

## Vile 581

Chapter 581 Eren vs. Altashia P3

'Brace yourself, Ertaur. Even with the defensive lightning cloak, it's still gonna hurt.

Bear with me.'

Eren discussed his contracted beast as he charged ahead. He was approaching Altashia from her 3 O clock while his bull was charging at her from her 6 O clock.

Altashia smiled a bit as she saw Eren using a two-pronged attack to target her. She thought she should return Eren's favor with equal fervor.

A distinct mana pulse was released from Altashia once again as she cast her spell. A spell that she had seldom demonstrated to anyone outside her clan's battleground.

Caw!

Caw!

Caw!

Animated spell.

Altashia had used a stacked animated spell. Three crows, boasting the same stature as their master, appeared around her. Two of them went towards the approaching Eren while one of them headed towards the charging bull.

Another stacked animated spell went off at that moment.

Hatchlings of the flame.

Two fire snakes appeared alongside Eren as he continued to approach Altashia. She was changing her position rapidly as she sent her animated spell forward, making it difficult for Eren to pin her down even using his exceptional speed.

Hiss!

The golden-colored flying crows tried to attack the two snakes using their vice-like grips and fire breath attacks. But the snakes had fire breaths of their own. They executed their variants and launched themselves in the air.

The two snakes wrapped their bodies around the flying crows and used their mouths to cast fire breaths on them continuously. Even with aerial advantage on their side, the animated crows became defenseless in front of the fire snakes.

'Eren's animated spells are leagues apart.'

Altashia saw and felt her animated spell practically getting obliterated by Eren's hatchlings of the flame. The timing and pattern of attack used by the animated snakes against her golden crows were flawless. Those attacks almost felt like they were performed by real mana beasts who had a firm grip on their inherent spells and their body parts.

Eren's animated spells were livelier than Altashia's. She couldn't beat him relying on her animated spell alone.

Altashia smiled and felt rejuvenated. She was getting excited by Eren's battle potential. This was the man who made her heart beat faster every time she saw him. A part of her consciousness liked and preferred his dominant side. Her other part wanted to dominate him instead. Stuck between her two facets of thoughts, Altashia was becoming more engaged with Eren's affairs than she let on.

'Even though I have feelings for you, I'll fight this fight seriously. I am sure you want it this way too.

Surpass me with your caliber. That is if you have what it takes to surpass me, Eren Elijah Idril.'

Altashia smiled and gripped her weapon hard before throwing it over her head. A hive of chains sprouted from the palms of her hands, made from the fire and wind elements.

Those wind-element chains latched onto her scythe and allowed her enhanced maneuverability over her oversized weapon. Eren was ready for this. He didn't shy away from approaching Altashia even though she seemed twice as dangerous as she was a few moments ago.

Swoosh!

Altashia swung her weapon around her like a whip, effortlessly controlling its trajectory. As if the weapon was weightless. As if she had done this a thousand times without breaking a sweat.

But the effects of the attack were anything but normal. A subsonic sound was heard as a wind-element crescent moon blade was manifested and expanded rapidly along the lines of the weapon's trajectory.

It was as if the scythe's blade had enlarged itself before manifesting itself like this. This flying attack covered an area of 30 meters. It then grew some more before it started approaching its target at crazy speeds.

Eren could still perceive Altashia's attack with his senses enhanced and his body made to accelerate due to his time element. Therefore, he was able to cast the movement spell on time and jump 10s of meters high in the air. But Ertaur wasn't so lucky.

Slash!

The red lightning bull's body was sliced in two laterally even with Eren's defensive spell protecting him. He was already engaged with the golden crow that was sent his way by Altashia. So he didn't have the time to perceive the attack. He wouldn't have been able to dodge it even if he could.

The red lightning bull's mana body disintegrated quickly when it was injected with Altashia's foreign mana in such a heavy dose. Even his soul was affected by that attack. And that was a big feat considering it couldn't have been affected by normal attacks. Altashia's mastery over her element was not something to be scoffed at.

'This girl... just as I had expected. She didn't fight all out against Rodrick Renar.'

Eren gulped as he saw the crescent moon-shaped flying slash still wreaking havoc in its path as it traveled ahead. It had targeted both him and his bull at the same time by big crazy big. The timing and

position of that attack were also flawless. This mana-dense attack left patches of ground in its wake as it traveled away from Altashia. These patches were either covered in flames or marked with visible scars.

Purple Reaver!

Invi Blaze!

Eren decided to test Altashia's defense by using his weapons' inscribed spells at once. He had already seen how Altashia would deal with such attacks by observing her battle with Rodrick. But he had decided to test the waters anyway. Two flying slashes made their way toward Altashia as she was just about to adjust her stance with her weapon.

Altashia smirked before raising her hand above her head. Since Eren had launched these attacks while being at an altitude of 10 meters from the ground, his attacks were zeroing in on her diagonally downwards.

Two giant hands made of wind elements were created by her before she sent them to intercept Eren's attacks.

"These tricks won't work on me, Eren. You already know that. Come up with something better."

Altashia spoke without any agitation in her voice. As if she was speaking basic math, like 2 plus two equals four. And Eren could see why when he comprehended her response that was acoustically stretched because of his enhanced perception.

At first, Eren would shut down his auditory senses when he was using his time-element spells. But later on, he changed his style and decided to listen to his surroundings for enhanced awareness.

Usually, he would find his opponents' speeches funny whenever they addressed him while he was using his time-element spells. That's because even the meanest of words would get dragged so much for him that their voices would usually become a joke to him.

But this time, Eren didn't find anything funny when he heard Altashia's statement that was devoid of any arrogance even though it sounded the opposite. He knew she meant it when she had said that.

Eren's slashes were dispersed in thin air when they were grabbed in the palm by Altashia's simple spell. As she squeezed both her hands in real-time, the hand manifestation mimicked her movement and squashed Eren's attack until they were no more.

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The two wind-element hand manifestations were all that it took for her to nullify Eren's flying slashes. She had shown Rodrick this move, making him desperate for a win by using his transcendent-grade weapon on her. And even that wasn't enough to stop her from dominating him.

Eren canceled his time-element spells and landed at a distance from Altashia. He smiled mirthlessly at his captain before looking at his swords.

Eren shook his head and sighed before sending his weapons back into his storage space. Altashia was going to ask if he wanted to fight with bare hands. But she didn't have to after she saw the butcher drawing another weapon set."

"Back to basics!"

Eren wielded his katars once again when he saw his flying slashes wouldn't have any effect on Altashia. He had already confirmed the same when he had watched her fight with Rodrick. We were just testing that assumption.

Diceros Left and Diceros Right!

Although Eren had received these Ace Ranks variants during his Purgatory exploration, he was still fond of his Novice ranked katars even though he couldn't use them. So he gave their names to these variants as well. The names were a way to pay homage to the first set of weapons that he had used extensively when he was in the Novice rank in the second timeline.

