

Vile 631

Chapter 631 Mortal Combat

Kilaba was chilling.

The sun had just set. The smell of fresh food getting prepped lingered in the air. That's because the whole tribe cooked at the same place at the same time inside an open kitchen hall that also served as a gathering place.

It had dinner tables and benches that could be raised from the ground by imbuing mana over the arrays that stored them. This level of nitty-gritty couldn't be seen in any typical Orc settlement. The smell of fresh meat stew getting cooked was coming from the same tribe's kitchen.

Kilaba didn't need to be present in the kitchen. His food would be served to him as soon as it was made.

That's why Kilaba felt relaxed in his room, playing a game of cards with one of his Orcina treasures. There was soft music being played by an Orc who had received clarity about music. Rankers of continent Anfang would have received a cultural shock seeing an Orc playing music and a pair indulging in it. One shouldn't judge a monster by its ferocity.

Kilaba's private chamber was as lavish as his taste in music and Orcinas. It was meant for the chieftain of such a big tribe like him. The palace was located on the top floor, which was the most secured place in the palace thanks to the apt placements of guards and arrays.

The palace itself was a grand, three-story construction that appeared poorly constructed but wasn't. It was made of limestones that were summoned into existence by earth-element spells. Unlike a typical Orc chieftain residence though, it was painted with colors.

There were runes and arrays in the palace that served as amenities. Kilaba had a room dedicated to every one of his Orcinas in his harems. There were 25. It seemed there was a custom for Orc chieftains to have 25 Orcinas.

"My treasure, it looks like you are going to lose. Why not call it quits and head to bed? I'm sure we can squeeze in a quickie before dinner? Hahaha!"

Looking at his treasure with mischievous eyes, Kilaba said to her. The Orcina looked around and put her cards down. She was letting the guy win. Otherwise, he would throw tantrums. One had to say that Orcina had received her clarity very well.

"My lord, don't you need to seek out that previous chieftain Baran? I hate to say this, but there are some Baran sympathizers left in the tribe. You'd profit more if you strike him early while he is still down with his injuries."

Orcina commented before looking outside the grand window that was letting the starlight in. There was a New Moon tonight. So the usual brilliance of the night star was nowhere to be found.

Kilaba didn't mind that the Orcina had subtly changed the subject. He smirked before speaking to her..

"Investing time to find that loser geezer, you say? I have better things to do with my life. Besides, I need tribute for the Oni festival. I'm too busy collecting that to concentrate on him."

Kilaba then got up from the bed and started walking towards the gallery that was on the other side of the grand window. The large-field view offered by the gallery allowed the chieftain to have a look at things happening inside his tribe grounds.

Inhaling fresh night air that was a bit cold, Kilaba replied in a confident voice to his treasure.

"Besides, that guy would never make a comeback. The mutiny could only happen if the guys challenged me again and won. But I don't see that happening. Hahaha!"

The Orc Lord said while patting his open chest. He was only wearing black pants while keeping his torso bare. On his back was a strange tattoo. A tattoo of an Orc face that looked menacing. He had also worn a silver necklace that was etched with runes.

The Orcina named Resha nodded at Kilaba's logic after hearing it from his mouth. She just didn't understand why she was getting paranoid over a potential mutiny when she had seen how easily Kilaba had beat Baran.

Just when she thought that she should allow her chieftain to have his way with her, a guard asked for permission to enter the private chamber. Kilaba noticed that the guard who was supposed to bring them dinner was earlier than usual. So he allowed him to enter the chamber through their voice communication channel.

In the meantime, the musician Orc who was playing a flute and zither stopped playing his track without vocals. He surveyed the room on his own and excused himself from it.

"My Lord, Baran is here to challenge you, once again. He is asking for mortal combat."

While bowing humbly, the orc guard continued.

"He says he needs you to fight him in front of all your trusted Orc Leaders so that they can see you lose."

Kilaba was stupefied when he heard the guard's words. She shrugged her shoulders in response, indicating that their conversation just now and Baran's presence were nothing more than a coincidence.

In the next moment, Kilaba started laughing like a maniac. He couldn't believe that a loose end had come forward to allow itself to be tied by him.

Generally, a challenger would not kill an old chieftain even if he had won. This was done to highlight the importance of the chieftain's position. The second was to keep the Orc Leaders from getting angry about their former chieftain's death.

In general, even if the monster had lost, if they had served as the tribe's chieftain they would have been allowed to live. They would only get banished from the tribe or serve the new chieftain depending upon the new chieftain's stance.

Of course, this was only applicable to tribes that had the majority of their population receiving clarity including former and latest tribe leaders. That's why Kilaba didn't kill Baran.

But all the formalities were off if the guys came knocking on your door asking for mortal combat. Even Baran's hidden supporters won't be able to do anything if Kilaba kills him now.

"You could have lived a less-privileged but happy life and died in the land of the faithless you were born into. But no. You just had to make your death as spectacular as possible.

Haha! This is way too hilarious. For this joke alone, I've decided to give you a swift death. Hahahahaha!"

Chapter 632 Throw. Swoosh. Kaboom

The battle ring.

