

Vile 421

Chapter 421 Captain's Orders

Eren then looked around and saw his squadmates still battling with their respective opponents. Since he didn't want to work harder than he had to, he lit up his Sativa stick and smoked it as he observed those battles.

He first focused on Sidro Zas, who was battling an Orc Leader.

The berserker of Eren's team had worn army-issue armour that had various gems embedded in it connected by a series of runic inscriptions. He was carrying an Ace Rank spear.

His opponent was an Orc Leader that seemed to be focused on defence. He was seen carrying a large shield that boasted the monster version of strange runic inscriptions.

Breeee!

The Orc Leader let out a battle cry and raised his free hand. Three earthen golems appeared in front of him that had the same appearance and shape as the caster.

The golems soon acquired earthen armour. Unlike Eren who didn't let his opponent cast her spell at all, Sid preferred focusing on executing his spells and making this battle as epic as possible. His motive was clear. He wanted Altashia, their captain to understand how powerful he was compared to Eren. He was so driven by the thirst to fight a flashy battle that he didn't pay attention to Eren who was already done with his duel.

Sid focused on his transcendent spell and released it when he was done with it.

Beast Contract Spell!

Lightning Bull!

Sid was also a lightning element user like Eren. But unlike Eren's speed, the latter's inherent nature focused on the element's destructive properties. Plus, he had access to the beast contract spell that he had gained after joining the army.

Sid was a normal ranker who had joined the Edinburgh army when he was an unranked boy. He had slowly climbed up the army ranks and became a part of the cleaning crew division.

The army squad that was made to explore and manage the Badlands was given more resources than their normal counterparts. In addition, special spells such as the Beast Contract Spell were easily available to them after they accumulated certain merits.

This was the biggest advantage the army would have over the academies. While the academies focused on the overall progress of a ranker as a whole, the Army focused on only one aspect of the individual ranker— explosive power.

That's why most army squad members who were used to entering the Badlands would have Beast Contract spells and deadly army-issue weapons. They wouldn't be allotted to someone like Claho or his team this easily.

Red Lightning Bull!

Sid cast his Beast Contract spell. A dark brown bull covered in red lightning appeared in front of Sid. He let it attack one of the golems. He, on the other hand, focused on strengthening his features with his beast contract spell.

Sid's arms grew at a visible rate. His size suddenly changed. His stature also increased quite a bit.

Breeee!

A distinct mana pulse was released in the surrounding area. It indicated that Sid's opponent had entered his rage state.

Sid laughed louder when he saw that his challenge had stepped up his game. To him, it meant that he would have more room to show his awesomeness to his crush and captain. One had to say, Sid was a believer in fairy tales. He wanted the proverbial happy ending with Altashia. And he was ready to extend to any lengths for that to happen.

The Orc Leader saw that a bull beast with the mana body was approaching him so he yelled out and sent one of his golems to meet the incoming enemy. Meanwhile, he strengthened his defence position some more with two more summoned golems.

'Damn. Hats off to this delusional fool. He surpassed the limits of idiocracy I had assumed for him.

Because of this, I had directed you to focus on the Orc Leaders from the very beginning of the battle. The more evolutionary stages they pass through, the higher their potential to birth something unexpected mid-battle. The number of golems this Leader can summon is just unreal.

Monsters are even more unpredictable than mana beasts when it comes to casting spells and the limits of their battle potential. Heh! The guy can go ahead and die for all I care. I just hope he doesn't create trouble for me.

Heh! Wishful thinking, Eren.'

Eren thought to himself as he watched the battle with his enhanced perception. These days, he was consciously making efforts to test the limits of his time-element spells. He wanted to see if they could give him the supposed side effects or if he was completely immune to them even after extended usage.

Furthermore, Eren had come to realize something after he had used his sin series ability: Domain of Wrath. For a spell to become an ability, he either needed extreme luck or intervention from someone way stronger than him. OR, he needed to get familiarized with the spell so much that it would become second nature to him.

So now, he would often execute Seated Perception at random. He wanted to make conscious efforts to make the spell into his ability as soon as it could.

Clash!

The red lightning bull clashed with the golem and tried to lift it using the lightning-clad horns it had. Too bad, the earth-element golem didn't receive any damage from either the lightning or the physical force with which the bull had charged it with. It just allowed the bull's horns to pass through its torso before restoring the torso that was just destroyed with more earth-element mana.

Now the bull's horns were stuck in the golem's torso which it couldn't get out no matter what. It continued to release more lightning element attacks but in vain.

Boom!

Boom!

Boom!

The bull's sturdy back was hammered by the golem's hands locked together. To make matters more complicated, another golem appeared beside the previous one.

Boom!

Boom!

Boom!

It didn't take long for Sid's bull to get sent back to him soon after he had cast it. But he didn't have time to look into that matter. Because he already had his hands full with the golems protecting the defensive specialist Orc Leader.

Chapter 422 An Introvert's Heart

Pitchhook!

Sid pierced a golem's torso with his runic spear. The blade passed through the golem's body and came out from the other side. He retrieved it again only to attack the golem in the same manner but in a different area— its head with blurred features.

'This delusional fool is not a complete idiot after all. He is trying to find a golem's heart first.'

Eren concluded as he watched the battle. A golem's heart was a dense cluster of mana that was inside the golem. It was what made the golems functional.

Golems didn't need additional healing spells. The caster only needed to make sure the golem's heart doesn't get pierced and it would keep on regenerating itself as long as it was given sufficient mana.

Another golem took a shot at Sid with an earthen sword in its hand. Sid had to move his attention away from the guardian golem that was protecting the Orc Leader and focus on the attacker.

"Lightning Bull's Rush!"

Sid cast another of his berserking spells. This was supposed to be a spell he would use after drinking the berserking potions. Instead of concoctions, he relied on his army-issue armour to enter the berserking stage. The gems embedded in the armour along with the runic inscriptions etched over it were lit up.

Immediately afterwards, two golems were destroyed almost at the same time because of Sid's Bull Rush. The spell enabled him to use his Beast Contract spell and create a spectral form of a bull around his body.

In sync with his caster's movements, the spectral bull destroyed two golems that came in its way. But to his shock, Sid found out that two more golems had been created in the meantime and he was busy destroying the previous ones.

It finally dawned on Sid that he should have focused on the Orc Leader at the cost of self-harm by the golems. That way his suffering would have ended sooner.

'Heeeeeeeelp Seeeeeeed, Aeeeeeeeren.'

