in the flames of wrath before consuming them as a whole.

#### **Chapter 410 Gaining Experiences**

"Stay... stay the fuck away from me, you abomination! You won't get away from casting this devilish magic, you know. You will get hunted for..."

Claho started talking and shouting with mana imbued in his voice. He hoped that some ranker group would take notice of this battlefield. But then he remembered that he had chosen this spot specifically because it was barren. Only lone rankers like Eren who wanted to travel to the city of Osan at the time of lockdown would choose this way.

But this realization didn't stop him from screaming his heart out. He dished out a lot of threats directed at Eren with his scared voice. Sadly, the so-called monster approaching him didn't seem to care.

Meanwhile, Layla had thoughts of her own when she witnessed how the mark of wrath had manifested in Eren's case. This was the most powerful manifestation of the Sins series ability she had seen so far in the Ace rank. She couldn't believe that power like this was granted to someone in just the Elemental Condensation stage.

It may be that the way this freak chose to bind this power to him was the reason for such a crazy ability granted to him. The world's will involved in the equation must have been pleased by the freak's resolve.'

Layla concluded as she watched the events unfold around the battlefield. She was partly okay with Eren unlocking such power for himself. It only meant that her master's plans would have higher chances of success. But she was also partly worried because she had come to realize that the guy would never allow them to treat him as a pushover.



'Wait. He has indeed acquired a troublesome ability but there's no need to panic. He can't do anything in front of my master. I just need to keep closer tabs on this guy.'

Layla concluded and let the topic rest. She didn't have to maintain the array anymore because the array had been broken by force, thanks to the release of Eren's Domain of Wrath. But she still chose to stay at her place and watch the show.

"Would you shut the fuck up already? If you want to call me names, pick one and run with it."

Eren disappeared from his position only to appear in front of Claho who had never stopped retreating step by step. He choked the guy's neck with his hand and continued:

"I meant every word I said, you know. I'm thankful for you guys. You have cleared my head and helped me get rid of all my doubts."

Eren said while flashing a gentle smile at Claho. Eren had started to pour the wrath mana inside Claho's mana circuits through his grip the moment he was caught in it. As a result, Claho couldn't cast any of his spells due to the foreign mana invading his body.

Eren tightened his grip around Claho's throat and brought him closer to him before continuing further.

"I accept the evil that's part of me now. I won't lose my shit again no matter who stands in front of me.

Your threats don't matter to me. Whatever happens to me, know that none of you is making it out of here alive.

And don't worry about me.

Heh. One way or the other...

My evil will not only survive in this world but also thrive here. No matter if it stays under the veil or comes out in the open."

As he said it, Eren imbued all the anger that he felt because of experiencing his weakest moment in Eliza's presence into his heart. The same heart that was powering his domain.

Eren's anger was a crucial element in keeping the Domain of Wrath active. The more he tapped into his anger, the stronger it became. And the more he used this domain, the more his anger would be zapped away from him. He could feel happiness after releasing all his rage in that way.

Eren had to say that the feeling of using this ability was intoxicating. He felt like he was releasing all his anger into the world. And the guy had a lot of it pent up in his heart.

Claho started changing under the influence of wrath mana that he had injected into his system by force. He released Claho's neck to observe the transformation closely.

Meanwhile, almost all of Claho's teammates were busy with the creatures of wrath that were getting out of their hands. Some of them had started to get out of the domain using various methods instead of running blindly as Kelmar had done.

But no matter what trick, artefact, spell, or potions they used, they would always get repelled by the barrier at the last second. Then the wrath mana would invade their bodies and make them experience

uncontrollable anger towards everything and everyone around them while affecting their mana circuits and mana cores.

The deserters would turn into creatures of wrath soon after getting infected by the otherworldly mana. And it won't take long for them to either kill their opponents or get killed in the process.

A bunch of wrath flames flew towards Eren. He accepted them into his body while watching Claho transform. But suddenly he felt that some weird and unexplainable thoughts were forming in his consciousness.

Eren closed his eyes again and processed those thoughts only to find out that they were not his own. They were the thoughts and experiences of his victims burnt to cinders by the flames of wrath. All the experiences that they had felt related to the feeling of anger or wrath were now being processed by him.

That was not all.

In addition, Eren began to analyze the weapon masteries of his victims as well as their progress in their respective ways of using the elements. He processed them like they were his own. Or more accurately, Domain of Wrath had enabled him to digest his victims' experiences as rankers and turn them into his own.

Eren was only beginning to understand the true potential of his ability as he started processing those experiences. He couldn't help but open his mouth and mumble to himself when he realized what was happening.

'Phew! No wonder Arthur wanted this power.'