Several spectators gathered around the open space meant for duels.

Sounds of cheers.

Calling names and curses.

This was the atmosphere Kilaba had found himself in when he stepped out of his palace. His usual Tuesday. He was walking towards the battle ring with a pep in his step and a smile on his face. This smile told everyone looking at him about his confidence in winning this challenge.

The challenge of mortal combat was hurled at him. This challenger was the tribe's ex-chieftain whom he had to regretfully spare. Sometimes, Kilaba hated Orc customs because of rules like these.

Kilaba saw the challenger soon enough. He was the same old, haggard Orc Lord that he had defeated not too long ago. He looked even weaker than before. There was a chance he might regress into his evolutionary stage if he keeps up with this streak—a rare instance of devolution among monsters.

And yet, Kilaba could see that there was a certain calm air around Baran that he hadn't seen before. He was looking at him with strange eyes. It took a while for Kilaba to understand the emotions reflected in his eyes. It was sad. And pity. But what Kilaba found odd about that gaze was that the sadness and pity were directed at him. As if Baran was worried about what was about to happen to Kilaba after this duel.

"Do you still think you can get your chieftain position back by challenging me to mortal combat?"

Kilaba asked Baran after he stepped into the ring and stood before him, maintaining a safe distance. He stared at the ex-chieftain while drawing his azure-colored sword from his storage. This time, he would kill the guy for sure. Nobody could stop him.

Baran sighed after he heard Kilaba's question. He had visited his former tribe with a few of his trusted Orc Leaders from his new tribe. They received the same jeers and curses as Baran, offered to them by Kilaba's staunch supporters.

Yet, they didn't react to any of them. Standing outside the battle ring, they expressed their guilt. They didn't care what would happen in the duel. Instead, they were more worried about something that was about to follow later on.

Baran pursed his lips and looked around him a bit before replying to Kilaba's question calmly. His voice had low-key melancholic vibes.

"No, Kilaba. I no longer seek that position. I have already accepted a new chieftain as my liege. I have come here to challenge you under his orders."

The spectators listened to Baran's response at the same time as Kilaba did. The surroundings around the battlefield grew quiet before bursting into chaos. Kilaba's supporters cheered while Brana's supporters that hadn't come out in the open felt disappointed.

The Orc Leaders that had supported Kilaba were all standing at the perimeter of the battle ring as requested by Baran. According to the ex-chieftain, they were going to witness Kilaba's fall. But all they were doing right now was laugh at Baran for his false bravado.

"Hahahaha! You know why that new chieftain has sent you here, right? He is asking you to die by coming to meet me."

Kilaba was in the same joyous mood as he always was when he said that. Only now did he understand why a sane guy like Baran would choose to come here willingly. He had thought that the old man must have some tricks up his sleeves. That's why he didn't attack him right away and maintained a safe distance from him.

As spontaneous as Kilaba was, he wasn't stupid. His clarity had given him the ability to not underestimate his opponents just because he had beaten them once.

Kilaba then patted his bare chest with his right hand before making a proclamation.

"My men, no matter how Baran's status is right now, he was a former chieftain of this tribe. He has come here to ask for a glorious death. And it shall be given to him.

But let's also honor him by conquering his existing tribe and taking it under our wing. That coward chieftain doesn't deserve to rule over their tribe members if they send an old man like him to battle."

Baran chuckled when he heard Kilaba's smart pitch. He was trying to make his supporters and Baran's supporters come under the same banner and cause by pitting them against his new tribe. This way, the differences between them would get resolved while Kilaba expanded the tribe.

The Orc Leaders that were supporting Baran wouldn't mind fighting a new Orc Lord that had dethroned Baran. In this way, they will prove their loyalty to Baran after his death, before being assimilated into Kilaba's camp permanently. A master stroke. Kilaba's clarity would put most humans' cunning to shame.

Kilaba's speech garnered support from all of the Orc Leaders that had gathered to watch the duel, including Baran's supporters that were standing behind. Baran didn't waste any more time. He summoned his quicksilver from thin air, letting his opponent know that he was ready for a fight.

Soon, the fight that supposedly had a preordained result began unfolding in front of the spectators' eyes. Baran was losing ground. Kilaba was tackling each of Baran's attacks effortlessly with his normal spells. It seemed like he wasn't even putting half of his strength into fighting the ex-chieftain.

Unknown to Kilaba and his existing tribe, there was someone else watching the fight from over their head, in the sky above. A man was standing on the back of an eagle-type demon beast. They were flying right above the battle ring that was hosting Baran and Kilaba's duel at this point.

The butcher looked at the battle ring that was far below him with his eagle eyes. He could keep track of what was happening during the battle, thanks to his eagle vision.

The time was ripe to make a move.

"*Sigh. This is the last one."

The butcher thought to himself as he took out the last vial of a certain potion that he had received from Purgatory. He raised the vial in front of his eyes and stirred it a bit.

Red Solid Spark.

In the next moment, a bolt of red lightning was created around the vial. Eren held the red lightning bolt in his hand and gripped it firmly as the restless red streak of lightning danced around it.