A feminine voice sounded in Eren's ears through his ID storage while his Sedated Perception was still active. It was asking Eren to intervene in Sid's battle. So the butcher cancelled his time-element spell before responding with only one simple word.

'Sure.'

They were the captain's orders after all. To be frank, he was expecting them to reach him much sooner.

Eren took a long drag out of his smoke before throwing it on the ground and extinguishing it by stepping over it with his right foot. He soon disappeared from his position.

Altashia was keeping tabs on the battlefield through a vision-enhancing artefact worn over her eyes in the form of simple-looking glasses. If Eren was there with her, he would appreciate the geeky charm she exuded at the time.

Altashia caressed the head of the baby crow sitting over the soldiers as she remained hidden. She was waiting for the Orc Lord to show up, assuming that there were no dangers to his life.

'This guy... is weird.'

Altashia commented to herself as she watched Eren enjoying his smoke right in the middle of the battlefield. She should have reprimanded him for being so careless and irresponsible. Especially considering that he was acting as the team's deputy vice-captain.

But then she remembered the burst of power Eren had exploded into a few moments before to take care of his opponent. No matter how keenly she looked at the guy, she could never decipher him completely.

Altashia considered herself to be pretty all-knowing about the men she had come across. Most were smitten by her beauty but were afraid to talk to her. Their interactions with her could only be summed up in one word—awkward.

She knew she was a talented ranker. That made her even more intimidating. So she had no friends in her childhood. Royal Ren was an awful place when it came to making friends. That institution was full of politics and power plays that she didn't want to be part of.

This environment forced Altashia to adopt an aloof attitude that was part of her defence mechanism. Instead of people around her limiting their interactions with her, she would do that herself by trying to act like an introvert. Soon, her introverted nature moulded her into the kind of woman she was. It became a part of her.

Altashia was aware that Sid had feelings for her. But to be frank, she didn't consider him as her equal in any of the fields she excelled in. It wasn't that the guy was mediocre. But her expectations were just that high. That's why she wasn't involved with anyone romantically.

But then she met Eren Idril and something in her heart started beating along with the heartbeats. She would feel strange vibes coming from him whenever she was close to him or interacted with him, however, limited that was.

Her womanly instincts told her Eren was interested in her. However, he never exhibited any sign of the same. So her mind was in a split. Her interest in the butcher grew as a result.

Altashia smiled mirthlessly when she saw Eren taking this fight nonchalantly. This was even while he knew there was a danger of an Orc Lord taking the bait and suddenly showing up. It was as if he had seen things that were much more terrible than the intense battle unfolding around him.

Altashia soon had to snap out of her reverie for Eren. Because she realized that Sid was soon going to be in a pinch. She sighed as she understood Eren's stance. He didn't reply to any of Sid's unreasonable taunts. But he had other ways of getting back at the berserker.

Altashia had come to realize that Eren's mindset was detrimental to team play even when he could do team play very well in the army drills. The guy was just that talented even in things he didn't particularly believe in.

Altashia also felt that Eren was a dangerous man. He was willing to see Sid die at the expense of being overwhelmed by the Orc Leader's golems that he was constantly producing.

Eren wouldn't intervene in the battle anymore unless she told him to. So Altashia finally used her voice communication channel to command the guy.

Despite all his anti-team actions, Altashia didn't develop any negative feelings about Eren. She thought it was cool, which surprised her.

Eren seemed almost as talented as Altashia if not more. The exceptional ranker in her treated the butcher's coldness as one of his charms. Her brain processed all those emotions and information about Eren— on a conscious and subconscious level, and created intrigue for him in her heart.

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AN: Guys, Code Red. I'm kinda simping on Altashia! ;)

Chapter 423 Roo Roo

'Roo Roo, what do you think of him?'

As the butcher was taking the last drag out of his smoke, Altashia patted the baby crow sitting on her shoulder and asked. Roo was the name of the baby crow that watched the battle unfold in front of it with keen and intelligent eyes.

'Hm? Do you also think he is weird? Hehehe. Weird how though?'

The baby crow narrowed its eyes while alternating looking at him with both its pupils at a time before croaking in a low-pitched manner. Yet somehow, Altashia was able to understand what that croak entailed.

'Hehehe! What do you mean he feels just like me? Are you calling me weird too? You can be so silly and childish at times, Roo. Hehehe.

You are just beginning to learn human language and etiquette after all. Maybe I shouldn't ask you about these things.'

Altashia patted the baby bird's head and concluded the matter. The young raven on the other hand croaked some more before keeping quiet. Eren vanished from his position to participate in the battle between Sid and the golem-making Orc Leader.

Sid was going to get crushed under the weight of a giant mace that was going to fall on him soon. That was the attack initiated by a new golem who had come to make trouble for the berserker while he was busy tackling three opponents.

"Damn it. You fucking beast, show your worth."

Sid forced the contract beast to manifest itself once again. This act was surely going to put the beast's soul under a strain. Something that could potentially damage it and make the beast tattoo disappear. But Sid didn't care anymore.

Meeeeerh!

The lightning bull was manifested once again. It let out an angry growl that was mixed with some pain and agony. It snorted its nose towards its master before focusing its gaze on the two golems nearest to him.

He scratched the earth with his hooves before charging toward his two enemies with reckless abandon. Meanwhile, Sid was beginning to feel some load getting off his shoulders because he had two fewer enemies to deal with.

But this is where he got blindsided.

"Creeeeee!"

A golem-looking opponent that was battling with him for a while suddenly stopped his rigid movements and burst into action he hadn't performed yet. He summoned two large axes on either hand and got into a striking range from Sid.

Woooosh!

The golem swung one of his axes horizontally, which the berserker easily avoided. But this was the decoy the golem-looking opponent had used to get him into a vulnerable position. The berserker had ducked from the horizontal attack by tilting back exaggeratedly. But now that he saw the other axe coming for his heart from above him in a vertical swing, he had nowhere to dodge.

Ba-dump!

The earth-mana imbued weapon tore through the armour. It lodged itself deep inside Sid's left shoulder as he fell flat on his back because of the unbearable force he experienced.

"Aaaaaaaaargh!"

Sid cried in pain. Yet the attack's noise had suppressed his scream. The magnitude of the force was so overwhelming that it had created a crater in which the berserker and the golem-looking opponent had found themselves.