Eren didn't directly approach Altashia. She too straightened her stance and looked at him keenly, awaiting his move with a mild smile on her face.

'I... I'll run out of mana earlier than her if this keeps up, even though it's her that is using such lavish attacks. How high is her attainment in her elements for this lass to pull such a feat off?'

Eren thought to himself for a moment before shaking his head. He then punched himself in the face while gripping the weapon by its hilt. The butcher then made cracking sounds from his neck with his knuckles before rotating his wrists. Another series of cracking of bones followed.

'This feeling... I hope we don't kill each other by getting so addicted to fighting each other.'

Eren thought and chuckled before narrowing his eyes on Altashia. He felt like he needed to give his absolute best and attack Altashia without any limiters placed on him for him to have a chance at beating her.

The next moment, he disappeared from his place.

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"She... she can use animated spells too?"

Arjun mumbled to himself as he watched Altashia manifesting three golden jackdaws in the battle. This was the first time he had seen her using an animated spell. What was even more frustrating for him was the fact that she didn't use it when he had challenged her multiple times. It meant that she didn't consider Arjun a threat enough for her to cast this spell.

But then he saw Eren's animated spells and understood why Altashia treated him more seriously than him. The hatchlings of the flames that he had seen before were nothing compared to what Eren had cast in his fight with their captain.

'He progressed so much in such a short time?'

"Don't get jealous over others' achievements and cough up the money. You lost another bet of "Who casts a previously unknown spell first?"

The dwarf Lyon's words made Arjun snap out of his line of thoughts and looked at him. He was demanding he gives his share of the money in his palm that the dwarf had raised in front of him. Arjun

sighed and took out a bunch of Extols from his storage before giving it to Lyon. he was facing too many shocks at this point. He wasn't in a mood to argue that he wasn't involved in instance-wise bets that the dwarf had come up with.

"Don't worry, Arjun. You are doing well. It's just that keeping up with a prodigy is no easy matter."

Dianna said while patting the elf's shoulder in support. The latter couldn't help but think to himself.

'But Eren seems to be doing pretty well in that department.'

Just when Arjun thought Altashia was done revealing her trump cards, he saw her execute her giant crescent-moon scythe slash. He had goosebumps all over his body when he felt the signature of that attack with his mana sense.

This time, Arjun was glad that Altashia hadn't used it on him instead of feeling demotivated. That's because he knew such an attack had a higher chance of harming him fatally. The attack's reach, speed, and intensity were so overwhelming that it nullified all the advantages he had as a ranger.

"I... I'm a frog in the well. You guys, if you ever see me wanting to challenge our captain again, then.... Beat the hell out of me. I give you my consent."

Arjun laughed heartily after he said that. The elf blood in him didn't let him suffer the mental burden of his self-realization. He had decided that instead of challenging his captain, he would challenge Eren instead from now on.

"What... What is our deputy vice-captain doing now?"

This time, it was one of the squad members that said out aloud. Arjun and the rest turned their attention away from Altashia to Eren and saw that he had removed his weapons and stored them.

They were all confused at first before it finally dawned on them.

Then Eren's squad mates saw him drawing his katars out. They remembered Eren had first taken part in mock battles using his katars. Only now did they realize that Eren was wielding his swords with mastery that he had gained in such a short time.

"That showoff... he is a prodigy himself for keeping up with our captain like that."

Lyon commented while he was busy counting the Extols he had gained. He regretted the fact that he didn't know much about Eren's progress. Had he known, he would have come up with more betting deals to make even more profit.

"Things are about to get serious. I think it's wise if we call in a healer from the army and tell them to stay on standby."

Dianna spoke with a stoic expression on her face. She was connected with the butcher through his brand. She could feel what he was feeling at the time. Arjun nodded while looking ahead before getting up from his seat.

'This bloodlust... the side of Eren that he has not shown to anyone here.'

Dianna thought to herself as she watched the butcher disappear from his position. She couldn't help but shiver when she felt the killer instinct that he had masked so well.

Weirdly enough, that made her even more attracted to Eren than she already was. Only now did she realize what the butcher meant when he had highlighted the importance of money, status, and power.

Chapter 583 Evenly Matched

"You know, I had almost forgotten that Eren was a katar user before he joined the army. The guy's weapon mastery over swords has increased to an unbelievable level if we take that into account."

Lyon said while ordering snacks for his seat from the spectral menu. Dianna smiled before replying unknowingly.

"Thank you!"

Both Lyon and Dianna had blank faces when the latter replied in such a way. The ranger coughed and continued.

"I mean, yes. His expertise in weapons is indeed exceptional. But we have yet to see how much he has progressed in his understanding of his elements."

Lyon looked at Dianna for a while and observed her expressions with his narrowed eyes. Then he sighed and resumed watching the fight.

Arjun soon returned with an Ace-ranked healer in tow. She was in her army uniform, unlike Eren's team members who had all come there in casuals. Arjun grabbed his seat again and watched as Eren tried approaching Altashia yet another time.

The butcher dared to venture within striking distance of Altashia because of his enhanced perception. And the effects of his time-element spell combo were apparent. No matter how much Altashia tried to attack him, she would be a moment too late and end up dispersing his afterimage.

Altashia was seen surrounded by a bunch of Eren's afterimages that were all seemingly attacking her at once. This was the effect of Alephee extending her hand and enabling him to quadruple-stack his time-element spell combo.

From her 4 o'clock position, Eren approached Altashia only to find an impregnable wall created by the handling of her weapon. She was seen as a virtuoso when it came to handling the oversized scythe. The Scythe Queen title that the audience of Arangar Arena had granted her was not for the show.

The butcher on the other hand struggled a bit in the beginning due to his changing of weapons. But then he found his rhythm with Dicerros' set and used them to perfection.

He too handled his weapons like an artist, colliding his punching daggers with Altashia's Chine just at the right angle to deflect her attacks. He would then immediately try to follow his parries with offensive strikes of his own. But Altashia seemed ready for those too.

By this time, she had closed all her senses and focused only on her mana sense to cope with Eren's speed. It seemed that she was having a hard time keeping up with his speed. That's because a few of Eren's attacks would breach her defenses and land on her body.

Altashia's natural mana defense would kick in. Even so, it couldn't completely counteract the butcher's merciless attacks. She soon had multiple slash wounds all over her body that oozed blood. Her petite-looking skin was now subjected to this brutal form of abuse.

Eren wasn't completely unscathed either. Altashia relied on her superior weapon mastery that she had honed from a very young age to deal damage to Eren. The butcher had fewer slash wounds on his body than Altashia. But the wounds he did have appeared to be serious.

The butcher didn't care. He just strengthened his mana defense further and carried on with his attack. He knew full well that retreating now would mean giving Altashia a breather. Something he didn't want as of yet.