Throw. Swoosh. Kaboom.

Chapter 633 Reading Minds

A few days before the attack on Kilaba.

Eren had branded all 24 Orcinas last night with the Sin of Lust. He branded them while he was in his human form and kept tabs on their psyche using his soul sense. All of them passed the butcher's screening process that he had developed thanks to his soul sense. The Orcinas, with their clarity, were completely loyal to the butcher now.

Despite receiving external help in the form of a supplementary potion, the guy was still exhausted the next day. Yet, that didn't stop him from having a smile of satisfaction on his face. Or from conducting the meeting he had with Baran and his trusted Orc Leaders. It was as if the butcher had received his own version of clarity when he did it with 25 Orcinas at once.

Gathering hall inside the chieftain's house.

"My liege, do you want us to go to war with Kilaba's tribe?"

With worry lines on his forehead, Baran asked. The monster could only get over the fact that all his untouched treasures had been claimed by the new chieftain.

"No. I specifically said I only want to get rid of Kilaba. Just come with me and point me towards your old tribe's location. And I'll take care of the rest."

Eren ate a lightning-mana-influenced apple that was suitable for his rank as he spoke. Fruits like these were relatively common ranking resources in Badlands. It was Raadoo who had suggested these fruits to Eren, saying that chieftains would usually consume these fruits after tending to their treasures. To regain their spent vigor.

The Orc Leaders looked awkwardly at Baran after their new chieftain said something like that. They didn't dare to object to their newly elected leader in human form. They had given that job to Baran.

Baran's creases on his forehead increased when he heard the butcher's statements. He coughed a bit before reacting calmly.

"My liege, Kilaba is not a street hooligan in Badlands that you could kill just by finding him. He has an entire tribe backing him. You can't deal with an entire tribe with your individual powers, can you?"

Eren was busy eating the lightning fruits that tasted just like an unranked apple, except that they gave his gums a slight jolt when he took a bite. It was surprising for the first time. But then Eren got used to eating these purple lightning apples.

After taking the last bite out of the last fruit, Eren chewed it like he was enjoying the jolts he was receiving from the bites. He only replied once he gulped the content down.

"Why would I target the entire tribe when I just want to kill him?"

Eren looked at Baran with a puzzled expression. He thought he had made his intentions clear to Baran. Yet, the former chieftain had organized this meeting with his trusted circle to discuss this topic.

Baran pressed his temples and massaged them a bit before answering Eren.

"My liege, this is not how an Orc fights. Especially if they are chieftains of the tribe. Kilaba could challenge me openly because he didn't have a tribe at that time. A battle between two chieftains would get their tribes involved.

Why do you think I fought wars with the tribes I assimilated with? If you want to take over Kilaba's tribe..."

Eren shook his head and interrupted Baran with his words.

"I only want Kilaba because he is an Orc Lord. a powerful Orc Lord at that. I don't care about what happens to his tribe afterward."

Eren was thinking that Raadoo had given him a wise suggestion about the food as he said that. With thoughts of stocking up on these fruits running through his mind, the butcher continued.

"Look, Baran. I know I don't know or care much about Orc customs. But you need to understand one thing. If any of you Orcs want to follow me, then forget about the customs that restrict you from doing the things you want to achieve. Get rid of them from your mind.

The so-called clarity you have gained needs to be refined to suit your needs as per your current situation. Don't depend on it so much that you forget what you have learned by living here on this cutthroat land.

The clarity you have received would work against you in your favor if it restricted you in your growth."

Eren said and looked at the Orc Leader. He could see that they had difficulty reading faces at that time. That alone told the butcher what they were thinking. So he looked at them with his narrowed eyes before adding on.

"Listen here guys, you are not on the monster continent anymore.

What is it called? Yes! Land of the Faithless. An apt name I must say. You are on the continent Anfang where only profits matter.

That's why I like this place. This continent as a whole.

You don't need a strong backer to survive here. Not really. It's controlled chaos here. One just needs to know how to make chaos work in their favor to reap benefits from any adversity.

If I want to kill someone that I know I can kill without getting my hands burnt in the process, I'll kill that person in a heartbeat. Without worrying about customs, processes, or morals. I want you to change your ways and adapt to this mindset.

Fuck those Orc rules. Fuck the customs of the monster continent.

I wasn't planning on it but, for your better or otherwise, I am this tribe's chieftain. So I want my tribe to follow my logic. My way of doing things. A monster army that follows my commands whether they are in line with the rules of the monsters or not.

Do you understand?"

When Eren spoke his last word, he spread his soul sense to every Orc Leader and Baran in range. In the next moment, the Orc Leaders felt like they were immersed in a sea of fire and lightning storms at once. They felt that there were a bunch of punching daggers flying in the air and cutting their bodies up.

They looked at their chieftain in that state and saw him staring at them with his cold eyes. It was as if they were being read like an open book in front of him. As if he was looking into the depths of their soul.

"Shilson, is it? If you think about leaving the tribe one more time, I'd have you leave this continent. And not through the back door, which the inhabitants of that continent use to enter Anfang. Do you understand what I mean?"