At the last moment, Sid had shifted his torso a bit and changed the point of impact for the weapon from his heart to his shoulder. The berserker armour he was wearing also negated a substantial amount of damage. Otherwise, the surprise attack would have killed him on the spot.

But it was not like he was in better shape now. The sword of death was still hanging over his head due to his fragile condition right now. His first-response lightning spell couldn't do anything to deter the Orc Leader from attacking him any further.

When the attack landed on Sid's armour, a dense pulse of mana was released. The tremors ran through the weapon before it reached its wielder. Those tremors made the earthen armour skin crumble, revealing the real opponent hiding within.

This was none other than the Orc Leader himself. He had mixed himself within one of his golem creations from the very moment he had started casting the golem creation spell. Mana pulses were going off everywhere in the vicinity. Additionally, the nocturnal darkness, as well as the dust storm triggered by the battle, had made it difficult for everyone to see.

The Orc Leader took advantage of this situation and doubled himself as one of his golem creations. In addition, he conjured a special golem that looked and felt just like him to take his place holding the shield.

Sid had realized that he had been tricked. He only considered the Orc Leader to be a defensive specialist. He would have never imagined that the monster could pull off something of this calibre.

Kahkahkahkahkah!

The Orc Leader laughed weirdly as he literally and metaphorically looked down upon his opponent. His decoy plan had been a huge success. But that was not all he did. He used his other hand and launched another vertical axe slash at the berserker— aiming to split his brain open into two. One had to say that, unlike a certain berserker, the monster didn't indulge in mid-battle vainglory for long and attacked one final time when the time was most ripe.

Swoosh!

The axe was swung and its blade was just about to land right in the middle of Sid's face. But something tugged at the orc's arm and the attack landed right above the target's head. Neither the orc nor the berserker was aware of what happened at first. They took some time to realize that someone had intervened at the last moment.

Altashia saw Eren appearing right in the middle of two participants and pulling the Orc Leader's arm at him at the last second. This caused him to miss the target that was Sid's face by only a slight margin.

The attack still damaged his hair and gave him a weird haircut though.

Chapter 424 Kill Steal

The attack still damaged his hair and gave him a weird haircut though.

"Aaaa... Oooooooooooooogh!"

He cried in pain again, loudly at first before the cry became suppressed. Altashia was confused by it. Surely, a berserker like him shouldn't cry about his hair getting cut mid-battle. But then she adjusted her specs in a geeky way and looked at the scene carefully.

Eren had appeared in between the two opponents and was seen standing over the axe that had struck Sid in his shoulder. With his other foot, the butcher had practically stepped on Sid's face. It suppressed his scream because the heel of Eren's footwear was right inside the berserker's mouth.

The wound on Sid's shoulders worsened because Eren had stepped on the axe with his other foot. In addition, he refused to allow Sid to relieve the pain by putting his shoes in his mouth. If Sid could die of embarrassment and uncontrollable anger, he would have died many times by now.

"Purple Reaver!"

Eren used the heel of the foot that was placed over the axe as an axis and spun rapidly before launching his weapon attack. As Sid was unable to anticipate an attack from the orc leader, the latter was also unable to anticipate an attack from someone like Eren right when he thought he had the berserker.

Eren had used the same diversion tactics the Orc Leader had employed. He had used Sid as the bait to launch a surprise attack on the orc— knowing full well that his teammate was going to get brutally injured because of this. But the same tactic allowed him to cut both of Orc Leader's arms off in one swift attack.

Breeeeeeeeee!

This time it was the orc's turn to wailing in agony. His eyes turned red and his already-opened mouth opened exaggeratedly as he looked hatefully at his newest assailant. He used his movement spell to retreat while gilding the nearby golems that were surrounding the trio to attack both of the human rankers.

"You are on your own now."

Eren said to nobody in particular. But the one the message was meant for heard it loud and clear. The next moment, Eren disappeared from his position.

'Eren oh Eren... how can you be so petty even during the battle? Hehehe!'

Altashia laughed when she saw what had unfolded on the battlefield. She had to admit that the butcher had indeed saved the guy's life. But he had also made sure that the berserker received his not-so-subtle response to all the slanders Sid had thrown at him.

Next, she saw Eren focusing on the retreating Orc Leader. He now had a bunch of fire snakes surrounding him that followed him in his pursuit. They would engage with any golem coming his way—allowing him to continue the chase.

The battle progressed as both of Altashia's teammates gained their advantage back. Soon, Eren disappeared from his position and appeared right in front of the now-handicapped orc, like some ghost.

Swish!

An orc was decapitated the next moment while Eren was seen spinning in front of the now-cut body like a mini fire and lightning typhoon. Blood gushed forth in a fountain and reached for the sky before bathing the butcher in its shower. At least that appeared to be the case.

But the monster's blood fell to the ground without touching any part of the butcher's body. It was then made clear that the mini typhoon was an afterimage and Eren had again disappeared from his position.

'Hmm. Roo Roo, did you mean to say that Eren is as good as me as a ranker?'

It's unbelievable that he has progressed so much in the way of the elements at his age without any firm background. He is indeed admirable.

Sorry for doubting you, dear. Hehe! You are a good boy!'

Croak! Croak! Croak!

The baby crow started croaking frantically as if he had something to add to his owner's assumption. But all he received was a gentle tap on its head. So it stopped croaking and indulged in being petted by its master.

There was another human ranker Vs Ord Leader battle going on in the other corner of the battlefield. It was between earth-element ranker Lyon and a hammer-wielding monster who had a diamond-element affinity.

Lyon Muff Dyke was Team Altashia's tank. Although he had one of the most common elemental affinities, his inherent nature 'Absorb and Repel' made him special. He could create walls and use them to defend himself and his teammates just like any other earth elemental tank. But instead of hardened walls, the walls produced by Lyon were more rubber-like.

His inherent nature had allowed him to use his opponent's physical attacks on him. Any attack that was sustained by one of his walls would be converted into a stationary force inside the wall by it getting depressed at the point of impact. Then it would release a burst of dense mana pulse from the same spot the attack had landed on. This dense mana pulse was powered by the opponent's force itself.

Lyon would convert that mana pulse into a spectral punch by coating his earth elemental mana over it. This way, the opponent would be forced to fight with themselves every time they fought with the tank.

The Orc Leader that was battling with Lyon was frustrated by now. He had various blunt injuries on his body even though he had a diamond-elemental defence spell active. This was because his offence as a diamond element monster was much more prominent than his defence.