Arjun and the crew watched with stressed expressions as their captain and deputy vice-captain slashed at each other without slowing down. They would also be seen using their respective spells to throw each other out of their game.

Eren had to admit that Altashia was leagues apart from him with just her being able to keep up with him despite them both having the same ranking status. Although Altashia seemed to have a higher BTP value than him, the butcher didn't think the difference would be so big for her to pull off such a feat against him. Especially when Alephee tried to help him despite him telling them he wanted her to remain as a spectator.

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'This girl... she was only toying with Rodrick Renar.'

The butcher concluded in his head as he fought Altashia's wind-fire flying slash at close range with his own weapon inscribed spells. He kept on comparing her performance with the one that she had shown against Rodrick and found it to be greatly different.

Eren had expected that Altashia hadn't gone all out fighting against the royal. But he did not know that she could be this terrifying.

It had been a while since the duel had started.

And yet, all the butcher could do was draw a stalemate between him and Altashia at close range. And for that he was unsatisfied. If Rodrick was here in Eren's place, he would have celebrated his feat and considered it a part of his victory.

Eren and Altashia had both expended a significant portion of their mana. They both knew the stalemate wasn't meant to help anyone and would leave a bitter taste in both their mouths should they continue doing what they were doing.

"Let's... let's get serious now, shall we?"

Altashia huffed and spoke out. She was short of breath and her body was dripping with sweat and blood. She shook her head and stood still the next moment before channeling her fire-element mana throughout her body. She cleared all the grime, sweat, and blood with that move and looked at Eren with a smirk on her face.

Altashia felt like this was the first time in a long while she had enjoyed a duel to this level. With her grandpa Altair, she had a very difficult time. But she didn't consider herself to be at his level in the first place. So she didn't feel anything even when she was beaten countless times by him.

But with Eren it was different. He had proved with his performance now that he could take her on without her worrying about the consequences that may or may not follow. The freedom to act as she wanted. This was the first time since her fights with grandpa Altair that she could enjoy such freedom.

Eren laughed and understood what she meant. He nodded at her before responding.

"Are you sure, Al? I'll still have a bit of an advantage if we cast that."

Altashia smirked before responding.

"Who says that? Let's test the spell out. You'd soon find out who has the advantage."

Altashia said as if she knew what she was talking about. Eren smiled mirthlessly before realizing that she already knew what she was getting before Rodrick came up with his offer. Her connections weren't to be scoffed at.

Eren and Altashia were talking about the transcendent-grade spell that Rodrick had given them. While Altashia had received the spell by defeating him, Eren had to make the guy high and metaphorically fly in the sky before hoodwinking that spell from him.

Altashia and Eren both nodded at each other before executing the same transcendent-grade spell.

"Demon Beast Transformation!"

Chapter 584 Demon Beast Transformation

Beast Transformation spells elevated the ranker's body stats as well as heightened their mana storage for the time till their transformation was active. It also provided them with a few beastly features that could be visible or invisible.

Layla had predicted that Rodrick's demon beast was somewhere in the Aranger city because of how his other transcendent-grade spell worked. And she was right. But only partially.

Rodrick had used the Beast Transformation spell to keep Aqua close to him when he had entered the city. This was another benefit of having a Beast Transformation spell that the demon beast tamers had high use of.

The Beast Transformation spell required one to have a spatial runic tattoo first. This would enable them to create an isolated space near their heart through the use of spatial magic. Only demon beast tamers who had a compatible mana signature with their beast could do something like this.

This was the first step of the spell. The spatial space near the ranker's heart needs to be inhabited by their respective demon beast for the spell to work. This was the second step.

The third step of the spell was to establish a connection between the ranker and their demon beast for the transformation to take place. The demon beast could not be summoned when the Beast Transformation was active. The beast would also feel weakened because it shares its body stats with its



tamer. And it would require time for the beast to get out of the weakened state even after the spell is ended. These were the disadvantages of the Beast Transformation spell.

But the advantages of such spells far outweigh the disadvantages. The primary advantage was that demon beast tamers could take their beasts inside any city and keep them with them.

The kingdom-sanctioned demon beast tamers only needed to declare that they were the official user of such a spell and that they were carrying their demon beasts with them to enter the city. Of course, they would be prohibited from using the Beast Transformation spell or making their beast come out in the open unless they were defending themselves. This was the security protocol in most cities.

This was why Rodrick didn't use the Demon Beast Transformation even though he had it. That and the fact that using the demon beast spell while Altashia didn't have her own might have put an obvious blemish on his victory. Even worse, his loss would have been far more scorn-worthy if he had lost to Altashia even with the transcendent-grade spell of such a kind working for him.

The Demon Beast Transformation would allow the ranker to borrow more powers from their demon beasts as they ranked up. The transformation would also become more and more beast-like.

The power output of Demon Beast Transformation would keep on growing with the ranker and their demon beast as they progressed in their respective ranking journeys. When a ranker reaches a certain level, they can borrow the attainment of their demon beasts to reinvent their spells. This would give them a completely different effect or output level to their spells.

The Demon Beast Transformation spell was also heavily controlled by the establishments including the kingdom of Edinburgh. Normally, it is only granted to demon beast tamers who have sided with their respective establishments or entered into an extended contract with them.

The spell's effects and output were also dependent on the connection they shared with their demon beast. Rankers with exceptional chemistry with their demon beasts would benefit more from the spell's body stat boost and mana storage expansion. That's because, with an increased connection like this, the mana compatibility between the ranker and the beast would increase, enabling them to gain an enhanced boost.

The ranker could tweak the Demon Beast Transformation when they became proficient enough in it. It meant that they could choose to manifest only a certain part of their demon beast while avoiding the other. They could also tweak the spell in such a way that they drew more boost from their demon beasts at the cost of weakening their demon beast severely.

The spell's potential was tremendous. The only limit came from the rankers and their demon beasts. The more capable and proficient the ranker was in using the spell or the more powerful a demon beast was which was tamed, the more fearsome the spell's output would be.

That's why Altashia was ready to fight with Rodrick Renar in the Arangar stadium. She knew exactly what she was getting when she made a deal with him. Rodrick also understood the importance of such a spell. He had used it as a bargaining chip to gain Altashia's favor as well as her family's by default.

Eren got this spell by chance. He didn't even know what he was getting until it arrived in encrypted array-inscribed storage space. Rodrick had to contact Eren via his ID communication and give him the voice key to make the scroll appear in front of him from the stored array-inscribed artifact.

The array disk made for the runic inscription came with the spell's scroll. It would just need blood samples from the ranker and their demon beast to create a runic imprint that could be used by the ranker as the tattoo. This way, each tattoo would be different from the other because of the different mana signatures involved.

The security provided for the spell spoke volumes about how much the kingdom prioritized control over its usage. In the wrong hands, the unfair advantage provided by the Demon Beast Transformation spell would create a lot of security risks.