Eren spoke looking at the guy taking a knee in front of him at the extreme right. The guy had sweat dripping on his forehead when he heard the butcher's words.

'He... he can read minds.'

Shilson thought to himself while controlling his shock to the extent of his abilities. Yet, he was unable to completely hide them. He also looked at the butcher with a fearful expression in his eyes.

The butcher chuckled when he felt Shilson's emotions with his soul sense and replied.

"Hehe. Yeah, Shilson. You can say that I read minds.

Isn't the only chieftain you'd ever have in your foreseeable life cool and amazing?"

Eren asked rhetorically while smirking at every Orc Leader present in the audience. They all looked at him with vigilant eyes and fearful expressions before nodding in agreement.

Chapter 634 Crash. Locate. Kill

Just when Kilba had thought he was going to win against Baran for good, the Orc Lord executed his movement spells and bolted in another direction. The Orc Leaders that had come with him had already made their move. This escape was well coordinated.

Running after throwing a mortal combat challenge was not an Orc custom. So nobody at Kilaba's camp was prepared for such a custom-defying, abrupt activity. With blank expressions, they watched Baran and his men escape from the scene.

They didn't have to travel that far. And they were also not worried about being pursued. Because they knew what was going to happen next.

"What the... catch... fucking catch that dirty old man and his..."

Kilaba was about to complete giving orders to his men when he felt something threatening coming at him with lightning-like speed. He stopped midway through and looked up.

Throw. Swoosh Kaboom.

A flash of red lightning.

A distinct mana pulse that belonged to the Adept rank was spread after the vial's detonation.

A mana miasma was summoned right in the middle of the battle ring that trapped Kilaba and his most trusted Orc Leaders. As a result, those Orc Leaders died instantly without making any sound. Nothing happened to their bodies. Because of the illusion potion, they became brain dead.

Most of these Orc Leaders were Kilaba's supporters. All of them died when they saw the red bolt strike someone or something.

Kilaba was trapped in the illusion right after the bolt of red lightning struck him on his chest. The vial of illusion potion exploded on his chest, giving him no chance to take countermeasures.

"Kiddo, take this. We are heading down."

Eren addressed Argo and threw an alchemy pill in the air. The young demon beast screamed an eagle screech before diving towards the falling pill. Arno's pill was heading in the same direction as the battle ring. The butcher also popped a pill for himself as he saw them getting closer to the ground.

Crash. Locate. Kill.

Eren knew about the flaw in using the illusion potion when he used it. He couldn't enter the mana miasma that it generated after he cast it on his victims. Otherwise, he'd get caught in the miasma too. His Ace rank was ineffective in countering it.

Eren couldn't kill Adept ranked Jerry whom he had first used the illusion potion because of the miasma. He used the miasma potion once again after getting out of Purgatory on Jerry and an Adept ranker from Beast Bloods named Tai. He detonated the potion bomb when the two Adept rankers were busy dueling with each other on their own.

Eren had to wait for the miasma potion to wear off in the surroundings before killing Tai and Jerry. Since they were alone and had no witnesses, he didn't have a problem executing his kill.

But the situation this time was different. Eren knew there would be spectators this time who would be able to intervene if he waited for the miasma to wear off before killing Kilaba.

Just as Baran had said, Eren couldn't find the entire Orc tribe. Plus, Kilaba was no small fry either. His blessing might allow him to snap out of the miasma's illusion faster than Eren's assumption. Various predictable and unpredictable things could go wrong while executing a hit on Kilaba.

This alchemy pill was something Eren had asked Layla to make to counter the miasma's effect for a short while. Alchemy was a branch of potioneering that dealt with capturing a potion's effect inside a pill.

Layla had no problem dealing with this request. It was just that the ingredients that were required to concoct such a pill put more financial burden on Eren. He could only take two pills of such a kind. But he didn't mind. Since there was only one potion, two pills were enough.

Kilaba saw that he was back in the Oni dungeon. During the Oni festival, he proved his worth to that entity. This time, the challenges were even more gruesome and lethal. This time, there were more opponents. And this time, the blessing was supposed to be even greater than what he had received so far.

Kilaba cleared all the challenges and took care of all his opponents. Just when he was about to receive the blessing with the help of that entity, he felt a sharp pain in his chest. A pain he couldn't comprehend. He subconsciously processed that the pain didn't belong to the world he was seeing.

The pain finally snapped Kilaba back into reality. He looked around him to see that there was a fog of green-looking miasma around him that was compromising his visibility. His vision was already blurred due to being caught in an illusion. So it took him some time to process what he was seeing.

An Orc Leader was standing nearby him. With his blue eyes devoid of any emotion, he stared at him. Kilaba didn't recognize this Orc. In addition, he did not understand why he was standing so close to him.

He was about to ask the Orc about his identity when he felt that the pain in his chest had intensified. He looked down to see that the blue-eyed Orc had driven a dagger deep inside his heart.

"What the..."