Lyon observed the situation at hand and thought that what he had done so far in playing safe was good enough. Now he needed to wrap up his battle.

For the first time since the start of the battle, Lyon summoned his weapon— a pair of runic gauntlets. The runic details shined when the tank put them on. He struck his fists at each other before launching an attack on the ground.

Lyon struck the ground with his fists with an exceptional force that seemed to be generated out of nowhere— with no momentum backing it up. And yet, the ground didn't seem to have gotten affected. The force just seemed to have seeped right into the ground without leaving any trace behind. It only generated a light mana pulse as a response and the ground beneath his feet seemed to have turned jelly. But that was it.

But the next thing the diamond-element monster saw was that his vision was changing as he was taking a flight in the air. His nervous system took some time to process the impact. But the next thing he felt was a huge force ramming just below his chin, which was the reason behind the guy's sudden flight.

'Hehehehe! It always gets them.'

Lyon thought to himself and chuckled as he watched his opponent getting thrown off about 30 feet in the air. Now he only needed to give a finishing blow to the orc.

But then, he opened his eyes wide as he saw something. He made an unsightly face as he shouted at somebody that was also seen in the air like a ghost just behind the in-flight orc.

"Damn it, Eren! No kill-stealing, you **** thief."

Chapter 425 Orc Lord Baran

"Damn it, Eren! No kill-stealing, you **** thief."

Alas, it was too late.

The night sky in Lyon's eyes lit up with purple lights as Eren used his weapon to attack once again. It was about to chop off the in-flight Orc Leader's head. But then a D-Rank mana pulse was released followed by the orc getting covered in quicksilver.

The flying slash landed on the metal-like surface of the quicksilver that protected the orc and nullified Eren's attack without showing any form of wear.

'Orc Lord is here.'

Lyon and Eren both got wary of their surroundings all of a sudden as they both thought of the same thing. They dropped the idea of killing the Orc Leader and retreated to the outskirts of the camp.

Breeeeeeee!

A mana-induced monster scream rang in the vicinity and suddenly an 8 feet Orc Lord appeared on the battlefield. He had finally decided to show himself after Team Altashia's persistent killing of his tribe members.

This Orc Lord had the same piggish facial characteristics as his lower-ranked brethren. But somehow they looked more intimidating. He had a fresh scar on his face that looked like it was struggling to mend because of the foreign mana invasion. The scar had azure spots around its edges that seemed to be spreading outward.

The Orc Lord also had a straight posture unlike the Orc Leaders and Orc Soldiers. Furthermore, he stood like a typical military ranker, keeping a watchful eye on his surroundings while keeping his guard up. His grey hair was a mess. The skin around his neck looked haggard— clearly indicating that he had aged. But his eyes shone with a distinct intelligence that couldn't be found in other orcs.

The Orc Lord looked around and saw the carnage that had been unleashed inside his tribe's camp. He looked at the dead bodies of his comrades with stern eyes before observing all the humans that were trying to run.

"You humans... Kill all!"

With a deep and growling voice, the Orc Lord spoke in human language. He spread his mana sense and covered his surroundings with it. Low-ranking human rankers tried to flee from the battlefield when they were affected by the monster's mana sense, which was full of his anger. Most of them got on their knees out of fear. And those who still managed to keep on running thought that their efforts were going to be in vain.

Sid's condition didn't improve even when he was an Ace ranker. His mental state is already disturbed by Eren. Getting caught in the monster's mana sense worsened his condition and made him shiver with fright.

The Orc Lord on the other hand didn't focus on anyone that seemed fragile to him. He focused his gaze on someone running away from him without getting affected by his mana sense at all.

"You... I'll kill first!"

Eren immediately fled after he saw the Orc Leader was being protected by a D-Rank spell. He could tell that it was no ordinary spell. It was cast by someone who had progressed considerably in their knowledge of the elements. Plus, the mana pulse that was released told him that the monster was as strong as someone in the solid stage of the D-Rank.

Eren ran in a particular direction. The direction that would allow him to meet up with Altashia. Only she could handle someone like this monster. Duelling him would only delay or expedite their inevitable, which was their death.

It wasn't long before he heard the monster's proclamation that he would kill all the humans. Monsters could speak the human language after they had progressed in their evolution, provided they interacted with humans or held them captive in the past.

Some intelligent monster tribes had set up their own societal rules and customs that were not all that different from human customs. The tribe's customs were all dependent on factors like the head of the tribe leading them, the number of intelligent entities in the tribe, and geographical factors among other things.

So it wasn't surprising for Eren when the Orc Lord spoke the human language. But what surprised and stressed him were the next words that sounded ominous to him.

The next thing Eren felt was that he was in a quagmire in that he was running ahead. However, instead of progressing further, his actions seemed to have the opposite effect. He realized that the monster had zeroed in on him.

Eren stopped running when he realized that. And then turned around and zeroed on the monster who was looking at him a few meters away from him.

"Yo!"

Eren greeted the Orc Lord with a slight bow that he didn't mean. He gripped one of his Shamshirs while taking out his smoke with the other hand. The butcher took a brief drag and released the smoke before adding more.

"What took you so long?"

The monster felt challenged by the butcher's behaviour. To make him fall on his knees, he released all his D-Rank prowess and concentrated all his mana sense on him.

Eren sensed the pressure on his psyche increasing. He felt like he was submerged in a very deep ocean current and there was no way for him to reach the surface and breathe. He felt like he was going to lose control over his limbs— the feelings of helplessness increasing by the moment.

And yet, his facial expressions didn't change. He raised his shaky hand and took another drag before speaking up.

"My man, come at me or leave me alone. What will it be?"

The monster took a while to understand what Eren was saying. He broke into his signature monster laughter when he did. He thumped his left chest hard with his right hand twice before replying:

"Name... Baran. You?"

Eren smiled back when he understood the gesture. The monsters would only tell their names to human rankers like this when they felt they deserved to know each other's names. It was akin to acknowledging each other's strengths. The monster had practically lowered himself when he stated his name to someone in Ace rank while he was an Orc Lord.

"Eren Idril!"

The monster nodded before responding with just one word.

"Die!"

Chapter 426 Demon Spell

"Die!"

Baran said before stretching his hand in front of Eren. Immediately a levitating mass of quicksilver appeared in front that looked highly viscous. It had a water-like fluidity. However, the dense mana imbued in it gave the impression that it was something heavy instead.