The butcher had come prepared for challenging Altashia knowing full well she too would start using the spell as soon as she got her hands on it. Argo was with him at the time of him challenging the warrior class girl. It seemed that she too had the same idea of testing the spell's effects. Especially since it was Eren who also had access to the same spell.

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"Demon Beast Transformation!"

A unique mana pulse was released in the battle ring when both the participants of the match drew a temporary truce to execute their respective spells. The spell was exclusive to demon beast tamers. And it needed some time to get executed the right way.

Eren's eyes turned beastly as he activated the Demon Beast Transformation spell. He now boasted vertical pupils that allowed for an enhanced vision that was unlike his normal one. He could now see the hair follicle on Altashia's body in a magnified manner if he chose to focus on it. This was the case even when she was standing at a quiet distance away from him.

Next to change were Eren's hands. His fingers changed their forms and made his hand look like Argo's vice-like claw. His body's muscle mass was also strengthened by the mana and beastly connection he shared with his demon beast, making him grow in stature and build. Plus, he now sported lion-like canines that peeked through his lips.

Since Argo had features of both the eagle and the lion, Eren too contained visible features of both. He felt like he wasn't using the spell optimally. But he knew he needed to get more proficient in using the spell for him to truly tap into the spell's potential.

Chapter 585 The Difference in Spell Proficiency

Eren felt like he was in his previous timeline, being a berserker and drinking a berserker potion. Yet, he could feel that the boost he had received from the Demon Beast Transformation spell was a tad bit higher than what the Berserker potion allowed.

And this was when he and Argo were just in the Ace rank. When he had only just started using the spell. He couldn't even imagine how fearsome the boost would get as both he and Argo kept ranking up and got compatible with using the spell.

Eren focused on Altashia and observed that she had more control over the spell because of the tamed mana signature that she was giving off. Her stature had also increased a bit. And her pupils had turned vertical as well.

But apart from these not-so-apparent changes, there were no visible beastly features that could be seen on her body. It seemed that she only strengthened her internal organs and boosted her body stats with the spell's somewhat controlled effects.

But maybe Eren had judged too soon. Because by the time Altashia was done stabilizing her Demon Beast Transformation spell, she sported two large black wings that made her look like an ethereal existence.

Altashia had full control over wings it seemed. Unlike the butcher, who was busy with other projects and potioning, she spent time mastering the spell.

Flap! Flap! Flap!

Altashia flapped her black-feathered wings and took flight. She spun her oversized scythe and looked in Eren's direction while flashing a haughty smirk. The ability to take stable flight had changed the whole game and tilted the chips in Altashia's favor.

The Demon Beast Transformation spell couldn't be maintained for a long time. And the addition of organs that weren't present by default cut short the spell's active time even more. But Altashia was fine with all that. The reason for that was seen on Eren's face when he saw her take flight.

'Damn... I... really want to kiss this woman right now.'

Eren gulped empty air as he watched Altashia staring at him. He was intimidated. That's because he knew that the warrior ranker had become many times more dangerous than she was because of the mere inclusion of two wings.

It also made her more attractive in his eyes than she already was. It was as if she were a fallen angel with black wings as often depicted in fantasy stories from Layla's books.

Furthermore, Al's usage of the transcendent-grade spell also highlighted the difference between the pseudo-prodigy-him and the natural-prodigy-her. It was like the spell was meant for her use. As if Altashia was used to tweaking spells on the fly.

Only now did Eren understand that having an epic tier demon-beast wasn't everything. One's mastery over the spell as well as the connection they shared with their demon beast was also an additional factor to consider. The difference in spell proficiency in using the same spell was as clear as day and night for him.

'If only I had my Reen right now.'

Eren clenched his hand and mumbled to himself. Then he thought that he was placing Argo in a bad light for his incompetence. He immediately corrected his faulty logic.

'All good things take time. I'll get Reen back eventually. Argo will only get better with time. And I'll master this spell eventually.'

Right now, I need to play with the cards I have been dealt with.'

The butcher sighed and looked up. Altashia was waiting for him to give her the sign. Even though she knew her flight capabilities had a timer attached to them, she wanted Eren to sort out his thoughts first.

Altashia was a kind girl, in her own warrior-like way. Her kindness was different from the kindness born out of pity or sympathy. Her kindness was based on her opponent's capabilities and her relationship with them. She won't pull any punches in the battle for kindness. But she'd offer her opponents a chance to present all they could.

What Eren had considered being Altashia's fatal flaw stemmed from her grandpa Altair's way of training her. He would allow her to showcase all her progress before making a move. So this habit was subconsciously adopted by her as well.

"What did you say about having an advantage, Eren?"

Altashia tried to taunt Eren while placing her palm on her right cheek. She acted cutely. But the butcher could only smile mirthlessly at her antics before responding playfully.

"No need to wait. Come and get some, Al"

Eren beckoned at Al using his right hand's index finger. He then played with his punching daggers artistically as if he was a juggler of his weapons. In a way, he was preparing for all the danger that was going to come his way. His restless hands and restless hearts found comfort in those activities.

Altashia didn't need to be told twice. She flapped her wings and appeared just a few meters away from Eren in the air before swinging her scythe in his direction. Before one knew it, multiple flying slashes were heading Eren's way from different directions.

Sedated Perception

Stunning Speed

Blitz Steps

When Eren used his go-to spell combo and tried to move, he was overwhelmed by the feedback he received. His enhanced body stats had made it possible for him to go even faster than his personal best. Moreover, he strengthened his movement spell so that he could move the way he chose in a world that seemed almost stagnant to him. As a result, almost all of Altashia's flying slashes missed their target even when she had an altitude advantage.

Almost!

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A storm of fire and wind-element mana raged inside the battle ring. It was also washed in red and purple lightning flashes from time to time.

"This Demon Beast Transformation spell is so epic. I can't believe those two are in the Ace rank after watching and witnessing the battle.

That's it. I want that spell as well. I'll slave in the army for as long as it takes for me to get my hands on it."

Arjun flared his nose in anger as he watched Eren and Altashia fight to their hearts' content without worrying about each other's injuries. He was angry at nobody. He just felt like he deserved to have this spell more than any other.

"It is because you say some stuff like this that is the reason why I always doubt you of moonshining my dwarven ale and replacing it with cheap knockoffs.

You'd need a demon beast first before you can try to cast the spell. Set your priorities right before you jump the gun."

Lyon said while snorting at Arjun. Attempting to make a comeback, the latter raised his finger and pointed at him. But in the end, he got nothing. So he put his arm down and sighed. He had gotten a bit too excited seeing the two Ace rankers fight with capabilities beyond their rank.

'I'd also get a demon beast. Maybe I can ask the army to enroll me into THAT program.'

Arjun thought to himself and clenched his fist. He started to have plans of his own as he watched Eren and Altashia fight.