Kilaba didn't have words to describe his confusion. Before he could process what was happening, the Orc twisted the space-element dagger some more before pulling it out. Kilaba watched with pure bafflement as the Orc drove the same dagger into his chest. This time, without appearing to cause any external wounds.

"What are you looking at, you dickhead? I just killed you."

Slap!

The blue-eyed Orc spoke in broken Orcish and slapped him with the back of his hand. This time, Kilaba heard him loud and clear, thanks to the effects of that slap.

Kilaba was enraged. And Eren was happy seeing that rage building inside him. Before the orc lord with blessings could land a final punch and end his life, the butcher used the ability he had already planned to use on him.

Time was of the essence.

"Domain of Wrath!"

Chapter 635 Baran's Plans of Tribe Assimilation

"Domain of Wrath!"

Eren said softly. In the next moment, a mini-domain was formed taking him and Kilaba under its dominion. Kilaba's body started changing.

Eren had also executed his Life Drain ability on the monster using the gaping wound left behind by the twisting of the knife. Kilaba's Adept ranked mana defense layer that was made non-existent because of him falling under the illusion was just about to kick in when the butcher did that. As a result, the monster's stamina was drained from him as well as his life essence.

In the moments following the robbery of Kilaba's life essence, the effects of Sin of Wrath could be seen on his body. His body started changing into a creature of wrath.

'Time to move.'

Eren said to himself as he watched his hit on Kilaba was executed just the way he wanted it to be. He didn't even give the monster a chance to fight back. For the most part, Kilaba wasn't even aware of what had happened to him, who had done it, or what he was doing.

He looked out at his demon beast who was fearlessly rampaging through the mana miasma while having a feast. Being a demon beast, he had enough intelligence in him to understand that only he was immune to the Miasma around him. And no matter how many mana signatures are gathered around him, they couldn't close in on him.

So Argo was having his fill. Turning into a lion, he devoured the completely dead monsters and half-dead Orc Leaders who were around the perimeter of the Miasma domain.

Some Orc Leaders who were present outside the miasma's area of effect could feel that something had happened to their leader. He wasn't giving any orders. The Orc Leaders that were trapped in the illusion spell's area of effect had gone silent too. They had only seen a red lightning bolt strike him followed by the creation of miasma domain and something huge entering it right afterward.

Mana sense wouldn't work in the miasma domain because it infringed on its operability. In a way, the potion created a domain of its own when it was used.

'That's enough, bud. Let's go.'

Eren said to Argo's consciousness. The demon beast was about to let out a lion's roar to register his complaint but his master stopped him.

'Don't. I'd feed you something else after this gets over. Let's go now.'

Argo growled at his master in dissatisfaction before changing into his eagle form seamlessly. He lowered his back for Eren before gripping the creature of wrath in one of its talons.

Before anybody could figure out what it was, a distinct cluster of red lightning was seen flying away from the mana Miasma. This red cluster was packed into a spherical domain of wrath that flew in the sky.

The miasma domain started dispersing into thin air right after the cluster of red lightning flew away.

Eren wanted to digest Kilaba without interruption. He wanted to take everything that he had to offer to him. This wasn't possible when he was under the threat of interruption and attack from Kilaba's tribe. So he just took him away to a different place where he wouldn't be bothered by anyone.

Meanwhile, mayhem ensued in Kilaba's tribe after the Orc Leaders found out that their chieftain was missing. After calling back the pursuers who were chasing Baran, they decided to focus first on their chieftain.

Monsters didn't have historians. But they did have shamans. The shamans began searching for clues and discovered that their chieftain had been abducted alive. If only barely.

Two parties were created as a direct response by the Orc Leaders. Each party had a shaman in it. The parties started zeroing in on their chieftain in the same direction Eren had moved. Using two different routes.

It was clear that the abductor had ridden a flying beast. Sadly, the tribe didn't have a mount of its own. Otherwise, the search and rescue operation would have been much smoother.

Meanwhile, Baran and his team had managed to escape safely. They all breathed a sigh of relief when they found out that Kilaba's tribe had prioritized their chieftain's safety. A predictable move. It was them that had done something unpredictable for Orcs.

Shilson, who was reprimanded by Eren, sighed when the group stopped to take a rest. His voice was a mixture of vigilance and doubt.

"Did..., Did we do this right, Baran? It feels so wrong in my heart. This way of killing is totally against our..."

Baran snorted before replying to him.

"Didn't you hear what the chieftain said? We need to forget about our old customs and move forward with a more progressive mindset. And don't ask me if it's right or wrong. I'm not your chieftain anymore.

Why don't you go ahead and ask this question to the real chieftain and hear his answer? I'm sure he'd be happy to answer you if you asked him nicely."

Shilson gulped before coming up with a revised response.

"I... I am fine. On second thought, we Orcs do need to change our ways. It's a fortunate thing that we have a visionary chieftain watching over us. He'd surely lead us to greater heights than before."

Baran chuckled when he heard Shilson's response. He then started planning for his next steps. As per Eren's logic, they should leave Kilaba's tribe. He had said that since he would kill Kilaba and almost all of his Orc Leaders that were his staunch supporters, it would only be the neutral faction and faction that supported Baran that would be contesting for the position of chieftain. None of them would try to mess with Baran.