The quicksilver mass approached Eren at an incredible pace while changing its shape. It had now taken the shape of a huge silver arrow. The tip of the silver arrow looked extremely deadly as it reflected the moonlight it was awash with.

But soon Baran realized that Eren was much faster than he had given him credit for. The arrow struck Eren but it turned out to be an afterimage he had left behind before disappearing.

Baran's D-Rank mana sense wasn't something to be scoffed at though. He stretched it and found Eren's location before guiding the arrow-shaped quicksilver towards him.

The arrow was aimed to hit Eren but it was deflected by a wind-element blade that had appeared in front of him all of a sudden. The next thing Baran saw was a barrage of wind-element arrows coming at him from above like a downpour.

Altashia had finally decided to intervene. And yet she couldn't be seen anywhere on the battlefield.

'The sky!'

Eren and Baran both thought of the same thing. They stopped what they were doing and looked up to see a huge bird flying over them.

Craw!

A distinct croak was heard on the battlefield as Altashia joined with her demon beast Roo Roo. It had changed its size drastically and was now serving as a mount for Altashia. Even among her talented peers, Altashia was considered to be one of Edinburgh's best of her generation because of this advantage. That she had a demon beast.

Contrary to Eren, Altashia's demon beast was approved by Edinburgh to be bound with her. But as a consequence, she had to serve in the army for some years.

Baran dropped the idea of killing Eren because he felt a serious threat coming from Altashia even while she was technically a rank lower than him. He summoned his quicksilver back and used it to create a makeshift shield in front of him to protect him against the wind-element blades that didn't look normal to him.

This was also a weapon-centric attack launched by Altashia with her army-issue runic scythe. The weapon was unusually large. The blade span of the weapon was almost 2 meters and the staff of the weapon exceeded the welder's height.

Yet, Altashia seemed to have no problems handling her weapon. In fact, she could handle it masterfully as if the weapon's size was normal for her.

Eren first created a distance between himself and the battlefield now that the Orc Lord's attention was divided. He then found a secure spot for him to watch someone else use their demon beast in the battle. Maybe he could learn a thing or two from the pair.

'Hmm! This will do,'

Eren found the top of one of the tallest trees outside the battle zone and sat on one of the tallest branches before starting to smoke again. Then he saw Altashia releasing some more wind-element flying slashes at the Orc Lord who was defending against them using his quicksilver spell.

'Hm? Why is he scared of Ace Rank attacks? Even though he might have been injured due to...'

Eren stopped his sentence midway when he saw what happened in front of him. Altashia stopped releasing wind blades after a while. She then looked at Orc Lord with narrowed eyes before swinging her empty hand horizontally as if trying to play a string instrument.

She looked as if she was about to perform a solo dance to some slow music. But the effects the act generated made it anything but elegant.

The surrounding ground and trees along with Baran's quicksilver that had sustained the barrage of wind-element blades suddenly caught fire. The fire had been generated from the same slashes that were left behind by the wind-element blades.

'Holy *****. This is an ability, right? Or is she using any artefact as a handicap to enhance her output? Either way, this is huge.

How shallow were my previous life's standards that I found this to be extremely unbelievable.'

Eren thought as he took a long drag from his smoke and released it to make a mini cloud in front of him.

'Damn. I need to get my hands on Altashia.'

Then he looked at his smoke suspiciously as if it had put those words in his mouth.

'Erm... I need to get my hands on her secrets.'

Eren corrected himself and took another puff before rehashing his thoughts again.

'Maybe both.'

He nodded to himself as if to have reached a satisfactory answer to one of the most complicated questions. He watched as the slashes in the ground and other elements present in the surroundings acted as a source of fire all around the Orc Lord.

'So that's why Baran was avoiding the flying slashes. Yet it doesn't make any sense that the Orc Lord would avoid such attacks for spells of Ace Rank level. Unless...'

Eren thought to himself as he watched with keen interest.

By now, the orc Lord was surrounded by a sea of golden fire. He dispelled the quicksilver to dissolve the mana-induced flames that were mixed in it before making it appear once again in front of him.

'Just...'

"Demon spell..."

'What I...'

"Burning Abode."

"Thought...'

Eren finished his thought as Altashia's extremely low voice echoed in his ears. He then saw the flames converging around the Orc Lord and created a cabin-like shape. It trapped with Orc Lord within it before releasing a dense mana pulse. As if something had happened inside the house.

'Craw!'

Roo Roo croaked at the same time the mana pulse was released in the air. That mana pulse blasted some of the fire that was coating the flaming cabin and made it spread to the surroundings. Everyone else who had begun to fight their own battles stopped when they felt the mana pulse.

There was no doubt in everybody's mind that the mana pulse that had been released was indeed of the Ace rank. Due to its sheer density, it somehow reached the Adept level.

As the flame house dispersed into thin air, everyone, including Eren, looked for the Orc Lord within it. Or at least his charred body.

But all they found was nothingness.

Chapter 427 Aftermath P1

'She... she killed him?'

Eren asked the question to himself. He wasn't clear on that detail yet. Because various mana pulses fired off at various points on the battlefield made it impossible for anyone to keep track of everything even with their mana senses.

But with a demon spell, it was in the realm of possibility.

A demon spell was something only someone owning a demon beast would have access to. Since the demon beast and the ranker get connected on a deeper level through blood ritual, their existence as mana wielding entities becomes synchronized.

The results of taming demon beasts changed with each ranker and the demon beast itself. But there were a few things in common. Like, there was a possibility of a ranker's mana signature getting completely attuned to their demon beasts and vice versa if they shared a deeper bond. It wouldn't happen overnight. It might not happen at all. But once it did, it would allow the ranker and their beast to boost each other's spells.

It meant that both the tamer and their demon beast would be able to cast the same spell at the same time. The effects of such spells would be more than their normal summation would produce.

There were other variants of the demon spells as well. But the fact that such spells required the participation of both the tamer and their demon beast remained unchanged.

'Damn it. My Reen is so much better than this shitty crow. If there was not so much rank difference between us, every spell of both of us would have been a demon spell.'

Eren criticized Roo Roo for no reason. He also felt jealous that Altashia could team up with her familiar so openly without worrying about consequences.

The reason Altashia could cast demon spells was simple. She and her demon beast both belonged to the E-Rank. They used the same rank of mana so they could cast the spell easily.

This was not the case with Eren and Reen. She was in the C-Rank, while he stood much lower than her in terms of ranking hierarchy. Although she could technically use lower ranked mana, the synergy needed to execute demon spells wasn't there. This was not a compatibility issue but rather the issue of not practising the execution of demon spells together.