#### Chapter 586 Alephee's Intervention

"Aaaaargh. It fucking burns!"

Eren whined in pain and agony as he tried to extinguish the burning slash that was inflicted on his torso from his right shoulder to the left side of his hip. He channeled his mana and sent his mana circuits into hyperdrive to get rid of Altashia's foreign mana that was trying to get into his system.

He canceled his time-element spells and focused only on his movement spell to ensure foreign mana was expelled as quickly as possible. He also retreated from his initial position to create a distance between him and Altashia.

Alas, Altashia refused to give him any more breathing room. By putting pressure on Eren, she tried to maintain her advantage over him. She executed her animated spells once again, knowing full well that the butcher would be too busy to stack or execute additional spells.

Sedated Perception!

Alephee used Sedated Perception once again to aid Eren. The latter was a bit confused and irked by Alephee's meddlesome attitude so he had to ask.

'Alephee, I had told you I'd handle my battle with Altashia. Yes, I'm struggling now. But you and I both know that this is not a surprise to me.

I'm guessing you have a reason behind not listening to my wishes. It'd be better if we were on the same page while I fought with this girl. Tell me, what's bothering you.'

As Eren ducked attacks initiated by two golden jackdaws who were also on his tail, he said. Their caster was following them from behind while trying to restrict his path by sending flying slashes toward him.

Alephee was quiet for a bit. She waited for Eren to get to a comfortable position by creating a distance between him and the incoming attacks before replying.

'Eren, I neither mean to judge nor have any ill intentions. It's just that these personal affairs need to be dealt with as soon as possible. Your ranking progress is lagging what I want you to achieve. It is a lot faster than your last timeline. And even in the present, it can be regarded as better than average.'

Alephee said and sighed. The butcher could tell that Alephee was deliberately vague. Quite frankly, he had too many questions to ask her. But he also knew that she wouldn't reveal anything that was beyond his level. So he had bided his time.

But the thing she had just said irked him even more than he already was. Thanks to the breathing room offered by Sedated Perception, the butcher managed to create a comfortable distance from all his attacks before asking her.

'Well... you say you don't mean to judge but you are judging anyway. You know I detest euphemism when it's not done by me for my own benefits. I don't want to have any confusion between us seeing that you are so close to me.'

Tell me what's bothering you. Is my progress not good enough? And why is it bothering you?'

This was the first time Eren had asked Alephee a question that sought answers from her that she wasn't sure she should share. This was the reason why she had only played as a spectator for quite a long time. But her involvement in his business broke that silent agreement between them. So now she had to answer.

'It's not about the speed of your progress, Eren. Not really. It's about who you are comparing yourself to. The pool of rankers your judgment is based on is what I want to address.'

The rankers you are comparing yourself to are like fish in a pond. They don't know that there's a wider world out there. I know I'm not being fair by seeing your progress through a standard that you haven't seen yourself. But let's say that you haven't straightened up your priorities.'

Eren had another stress line on his forehead as he listened to Alephee. She would choose the weirdest of times to have a deep conversation with him. He knew these conversations would leave him with more questions than answers.

He was especially uninterested in engaging with Alephee now when he had his hands full dealing with Altashia. But he had also understood that Alephee had no ill intentions in raising concerns. So he decided to clear the air between them as he dodged and counter-attacked Alephee's attacks.

'Is it related to Sage Eliza and the Lazarus Project? Because...'

Alephee cut him short and replied.

'No. That's not it. I know you are using your time wisely, and I approve of all the steps you've taken so far. But your personal growth is what I'm most concerned about.'

Do you only want to win over Sage Eliza? Is that your ultimate goal? Don't forget even she was bested by her opponents even when she was a Sage, a half-blood, and a prodigy all in one.

I know your goals stretch far beyond a Sage rank. Despite this, I do not see a true desire on your part that can make you stand out among your competition. I know it's not your fault. Maybe it's me who has kept things to myself as I didn't want to burden your mind further. But I guess it's time we changed that about ourselves.

It's time I push you toward an even higher sky. It's time I started taking things in my hand to better guide you whenever I feel that you are slowed down due to your circumstances or your own faults.'

Alephee spoke seriously. It's been a while since Eren had heard her speak so earnestly. He didn't mind Alephee's guidance. It was even better for him if she got more involved in his progress. So he asked her while keeping an eye on his opponents. One more golden jackdaw had been added to that list by now.

'All right. I assume you find something wrong with my approach to fighting with Altashia. Tell me what it is.'

The butcher didn't beat around the bush. He had come to realize that Alephee was trying to expedite his progress by skipping his natural learning curve. He liked shortcuts too if they would help him become a better ranker. So he asked without any hesitation.

Alephee was glad that Eren was on board with her thought process just like that even though the timing at which she had decided to do it wasn't optimal. She had also come to recognize that the butcher had meant it when he had said to his teammates from LA that the pursuit of power does not require a reason.

The butcher was not adamant about finding comfort in his current circumstances. Neither was he content with his current progress even though he felt proud of himself for whatever progress he did achieve.

Eren knew that there were rankers more talented than him who were also blessed with ample ranking resources he couldn't even imagine them having. Altashia was just one of those fearsome rankers.

So he always sought to have better goals than before. As Eren strived to live a better and more fulfilling life than his previous timeline, he was continuously reinventing himself and his mindset.

She also replied promptly by asking him another question.

'Eren, how much do you know about the path Altashia is on? The warrior class as they say it.'

Chapter 587 Warrior Class

'Eren, how much do you know about the path Altashia is on? The warrior class as they say it.'

Alephee said and made Eren ponder a bit. He sighed and replied honestly.

'Honestly? Nothing much. I hear that it is a class that allows for enhanced weapon mastery as well as better spell executions. But I don't know how one achieves that.

Plus, there are not many warrior-class rankers that I came across even in my previous timeline. So knowing about them or their path didn't seem pertinent to me.'

Eren said and sighed. He had ignored his academic studies when he enlisted in the army. He had tried to change that and learn about the warrior path when he set his goal to defeat Altashia.

But he'd have had to pay for any information that was worth his time. The butcher now had plenty of Extols. But he knew they would get used to his newly formed guild. So he needed to be frugal about his expenses.

Alphee had first thought of having Eren have his natural learning curve. But since she had decided to help him accelerate his growth, she needed to be upfront about a few things. All so that Eren's progress doesn't get hindered by roadblocks that were taking more time than necessary to get cleared.

'All right. Eren, the reason you won't see many warrior-class rankers around you is because of the class's peculiarity. Rankers in the warrior class have full control over their mana circuits and mana points. You know what that means?'

Alephee asked Eren while he avoided another series of slashes sent at him. Since he was having a hard time, Alephee decided to stack Sedated Perception once again. It made it easy for the butcher to get out of his new danger zone.

'Complete control over one's mana circuits and mana points you say? I'd guess a ranker would have better control over their spells and they'd be able to tweak the spell's output and effects easily.'