Baran agreed with Eren's logic. But he was unsatisfied with this outcome. For the most part, the guy was only thinking about his benefits. Although he had not made his tribe come into the crosshairs of other tribes, he had also not done something that the tribe could benefit from.

That's why Baran decided to step in and do a few things for the new chieftain on his own initiative. Plus, he cared about his previous tribe. So he had decided to approach the tribe again so that it could be assimilated into Eren's tribe.

Of course, he would face opposition from a few Orc Leaders. They weren't stupid. The Orcs were not unaffected by his act of running away from the battle ring just before their chieftain was attacked. So this time, bringing a group of Orcs to initiate talks wasn't enough. Baran needed to launch a campaign to assimilate his previous tribe into Eren's.

'I... I need to talk to him.'

Baran thought to himself before looking in the direction the red cloud of lightning had moved in. The monster Orc Lord had started thinking like a true commander of the monster army.

Chapter 636 Killing Kilaba Off

At the peak of a small, flat mountain top.

The midnight moon was spreading its pleasant, mellow light over the dense vegetation around the steep mountain. This mountaintop wasn't anything special. Nevertheless, it provided Eren with a safe place to carry out his next activities.

Kiyeeeh!

An eagle cry resounded in the surroundings as a man and a demon beast landed on the flat mountaintop away from Kilaba's tribe location. This time, he knew he wouldn't be disturbed.

Eren was at its wit's end trying to maintain his domain of wrath around him and Argo as they were flying. This was all while he controlled the creature of wrath that would have become berserk if he dispersed the domain.

Eren didn't underestimate Kilaba even when the monster was about to die. His evolution as an Orc Lord wasn't to be scoffed at. If it wasn't for the last vial of illusion potion he had in his vial, he wouldn't have thought of messing with someone like Kilaba.

'All good things come to those who wait. AND act at the right time.'

Eren chuckled as he wiped the sweat off his forehead. Being Eren's demon beast and having a blood connection with him, Argo was immune to the domain of wrath's negative effects. Yet, he was still angry for being interrupted from having his free meal.

"Here, you fat bird. Have this. You are a growing boy after all. Eat your fill."

Taking the bodies of five Ace-ranked mana beasts that he had earlier hunted, the butcher spoke. There were various kinds of beasts for Argo to pick from.

Kiyeeeh!

This time, this was a happy eagle cry. Argo flapped his wings and generated a gust of wind around him to show his satisfaction before turning into his lion form once again. This form was ideal for savoring the delicacies around him.

Argo started eating right away with the first mana beast that was closer to him. Meanwhile, his master was busy observing the creature of wrath he had created and incubated for so long.

Kilaba looked drastically different from his previous appearance. Instead of having light green skin, he now had ruptured dark green skin with scutes on it like that of a crocodile. He also had a festering azure hue on his skin that seemed to have a distinct mana signature of his own.

The tattoo on his back was not recognizable anymore. He looked like the creature of wrath that had been poisoned before being injected with something sinister.

Kilaba was so angry even while on the verge of death that he had ripped the skin around his chest. He had also torn his stomach, making his guts leak out from that tear.

"Breeeeeeeh!"

Kilaba yelled in agony, frustration, pain, and other emotions Eren wasn't sure he could process anymore. But then, Kilaba shocked him with his next action.

"Youuuuuuuuuuu. Whooooo Areeeeeee Youuuuu?"

Eren was surprised that creatures of wrath could talk. Kilaba's voice was weird. As if there were many people inside that inflated giant body of his that no longer belonged to an Orc.

The moonlight falling over his 10 feet tall, pure muscle body that was on the verge of imploding looked intimidating. Eren didn't reply to the Orc directly. He was finding it difficult to control his ability anymore because of the sheer pressure with which the Orc Lord was fighting against his control.

"Why do you care, Kilaba? You are just a guy on his deathbed. If you care about me, you must also be concerned about your treasures, right? Guess what would happen with them?"

Hehe. That's right. I'll claim them. Or maybe I'll offer them to my subordinates for a job well done. Your treasures would become the properties of my entire tribe."

Eren said in his Orc form and laughed out loud. His goal was to make the guy lose his sanity. So that the Orc Lord would give in to the emotions of anger completely, which were bubbling inside his heart and brain. Therefore, he began painting a grim picture of all his possessions with his vicious tongue.

"Breeeeeeeh!"

The azure hue on his body started spreading further at a rapid pace when Kilaba lost control of himself. He had completely lost any shred of his ego as Kilaba the chieftain at this point.

'Eren, kill him. Now.'

Alephee spoke in Eren's mind when the azure hue started spreading further than Kilaba's chest. It had already covered the monster's limbs and torso. A distinct mana pulse that he had never felt before was released into the surroundings.

The butcher had a thought that if he didn't have an awakened soul sense, that mana pulse would have affected him mentally. It would have incapacitated him long enough for the no-more-Kilaba creature to wrest away the control from him.