Eren didn't prioritize the casting of demon spells at all because he couldn't use such spells openly like Altashia. And since Reen was a C-Rank, they didn't need the demon spell to enhance the output of any destructive spell. Reen's solo casting of the C-Rank mana or spell was enough to deal the maximum damage the pair could dish out to their opponents.

Technically, every spell the butcher had could have been made a demon spell because of his unparalleled compatibility with Reen. If only he had enough time and freedom, the effects he could have produced with Reen would have been much higher than any demon spells in existence.

'No point thinking about the 'could have beens'. We can reflect on our lives all we want by looking backwards but it can only be lived forwards. Such is life.'

Eren thought to himself and finally jumped down from the tree. Altashia had also jumped from her demon beast at the same time after getting close to the butcher. They both landed on the ground at the same time not too far away from each other. Eren and Altashia's eyes met before the former asked the question that was bothering him.

"Did you kill him?"

Altashia smiled mirthlessly before shaking her head in denial.

"No. He escaped. That monster was too crafty. With my show of power, I forced him to run away from his tribe. Guess he calculated that fighting with me wouldn't be in his best interests."

Eren nodded when he heard Altashia's response. He had to admit that this young girl was amazingly talented. A naturally gifted genius that was rarely produced. The fact that she could cast a demon spell not only spoke volumes about the bond she shared with her beast but also her inborn talent. Handling the demon spell was not as easy as it looked. It takes fine control over one's mana and the ability to match up the outflow of mana with that of your demon beast. Otherwise, such a spell would become haywire on the battlefield long before it could hurt the enemy.

"Our job was to only take care of the orc tribe that had gotten too close to Edinburgh's borders anyway. Our job has been accomplished more or less. Although some orc managed to survive and flee, it is unlikely that they would dare to come any closer to the border."

Altashia nodded while walking closer to Eren. She patted the baby crow that had just landed on her shoulders before continuing.

"That's right. Exiled orcs are likely to be accepted into other orc tribes if they are lucky. Or would get killed by the creatures of the Badlands.

It's frustrating though. That monster would have been more useful for the army if we could have caught him alive. I played it too safe after considering his rank. I should have fought him on the battlefield."

Altashia had the Scythe Slayer ranking technique, which set her class as a mid-range warrior. It had allowed her to make full use of her two affinities: fire and wind while ensuring the weapon arts got incorporated into her moves effectively.

Altashia was blessed with the best ranking technique for her aptitude and the most effective resources that were available in the Edinburgh kingdom. Additionally, her natural talent helped propel her forward more than any of her known peers, which were equally privileged as her if not more.

Eren wanted to say that Latashia shouldn't take an Orc Lord lightly. That she had done a good job playing it safe by keeping her distance from the monster. But after rewinding her performance in his head and feeling her post-battle presence up close, he changed his mind and decided to keep quiet on the subject.

Just like in the case of Baran, he had not seen Altashia's full potential as a ranker. So it was better not to comment on that subject.

Chapter 428 Aftermath P2

As Altashia approached from his front, Eren turned his gaze behind her. He could see his comrades approaching him. Some had serious wounds and some were only slightly bruised. However, everyone was practically uninjured, considering the level of the battle.

Eren spoke up after pondering something.

"Altashia, how long has it been since you had Roo?"

Altashia was initially confused by Eren's question that was not related to their mission. He rarely discussed topics that were not mission-related. However, she was glad Eren had used her demon beast's name rather than simply calling it a beast or a crow, as had been done by others.

"Umm. Not that long. This was barely more than a year ago when I bound Roo Roo with me using the blood ritual. Just as this boy was breaking into the Ace Rank."

'Amazing. Unlike me, who relies on my past life's experiences and advantages, she is indeed a naturally gifted ranker. Ken is like her if I ignore the guy's dense brain.

I had thought that powerful rankers come from powerful backgrounds. But rankers like her make me wonder if it's their presence that makes their backgrounds seem so impressive.

Because somehow I feel that with or without her family's help, this girl would have more or less stood in the same position she is standing in today.'

Eren thought to himself and kicked the butt of his nearly finished smoke in the air after taking the last drag out of it. He didn't realize that he was staring at Altashia the whole time while he was having a monologue in his head.

That made Altashia feel a bit awkward. However, as she observed Eren's gaze, she discovered that it was devoid of lust. He was looking at her like some kind of puzzle that needed solving.

"Hahaha. Eren, do you want to battle with our captain now? I'd pay to see someone else apart from me getting their ass handed to them, you know."

Arjun spoke up as he approached the pair. He was leading all the other members of the team. The guy didn't have a scratch on his body. He didn't participate in the battle after all.

Eren smiled after hearing Arjun's jab. He also wanted to duel with Altashia. But he also knew that he was not ready to fight with her using his normal strength. He needed to cast the Domain of Wrath if he wanted to stand a chance in tilting the favours to his side. The butcher hadn't become senile to seek a pyrrhic victory only to invite troubles his way.

"Unlike you, I am not a fan of getting my ass handed to me. When I challenge our captain..."

Eren smiled at Altashia before continuing.

"... It'll be after knowing that I'd win."

Altashia wasn't surprised by Eren's confidence. She had come to realize that he should have his trump cards in his sleeves. She was surprised by the fact that he intimidated her. As if duelling with him was not going to be as easy as she had initially thought it would be.

Roo croaked and flapped its wings as if he was angry after hearing Eren's time-bomb-like challenge. The beast's master chuckled and patted its head before translating his words to Eren.

"He is kind of saying... "Come at me. I alone am enough to take care of you."

Hehe! Ignore him. He is just a child in human years after all.

And Eren..."

Altashia met Eren's eyes with a shine in her eyes that she hadn't shown anyone before. A shine that indicated the level of excitement she had long forgotten when fighting with someone from her generation.

"I'll be waiting for the day when you challenge me."

Eren nodded at Altashia when she finished her sentence. Arjun wanted to add more fuel to the fire but someone spoke up first before he could do so.

"Captain Altashia, I want this man removed from our team. He has knowingly harmed me during the mission. Everybody saw that. Arjun, you saw that, didn't you? Dianna?"

An agitated and angry voice was heard from the back of the team. Sid was slowly making his way to the front while dragging his injured feet and tending to a large wound on his shoulder.