Eren said after pondering a bit in the nearly stagnant world. By now, he had gotten intrigued by the things Alephee was trying to say to him. So he didn't mind anymore that he was stretching his battle with Altashia.

'That's right. But there's more to it than that. Having complete control over one's mana circuits and mana points is a dual-edge weapon.

If you don't know what you are doing, your opponents won't have to do anything to beat you. You'd be toast every time you try to fight your battle.'

Alephee said and allowed the butcher some time to process what she had said. Only then did she continue.

'What you call warrior-class ranker would have the control they need to effectively turn a certain segment of their mana circuits off and overload a certain region of circuits.

This allows the warrior ranker to amplify a certain attack or spell after shutting a certain portion of their circuits. This act alters the flow of mana within their system, unlike the normal pattern set by the spell.

It's like a controlled berserk state that can be entered without having to rely on the berserker potion. Or like the barbarian's rage mode without having to feel heightened emotions.

This is also the reason why Altashia has so few spells in her arsenal. But the few spells that she has, she has mastered them all, allowing her to unlock 100 percent of their potential. Maybe more when she gets serious.'

Eren opened his eyes wide in surprise when Alephee dug deeper into the warrior class for him. By now he had sweat on his forehead because of the multiple activities he was doing right now. But one had to wonder if the sweat was because of him getting stressed after learning about Altashia's class.



'That... that is a broken class then. If there are no potions or heightened emotions involved, the boost won't produce the adverse effects that are associated with them. The enhanced stats would be treated as the natural state of the body for the time being.

Wouldn't that make Altashia too overpowered? Damn it. I should have thrown her a challenge after polishing my way of the elements some more.'

Eren tightened his grip on his katars and spoke to Alephee. He had now planned to take a stand and face Altashia head-on. So he was preparing to launch a close-range attack by getting into the striking zone.

Alephee chose an appropriate time to reply when she saw Eren safe from another series of attacks. Altashia was getting pissed because of the butcher's passive way of handling things. She had been on the offensive for quite some time now.

She didn't expect Eren to remain on the backfoot for such a long time. So she too decided to let him come into her range before attacking him with another serious strike. One could say their thought processes were in sync with each other when it came to battling.

'Broken you say. Warrior class does have its advantages. But that is only possible if the ranker has fine control over their class-specific skill.

Maybe you can't figure it out because you don't really understand what it means to have complete control over one's mana circuits. So listen well.

A spell's way of execution changes when a warrior class decides to amplify their spells or normal attacks by altering their mana circuits and mana points. That would mean the change needs to be as per the portion of mana circuits and mana points that the ranker decides to switch off or overload.'

Eren's gaze turned serious when he understood the repercussions behind having such fine control over one's mana circuits. It meant that the ranker needed to alter the spell execution every time and deviate from the original spell model as per their needs.

This was akin to trying out a different spell every time that looked and felt the same. But its execution would be different every time the warrior-class ranker decided to enhance the spell's effects through unusual means.

Alephee chuckled after sensing Eren's thoughts and added on.

'It seems you now understand how much of a prodigy Altashia is compared to you. That's right. No average ranker could take up a warrior class. This is a class meant for the elites.

Even being a prodigy won't cut it. It would only get you to the start line. One needs to suffer through hell and risk frying their mana circuits and mana points multiple times over and over again to learn about the warrior class and its nuances.

To gain control over their mana circuits, the ranker must continue to self-harm. I bet the girl's early years must have been very difficult if she is this proficient in her class.'

Alephee commented and let Eren process the information she had given him. The latter just kept on reevaluating Altashia as he listened to his companion. He couldn't help chuckling mirthlessly before responding.

'Are you trying to say that I'm not even an average Joe in front of rankers like Altashia? Because if you are, I'm inclined to agree with you.'

The butcher said and chuckled. One could have detected a hint of gloom in his tone had he said that out loud.

'No, silly. I'm trying to make you understand the obvious advantages and disadvantages of the warrior class.

For example, Alephee could keep up with you even while you had time-element spells to enhance your perception, reaction time, and spell executions.

Do you know why that is? Take the warrior class's specifics into account and think again.'

Chapter 588 Wind Blade Tornado

'Take the warrior class's specifics into account and think again.'

Eren heard Alephee's suggestion and pondered for a bit while thinking about the close-combat spar he had with his opponent. He had found it pretty unbelievable that a ranker of his same ranking status as him would keep up with him even while his time-element spells were in full swing. Especially when Alephee was pitching in as well.

He then opened his eyes wide, as if he had acknowledged something.

'Altashia... she... she had closed her eyes at that time. I guess her auditory senses were also cut off when she was sparring with me. Did she do that by controlling her mana circuits?'

Alephee replied immediately.

'That's right. That act wasn't random or common even when it looked just that. Altashia had heightened her perception by overloading the mana circuits in her brain and boosting her intelligence stat value temporarily.

The power to temporarily boost stats whenever and however the ranker wants without any trigger requirements or side-effects from them. Therein lies a warrior-class ranker's true potential. But it also highlights the measure of weakness a warrior has to face because of the way they achieve that power.'

Eren's eyes seemed to have brightened when he finally understood Alephee's words. Those extravagant weapon movements that Eren saw Altashia do were also achieved by following the same principle.

Altashia would just control her mana circuits and boost or adjust the physical prowess needed to handle the weapon. As part of her weapon handling, she would use her non-boosted state, allowing her to seamlessly switch from physical boost to agility when needed. That's how her weapon handling looked artistic and effortless.

'That means Altashia compromises on other functions whenever she is amplifying her spells or attacks. While improving her intelligence stat, she compromised on her other senses.

She compromises on her agility when she performs those single-move weapons attacks. And she compromises on her mana expenditure rate when she is physically boosting herself.

That means...'

Alephee chuckled and completed his sentence for him.

'Whenever she performs something that seems extravagant and logic-defying, her safety is compromised because of her state. The most effective time to attack Altashia is right after she performs one of those big moves. That is the time she is most vulnerable.'

Eren stopped running around and stood in his place when his hunch was confirmed by Alephee. Only now did he truly understand the intricacies behind Altashia's attacks. He had to admit that the warrior class was meant for a ranker like her.

Or more specifically, her talent and her diligent work had both come together in harmony to make her the finest version of herself. One fearsome ranker dominated the battlefield with her presence alone.

Even her seeming weakness didn't come across as a real weakness to Eren. It was just simple logic taken to the extreme. The real problem was staying near Altashia after she performed those big moves and living to tell about it.

'I won't know if I don't try to find out.'

Eren smiled mirthlessly before preparing himself for the incoming attacks.

Blitz Shield

A cloak of purple lightning was formed over Eren's body.

Blitz Storm

Tongues of red lightning started jutting out from the surface of the lightning cloak. Eren had only cast the AoE spell. He hadn't released it yet. He was waiting for the right moment to do so.