Eren didn't ask for the what, why, and how when he heard Alephee's voice. He had recognized that it was laced with urgency. The what and why of her urgency could be addressed later.

Summon. Swoosh. Chop.

A wind-blade tornado was summoned by Eren before heading in the monster's direction. Suddenly, Kilaba's truly monstrous body was missing its head over its torso.

Drop.

The head was carried in the air by sitting on the wind blade, thanks to the Wind Blade Tornado spell. It dropped a few meters away from the body behind it when Eren dispersed the blade.

The blue hue that was spreading over the monster's body stopped spreading when the head was cut off. The butcher raised his hands and swiped them in the direction of the body.

Burst.

The monster's body was imploded. Blood, bones, and meat were all over the floor. This time the butcher did not have the concentration required to maintain a mana shield. As a result, the dark red blood and chunks of meat were spread all over him as he was standing not too far away from the implosion.

"Hm?"

It surprised the butcher to see what was left behind after Kilaba had been detonated into nothingness by him. Instead of the usual, there were two flames of wrath floating over the space where Kilaba was.

Chapter 637 Soul Spell

"Two wrath flames, huh?"

The butcher was amazed that bringing Kilaba into the domain of wrath had given him two wrath flames. The butcher was about to dispel the domain when Alephee's voice sounded again.

'Don't dispel the domain just yet. We need to take care of the second flame first.'

Eren narrowed his eyes when the gears in his head started churning. He asked Alephee while looking at the second flame which was azure blue and a bit smaller than the regular wrath flame.

'Is it related to the monster continent?'

'Yes.' Alephee said promptly. Eren didn't ask her anything regarding the azure blue flame anymore. He just wanted to know what he was supposed to do next. He had already kind of surpassed his limit in keeping the domain of wrath active.

It had started to affect him and he was feeling a bit of anger toward anything that he thought of. Still, the butcher was in control of his emotions.

'Wait. Let me seal it with a time-element sealing spell.'

Alephee said to Eren before executing a spell he hadn't heard of. In the next moment, the azure-blue flame stopped flickering and stood still as if it was just the image of the flame he was seeing.

Alephee also cast a spell on the usual wrath flame, freezing it in space and time. The butcher was taken aback by what he was seeing.

It now looked like both the flames had been frozen in ice blocks that wouldn't melt no matter how much heat is provided to them. These frozen flames were about to fall on the ground, but the butcher used his wind element blades to carry them in his hands.

The butcher wasn't surprised that Alephee could do it. But he was shocked by how she did it.

"This spell... How did you do it?"

Eren didn't feel any mana signature from this spell. There was no fluctuation of surrounding mana either. He did not feel that Alephee was using his mana to cast time-element spells like usual. It was something he hadn't seen or heard before.

Alephee chuckled before answering him.

'This is what is known as the soul spell. It can only be cast by those who have soul sense. *Sigh. Now that I've cast it, I'll take a short nap afterward.'

Eren's eyes sparkled when he heard a new branch of the spell had opened up for him when he heard Alephee's somewhat tired speech. He was about to ask her if he could learn something like this. But it was Alephee who anticipated the butcher's question and answered him.

'Don't get too excited. It is too early for you to cast soul spells. Your soul has just come out of its shell. Let it grow and mature a bit. I'll tell you when you are ready.'

Eren became angry at Alephee's words. But he knew it wasn't due to what she had said. The domain of wrath was affecting him. Alephee realized what was happening and commented.

'Both of these flames can now be stored inside any storage space artifact. They would come to life once you imbue your mana into them. I suggest digesting the usual wrath flame inside the Oni dungeon. That space would provide you with maximum protection and safety for this.

The azure-blue wrath flame is a bit special. Let's go to the Oni dungeon first before we can discuss this thing.'

Eren had a couple of questions in his mind. But since Alephee had said that the Oni dungeon would be an ideal place to digest his current gains, he stopped asking her. He didn't mind waiting a bit to digest these flames.

The search and rescue party for Orc Lord Kilaba finally reached the mountaintop as per the clues their shaman had provided. Eren hadn't done anything special to hide his tracks since he wanted these monsters to follow him.

So that they would know what had happened to their chieftain. The death of a chief would demotivate tribe members to stop chasing anyone. That's because the fight for the next chieftain would begin shortly thereafter. The tribe was going to have a hard time controlling internal conflicts and dealing with other hostile tribes.

When the search and rescue teams reached the scene, all they saw was blood and gore spread everywhere at one corner of the mountain top. Every organ and every bone of something or someone was broken into many pieces.

The strange mana signature around the place created by the potion of innocence made it more difficult to identify the body that burst like a water balloon there. Shamans also vomited and became ill when they tried to cast their detective spells.

But suddenly one of the Orc Leaders found something suspicious in the distance. There was a branch of a tree that was lodged in the ground. It looked weird because there was no other vegetation in its vicinity.

"Chiefieye Kilaba!"

An Orc Soldier who was there to check on the Orc Leader's orders yelled in surprise when he saw that something was placed at the top of that tree's branch. He hadn't yet received his clarity. Therefore, the way he pronounced the sentence in orcish made his tongue as broken as the guy who had killed Kilaba.