"Look what he has done to my shoulder. As per the army guidelines..."

Sid was about to continue spewing some more hate towards Eren who again acted like he didn't care about the guy anymore. Because he knew he didn't need to put his side forward. Altashia would do that for him. Not because she liked him or anything. But because he intercepted the battle in such a way that no disciplinary action could be taken.

"Hate to interrupt you, Sidro, but I think I know army rules better than you. Eren has taken the right action at the right time. You should be grateful for being alive because of him."

Sid felt like the beating he had received from the Orcs was nothing in comparison to the blow he received from his crush's words. The fact that they came from her for the guy he hated the most made it even more frustrating for him.

"Captain Altashia, you saw him injure me by enlarging the wound on my shoulder, right? This assho.. err... I mean this freak even put his heels in my mouth..."

Altashia shook her head before replying.

"That could be interpreted as Eren securing the enemy weapon by pinning it in its place. That thing about your mouth could just be something unavoidable since Eren had to protect you by placing himself between you and the monster.

Most of all, Eren was sent to battle with the monster you were engaged with under my orders. You should have been more competent in dealing with the enemy you were assigned. The fact that you did not and are still accusing someone who did the work for you falls in line with something that violates army guidelines. Should I proceed and charge you instead?"

He chuckled at Altashia's subtle provocation, which she had delivered to Sidro without being loud or out of her natural aloofness. He looked at Sid next, who was looking at the butcher with daggers in his eyes.

"Um... what should we do now, captain?"

Arjun tried to lessen the heaviness of the atmosphere by asking the right question at the right time. Altashia shook her head as if disappointed in someone before answering the ranger's query.

"*Sigh. Just the usual. Secure the area. Destroy the corpses. Look for anything valuable in the camp. And try to find the leads that might lead to where most of the orcs have escaped.

We'll rest here at the orc camp after taking care of the corpses. The rest of the procedures will be followed in the morning."

Altashia ordered her team and everybody nodded. Each of them got to their assigned positions except for the ones who were severely injured. Eren was charged with body disposal. He walked into the distance before disappearing from his peers' line of sight. Unbeknownst to his team members, his right hand had suddenly gotten paler before his fingernails turned into talons.

'Life Drain!'

Chapter 429 Blood Seed & Shapeshifting

Life Drain!

Eren had managed to activate this ability at will after learning about it from Nina and his experience with the Domain of Wrath. He now only needed to shake his arm as if tremors ran through them while thinking about Life Drain in his mind to activate the ability.

He had come to realize that abilities would be bound to certain organs of one's choosing. Ranker's organs served as blank paper and higher consciousness as ink to etch runes that enabled one to wield abilities.

Eren had been wondering if abilities could get plundered if he has the ranker's organ that was etched with their ability. He may be able to assimilate that organ into himself through his half-blood powers.

Eren knew things wouldn't be as simple as he had made them out to be. Plus, ability wielders were a rare breed among rankers for him. So his experiments would have to wait.

Eren used his Life Drain on a lot of dead bodies. And yet, his stats only increased marginally. Generally, the Life Drain would top up his stats at their maximum and give them a temporary boost. Stats retaining some semblance of their elevated status was only a residual effect. But he didn't think that was all there was to his slow growth. He blamed the low levels of his targets and his ever-advancing ranking status. The more he progressed in his rank, the more difficult it became to increase any of his stats permanently.

Still, every small gain mattered to him. Plus, he couldn't let these freshly dead bodies be put to waste. He was assigned to destroy them. So he might as well use Life Drain on these freshly deceased bodies before he disposes of them.

Life Drain worked best when the target was alive though. Plus, he needed an orc target alive for another reason.

'Hm! This orc seems alive. Let's try it on him.'

Eren finally found a live Orc Soldier who was taking his last breaths in the furthest corner of the tribe's camp. He had tried to run despite his severe injuries. But Eren guessed he had been hit by Dianna's projectile before he could make it. She must have been playing with her lower-level targets since he didn't die immediately. It forced him to hallucinate—worsening his injuries because they were left unattended.

He first drank the potion Layla had given him to neutralize any weird mana pulse that would get generated due to his experiments. Only then did he proceed further.

'Life Drain: Devour'

Eren's hand turned into a slime form and spread all over his target. The barely alive orc tried to struggle against something he didn't even understand. But all was in vain. His body started disintegrating at a rapid pace before completely disappearing.

The butcher had also learned how to harness half-blood ability consciously. He closed his eyes and turned his slimy mass into his hand like usual.

Various memories started flowing inside Eren's head along with some knowledge about the weapon the victim used. He couldn't understand the comprehension he had received from the orc that covered the way of the elements. The butcher guessed that since he wasn't familiar with the orc race, the victim's interpretation of the elements would be quite different from the human point of view.

'Heh! It's not that I won't be able to understand them ever. I just need to get familiarized with being an orc for these things to make sense.

I'm no longer human. So why should I let my understanding of the elements be limited to that of humans' point of view?'

Eren shook his head as he thought to himself. Next, he activated his half-blood ability consciously to make it work the way he wanted it to work for him after giving it the blueprint it needed to assume the orc's shape and copy his mana signature.

Eren had tried his half-blood ability on mana beasts directly when he was out hunting alone. To his disappointment, it didn't work on non-sentient entities. It was like the blueprint he had received from them was too complicated for the current him. It gave him no reference on a subconscious level that he could use to start his shapeshifting.

But at this moment, in the case of this orc, he had obtained the reference he needed to shapeshift into an Orc. He first processed all the Orc's memories slowly including his language. After that, he focused on keeping the information he needed and removing the one that was too much for him.

Finally, he refined the essence of the orc he had absorbed and converted it into a single drop of blood. He then stored it inside his body close to his heart, isolated by a thin but firm layer of mana. This was the reference point he needed to turn into an orc. He named it Blood Seed.

From now on, he needed to create a Blood Seed from his targets if he wanted to shapeshift into them. Currently, he could only store one Blood Seed in him at a time. Any more and the Blood Seeds would create a conflict with each other, resulting in the butcher losing control over them.

The butcher opened his eyes and looked around. He mumbled a few words only after confirming that everything was alright.

'Shapeshift: Model Orc'

If Eren hadn't drunk Layla's potion before, a distinct mana signature would have been felt by Eren's squadmates that were closest to him. Changes began appearing after the wave of mana signatures passed without being released into the air.