'This is it. Here goes nothing.'

Just when Altashia and her animated jackdaws got within a few meters from Eren, he let loose his AoE and approached his opponent using his movement spell— Blitz Steps.

A cloud of red lightning bloomed in the middle of the battle ring. The animated jackdaws' bodies were pierced by foreign lightning mana that only sought to destroy everything in its path. The birds wailed in pain before some portion of their bodies started disintegrating.

Eren didn't bother casting animated spells of his own even when he knew he held an advantage over Altashia when it came to their showdown. That's because he was counting on his next attack.

Red Blitz Bolt!

The butcher started his assault from the front and sent his red lightning attack in Altashia's way. Then he disappeared from his position and jumped using his movement spell. He jumped till he was at the same altitude as her.

Altashia was shocked by the sudden explosiveness Eren had shown her. But she wasn't worried. She flapped her black wings and started zeroing in Eren's direction with her weapon spinning around her.

Red Blitz Bolt!

Eren charged his daggers with his red lightning mana before throwing them high in the sky. It was only meant to be used as a diversion so that Altashia's concentration would be split in his weapon's direction as well.

He then raised his arms and slashed them as if they were swords themselves in Altashia's direction. He had executed a spell he hadn't shown to anyone in the army yet.

Wind Blade Tornado!

This was the wind-element spell Eren had practiced and perfected a few weeks back when Agatha was with him. He had been sitting on this spell for a while until he was confident enough in using it.

The butcher also stacked his spell but didn't initiate the attack with the second attack. He had kept the stacked Wind Blade Tornado dormant to be used later.

Swish! Swish! Swish!

As a result, a large number of wind blades were created in the air all at once before soaring towards their target. Altashia soon found out that she was going to be consumed by a mini-tornado made of wind blades spinning rapidly around her.

Altashia was taken aback by this mid-range attack performed by Eren. And the spell's output made it abundantly clear that Eren's affinity with the element was not low. Plus, he had chosen to attack her when she was relatively close to him in the air. That cut down on her maneuverability to completely dodge the attack.

Eren had forced Altashia to give him another of those overwhelming flying slash attacks at the cost of more mana expenditure. It was like he was baiting her to bring out her top performance.

Altashia was Altashia. She wouldn't try to bide her time by playing safe. Especially now, when she knew she could finally go all out against someone of her generation. She began to enjoy every moment of her fight with Eren once again.

Chapter 589 [Bonus] Demon Spell: Burning Abode

Altashia was soon going to get consumed by Eren's sudden wind-element attack. She had already checked those incoming wind blades with her mana sense.

Furthermore, she felt that she needed to be wary of Eren's weapon set that he threw earlier. She had seen him fight. He'd always shock his opponents with his complex moves, by making them take the decisions he wanted them to take. So she didn't try to escape from his incoming attacks in a hurry. And in doing so, she fell for the same trap she wanted to avoid.

Eren's wind-element blades weren't individually that strong. They won't be able to break her defensive spell if they attack individually. But with their quantity, they could attack the same area multiple times faster than her mana defense layer could keep up.

Plus, due to her class requirement, most of her attention had gone to controlling her mana circuits and mana points. So she couldn't strengthen her mana defense manually.

Altashia was forced to show her hand.

The warrior-ranker stabilized her flight in the air using her wings and gripped her weapon hard. Wind and fire element chains started sprouting from the surface of her arms, latching onto her scythe.

Swish!

Time seemed to have slowed down for the spectators as they watched Altashia perform the same move she had used on Rodrick Renar and his demon beast Aqua. The mana pulse of that attack was so intense that it didn't feel like an attack initiated by an Ace ranker. No, even among the Adept rankers, that attack would still have garnered attention from its spectators.

A circular flying slash that expanded in all directions disrupted the surrounding mana and hindered the incoming blades. The wind blades crashed onto the large solidified wind and fire element flying slash and dispersed immediately after touching it.

Altashia's flying slash was also crumbled down before breaking into multiple mini slashes that fell on the ground beneath her like rainfall. The ground immediately caught fire without burning anything solely due to Altashia's remaining mana sustaining the flames.

All of Altashia's other attacks had also caused the fire to break out in the nearby vicinity. This was when the ground did not have anything to burn. One could imagine the havoc she might raise if she fights near an area infested with flammable objects.

Eren saw Altashia's attack approaching him in his near-stagnant world and had stress lines over his forehead. This was his test. He had forced Altashia to show her hand. But if he couldn't pull off what he had planned to do, the very act was almost certain to backfire on him.

Wind Blade Tornado!

Total Control!

Eren released the second stack of the same spell that he had kept dormant at the same time. He also accelerated its effects with Total Control so that it would keep up with his enhanced perception.

Just like Wind Blades Tornado, Eren had also kept the Total Control Spell hidden from his mates. This was so that he could use them against Altashia at the right time. With this, almost all of Eren's trump cards that he could count on had been used.

Altashia saw Eren get surrounded by his wind-element spell within a fraction of a moment before disappearing from his space. He had changed his position by going even higher than his previous altitude with the power of Wind Blades Tornado lifting him.

Eren's mana sense was compromised at that time and he couldn't keep up with the blades' speed that had been accelerated by his Total Control spell. As a result, even though he was uninjured, his clothes were ripped apart by getting caught in the tornado.

Eren barely managed to keep his pants on. But his torso was now out in the open as his casual army shirt and jacket were torn apart by the wind-element spell. But he didn't care. He had achieved what he had set out to do.

'Now's the time.'

Eren thought to himself and canceled all his active spells save for his time-element spells. He then executed his next set of spells as he started losing altitude rapidly. He adjusted his body and approached Altashia just like a meteor approaching earth.

Eren already possessed the maneuverability needed to perform moves like these due to him acting as Tuan. The experience behind Fire Wings' attack was now helping him.

Fireball!

Wind Blade Tornado!

Red Blitz Bolt!

Eren first exposed Altashia to a bunch of Fireballs that he had accelerated the production of using Total Control. Then he surrounded her with Wind Blades Tornado once again to create mental pressure. Finally, he charged his punching daggers with red lightning as he waited to check on her condition.

Altashia had beads of sweat on her forehead after she had cast that logic-defying spell. She was used to getting some breathing room after such a spell made its presence. She thought this time would be no different. But Eren's approach right after her spell was over had caught her off guard.

The mini fireballs were squatted by the wind-element hands she had created in haste. She also sent flying slashes at the incoming wind blades to deflect and clear the airspace around her. After getting rid of the fireballs, semi-transparent hands also surrounded her body. And yet, some of the fireballs and wind blades managed to penetrate the defense she had set up in haste.

"Aaaaah!"

Altashia couldn't help but cry in pain as she was hit by some of the butcher's attacks. Her petite skin on her arms was first burned off before getting slashed because of Eren's attacks. She had used her hands as the last line of defense to protect her vital organs from being targeted.

For the first time in a while, Altashia was angry. Not on Eren. But on herself. Her grandpa Altair had warned her she was prone to serious attacks after she used the class-enhanced attacks she used to perform by tweaking her mana circuits her way. That is if the ranker could figure out the basics behind her attacks.

'It feels like Gramps Altair would be laughing right now if he was here. Laughing at me for my incompetence. I... I hate him.'

Altashia flared her nose in anger when she remembered Altair's warning that finally became true. She stopped the flow of her blood by strengthening her mana defense and looked up at the red mass of lightning that was approaching her rapidly.

'This... this is why I love him.'

Altashia smiled as she held onto her weapon and looked at Eren in the eyes. The latter was also looking at her keenly with stoic expressions. It was apparent that he was serious about defeating her. By putting

his life in danger, he had created an opportunity to strike her and defeat her. She could relate to the resolve Eren had displayed for her.

They both were almost burnt out by this point. Altashia was even more so than Eren because of her being on the offensive for quite a longer time than him.

They had left their spectators gasping in shock and inferiority complex. In demonstrating their high level of might and exceptional ability, they had demonstrated that the genius rankers were not necessarily following common sense.

And yet, the fight was not over until it was over. Altashia still had the last embers of mana left in her to cast one more spell.

She let go of her Demon Beast Transformation spell and allowed her black wings to disperse in the air. She too started losing altitude while looking at the incoming Eren.

Altashia hesitated for a bit before strengthening her resolve. She was sure Eren wouldn't want to win the fight at the cost of her holding back. She would feel guilty too if she ever did something like this. Most of all, she didn't want to compromise on her warrior mentality.

'Eren, my love, I hope you overcome this spell!'

Altashia closed her eyes and mumbled to herself before using her final trump card.

"Demon Spell: Burning Abode!"

Chapter 590 Elemental Fusion: Wind-Fire Wings P1

"Demon Spell: Burning Abode!"

Altashia's flames that had spread all over the battlefield due to her flying slashes started converging in the airspace of the battle ring. They quickly closed in on Eren as he was getting closer to Altashia.

Altashia had dispersed her black wings because she couldn't have maintained them for a long time anyway. The second reason was that she wanted to cast this spell.

She wanted to create a space between him and the approaching Eren while he came close to the ground. This was so that she could control her stray flames in the vicinity. Her Demon spell was fueled by the existence of her stray flames in the vicinity after all.

The flames changed their shade to a golden hue as they converged around the falling Eren. Their temperature also seemed to have shot up due to the demon spell's amplifying effects.

Typically, a demon spell would require the demon beast tamer and their demon beast both to work in unison to cast it. But there were a few ways around it. By using Demon Beast Transformation, the ranker had all the power.

"Mother..."

Eren was consumed by the sea of golden flames before he could curse to his heart's content. That sea of fire quickly took the shape of a small cabin before starting to lose altitude at the same pace as Eren had been.

Altashia controlled her descent with her wind-element mana. She then easily found her footing on the other end of her weapon's snath. Then she used her feet to jump while using the snath as a platform and side-stepped. She also stored her weapon in her storage before using her movement spell to create a distance from the about-to-be-impacted ground. A series of actions took place seamlessly and were completed before a moment had passed.

Boom!

The ground shook a bit as the Burning Abode crashed onto the ground while still retaining its shape. A series of crackling sounds were heard as the flames spread in the nearby area once more. Altashia watched with concerned eyes as the destruction of the battle ring caused by her started unfolding in front of her eyes.

It felt like she had won even though she did not even have a shred of mana to fight the battle anymore. But she did not find joy in that part. She was worried about Eren's safety and criticized herself for overdoing on her part.

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A few moments before Eren was engulfed by Burning Abode.

The butcher felt a unique yet familiar mana pulse when he approached Altashia. He searched his memories and quickly narrowed the possibility down to the execution of one spell he had seen Altashia cast once.

Eren couldn't believe that Altashia could also cast Demon spells when she was in the Demon Beast Transformation. This level of proficiency in spells she had displayed was far beyond Eren's expertise. Despite his previous timeline experience, he was unable to overcome it.

Eren began cursing out loud and then in his head as he was being consumed by golden flames. Due to the enclosed burning environment in which he found himself, he thought his skin would liquitate and burn away. So he cast his defensive spell and shrank his body into a ball-like form by hugging his knees.

Blitz Shield

Fire Wings

Wind Blades Tornado

Playing defensive for a while allowed Eren to cast such spells even when he was running low on mana.

First, he cast his defensive spell. Second, he executed Fire Wings and wrapped them around him as he hugged his knees. Third, he deployed Wind Blades Tornado to surround him.

"This... fucking... Fuck... Fuck... Fuck!"

Eren cursed some more as he felt like his skin would get burnt to a crisp before crumbling down in front of him. This was when he was surrounded by three layers of defense. Although the attacks in the outer perimeter weren't defensive, they had done their part in filtering the damage that would have otherwise fallen on the butcher had he only relied on his defensive spell.



'Eren, don't play defensive for long. Altashia is not keeping this spell active. Additionally, she lacks the mana to forcefully dispel it. You'll be toast soon if the healer on standby doesn't come to save you.'

Alephee reminded Eren to act despite his first instinct to play defensive inside the Burning Abode. He came to know that there was a healer outside waiting on them in case things go south. The healer's intervention would mean he had lost the duel he had fought so long to win.

'Damn it.'

The butcher's eyes shined with cruel light as his expressions turned bitter. He gritted his teeth and decided to fight back against the odds stacked against him.

Eren had another episode of soul sense awakening at that time. But he gritted his teeth and subconsciously prevented himself from getting immersed in that feeling. Losing sense of being this time meant he would be severely injured even if the healer does decide to intervene.

'This house of flames isn't enough to stop me. I'll rise above every flame that tries to burn me.'

Eren's closed eyes widened, reflecting the sea of fire that he was surrounded by. His eagle-like pupils were shining with a light of their own as he looked upwards.

Kiyeeeh!

A few moments ago, Argo had responded to Eren's strong emotions of triumph over adversity. He flapped his wings from inside the beast space created by the transcendent-grade spell and sent an eagle cry into his master's mind.

Eren's skin started exuding smoke and his defense mana layer started chipping away due to Burning Abode's DoT. He gritted his teeth and released his two spells that were acting as the first and second line of defense. He concentrated only on maintaining his purple lightning cloak.

That's because he was preparing to cast a unique fusion of spells that he hadn't cast before.

'That's right, bud. Our freedom... nobody should be allowed to take that away from us.'

At this precise moment, Eren had an epiphany to perform elemental fusion due to his budding soul sense and the stress he was under. That too, using a demon spell he had just gotten access to.

"Elemental Fusion: Wind-Fire Wings!"