Eren's skin started turning rough. His stature remained the same but his muscles started bulging. His torso got beefier and his thighs also enlarged to look like the robust leg of the orc monster.

The butcher's hair length also increased. His mouth was widened and his eyes bulged. He was soon endowed with lupine ears and lower canines that resembled a boar's tusks. Even his body odor changed.

Eren's skin colour also changed. But instead of turning dark green like it was supposed to, it had turned greyish green.

The butcher smiled hideously when the shapeshifting was completed. Everything about him changed into that of an orc.

He looked at his hands and his torso before nodding to himself. He was dripping sweat from his forehead when he finished his shapeshifting.

This was the closest the butcher had come to shapeshifting into his target. It had consumed a lot of his mana and used up all his concentration but it finally succeeded the way he wanted it to.

Chapter 430 Total Control

'Haah! I can't do anything about the skin colour. But it's not a complete deal-breaker. The orcs would just assume I'm from a tribe they don't recognize.'

Eren concluded before moving his hands and feet in a way he wanted to. Then he executed his movement spell to check out if he had any problems casting it. So far, he was content with the results.

Non-sentient entities didn't work for Eren because he couldn't create Blood Seed from their bodies for him to initiate shapeshifting. Entities with intelligence higher than a certain level were also difficult for him to shapeshift into. That was because the Blood Seed created from their bodies would have a lot of their consciousness mixed into it that he couldn't get rid of.

That's why Eren wanted to experiment with monsters. He had concluded that Orcs would be one of the easiest monsters he could shapeshift into because unlike the beasts, they had sentience. But it wasn't as developed as humans. His guesswork was right on the mark, and he had managed to shapeshift into the monster just right.

Nonetheless, the Blood Seed also had the orc's consciousness extracted into it, no matter how insignificant it might seem compared to humans and alike. That was a taint in his shapeshifting. That's why it manifested into Eren's skin colour deviating from his victim's appearance.

'This is as good as it gets. I can move across the Badlands without leaving any trace using this shapeshift model. I needed this to get to that place.'

Eren flashed a cunning grin and let go of his shapeshifting to return to his usual appearance. He then got back to his work and destroyed all the orc bodies before leaving the scene.

"You punk, you tried to steal a kill from me, didn't you? I'll...Hikick... I'll do the same to you someday. You'll see. Don't cry to me when that ha... ha... happens. You got it?"

Lyon spoke after getting drunk on dwarven mead. He was a dwarf after all. But he was pretty tall for a dwarf— measuring five feet and six inches, so nobody would call him a dwarf despite being one. His peers just called him a midget which would have seemed offensive to dwarves. But since even dwarves doubted that he was one of them, the guy was just bullied by his peers most of the time.

Lyon was always pissed off at his squadmates for this reason. Tonight, the butcher became the reason for his outburst. He pointed his chicken tenders at Eren accusingly while he spoke up what he had to say.

Eren's team had settled into orc camp for the night. Some soldiers ate their meals earlier and were assigned to the perimeter detail. The rest were sitting around a large campfire, which was created by lighting a shabby hut on fire.

"Sigh. When will you understand this simple truth, Lyon? The key to a happy life is forgiveness. We should all just forget about our previous grievances and support each other. There's nothing to be gained from carrying out revenge-driven acts.

Don't you agree with me, Arjun? Please make this lost soul understand."

Eren said while having Frostfoam. This was one of the brands he had stocked up on before leaving for the mission. The rest of the rankers were already impressed by Eren's almost insatiable appetite. The butcher must have emptied the meal meant for 6 Ace rankers in his stomach. Yet he was still eating the Ace rank mana beast meat Altashia had hunted for her teammates.

Arjun spat and sprayed the elven ale he was drinking in front of him when he heard Eren's response while Lyon choked on the chicken tenders he was eating. The spat eleven ale was sprayed straight into the campfire and produced a burst of flames that reached for the sky. The ranked ales were highly inflammable.

The rest of the rankers laughed before looking at Sid in the distance who had joined the perimeter detail. They knew that the guy would have lost it for sure and attacked Eren right then and there if he was here.

"You... *cough cough* you of all people shouldn't talk about forgiveness... you... sly fox. And how can you be so... so shameless... hikik... saying those things with a straight face?"

Altashia chuckled when she heard the conversation Eren had with Lyon, Arjun, and the rest. She had considered Eren to be a very serious man. But the guy just kept on surprising her by showing various facets of his ever-intriguing personality.

Soon, Arjun returned to the perimeter detail to relieve Dianna of her ranger duties. The latter came and sat with Eren. The seductress immediately started chatting and flirting with the butcher. Altashia found it uncomfortable to see something like this. Then she criticized herself for feeling uncomfortable.

Dianna was opposite Altashia. She was a direct girl who wouldn't shy away from saying what she wanted. So she was able to mix with her peers as easily.

'Roo Roo, do I need to change?'

As Altashia spoke to her demon beast in her mind, she sighed. The latter croaked at her first before looking at Eren and Dianna with hateful eyes.

'Hehehe. Don't be silly, you bloodthirsty bird. No harming Dianna, alright? She's one of my teammates.'

Altashia found comfort in the fact there was at least someone like Roo who could truly understand her and always be with her. She then got up from her seat and nodded at the teammates that looked at her before walking towards the camp's boundaries. She thought she should do guard duties, lest her demon beast starts thinking of multiple ways to make Dianna suddenly disappear from their team.

"So you are saying you got your hands on a transcendent-grade time element spell you can give me?"

Eren asked Dianna while having another slice of mana beast meat. She had come to give Eren an interesting piece of news because she knew that he was looking for good time-element spells.

She had first thought that Eren wasn't someone who could use time-element spells even though he had been shown to have an affinity for it. The guy didn't show any side effects after all.

He told Dianna that he would only use it primarily for his potion-making and rarely for battles. He also convinced her that he was using an artefact to curb the side effects and also mask his time-element spells.

"That's right. It's one of the most well-known time-element spells after Sedated Perception. Its name is...

Total Control!

While it is considered a transcendent spell, its effects are only supplementary. That means the spell would grow in rank with you. But its effectiveness highly depends upon the way you use it."

Dianna said while running her index finger across Eren's arm and chuckled a bit before replying:

But since it's a time element spell and a transcendent grade at that, I'm sure you can understand why the Remus Auction won't sell it for anything less than 20K Extols. You should even consider the price as a discount given to you because you know me.

So tell me Eren, do we have a deal? Offer closes soon, you know. Hehe!"