The branch had been used as a stand to hang Kilaba's head. Eren had arranged Kilaba's head in this way to make a statement for the Orc Leaders. That he knew they were coming and he was ready for them in case they decided to press the matters further.

After killing Kilaba, Eren had gone back to the army to complete a bunch of army assignments. Altashia was relieved from the army. He was offered the position of leading his army squad.

Eren refused his promotion in the army and gave it to Arjun. In return, he told the handsome elf that he should return the favor by managing things without Eren in the picture for a few weeks.

Eren also completed a bunch of assignments by being part of the different army squads in these two weeks. This was so that his records of clearing the missions stayed fresh in the official records. He would then depend on Arjun to make his absence from the army unnoticeable. The butcher knew how the system worked by now. And so did Arjun. They would not shy away from bending the rules in their favor for their own benefit.

During his free time, Eren received inputs regarding the potion manufacturing and supply chain from Renar and Viper. Lastly, he contacted Jake's father to streamline the process, at least in the Lionhearts duchy.

Eren also kept tabs on the construction of White Raven town by keeping in touch with Agatha and Levine through spectral calls. He added his input whenever needed. The rest of the responsibilities were given to both women.

Three weeks after killing Kilaba, Eren was back in his Orc tribe to check on them. He was going to enter the Oni dungeon after wrapping these things up.

And of course, meet his treasures. And the first thing he heard was Baran doing something way out of the script.

Chapter 638 Leadership Qualities

"You did what now?"

Eren was shocked when he heard that Kilaba had successfully managed to merge his old and existing tribe. Previously, Eren had only about 700 members to command. Of which 26 were Orc Leaders. Now after the takeover, he had around 1600 Orcs to lead. Of which 64 were Orc Leaders.

Eren's tribe had 64 monsters who could stand toe to toe with Ace rankers. This was more group strength than what he had officially gathered under his guild's banner yet. Eren couldn't believe that letting Baran live and making him one of his subordinates would grant him this much manpower.

The old monster had returned to visit his old tribe that was busy infighting after Kilaba's absence.

Kilaba's tribe needed an Orc Lord to lead them now that Kilaba's death had been confirmed beyond the shadow of a doubt. As there were no orcs at that stage, the choice fell to choosing from Orc Leaders. And that's when all hell broke loose. Just as Eren had predicted, the tribe was facing an insurmountable conflict.

Baran didn't want his previous tribe to split into various small tribes led by various Orc Leaders. So he decided to take things into his own hands.

Baran wanted to inform the butcher. But since the guy had just upped and left as he had said he would, Baran took this decision as the chief in charge of the tribe and acted.

Baran took a substantial portion of his warrior Orcs and hunter Orcs under his command and visited his previous tribe. Of course, most Orc Leaders were hostile towards him. Even the monsters that had supported him felt disappointed in him.

It was obvious that the one who had killed Kilaba belonged to Baran's side. It sullied the Orc Lord's reputation in front of his old tribe because he didn't officially beat Kilaba.

Baran knew what was about to happen. So he asked the shamas to perform a special spell on him with the help of arrays that belonged to the monster continent. It would temporarily devolve the Orc Lord into Orc Leader.

Baran then challenged all the Orc Leaders in his previous tribe to fight him in groups. The Orc Leaders couldn't believe that an Orc Lord would willingly step down from his evolutionary pedestal just to prove his worth.

And prove his worth Baran did. All the Orc Leaders who were opposing him in his former tribe were defeated by him. He did it while getting heavily injured in the process.

Baran didn't deny that the entity who killed Kilaba had nothing to do with him. He used monster rules to take back what once belonged to him.

'Use the rules of the game to your advantage. Don't get shackled by them.' His new chieftain had said to him. And that's what he did.

"Kekekeke! I just did what I wanted to do for a long time. I had gathered those men under my banner and worked with them for years. It was my diligent work that had brought that tribe together.

How could I let it go to waste just like that? I wanted to give you a fair warning. But you cut all your communications with us during this time. And my window of opportunity to act on this matter was closing."

Baran said and observed Eren's reactions, which gave him no clue. So he kneeled in front of the butcher before adding on.

"So I made this decision on my own. If any of my actions have caused you any sort of trouble, I'm up for any punishment that you give me."

Eren was impressed. He thought that the clarity Baran had received after being an Orc Lord was beyond normal standards at this point because of the monster's old age. He had refined his clarity more than other intelligent Orcs who were just aware of how things worked. Baran was now starting to see why things worked the way they worked.

Clap! Clap! Clap!

Eren clapped his hand in appreciation for the old Orc Lord before commenting.

"Old man, you did a great job. I remember specifically telling you that I didn't want Kilaba's tribe because it would make me have more responsibilities than I could afford to have."

Baran gulped subtly when he heard the butcher's response. He had taken this action after assuming that Eren wouldn't mind his old tribe getting assimilated with the new one if he was released from such responsibilities. He was about to find out if that assumption was right or wrong.

Eren chuckled after realizing what Baran was thinking and spoke up.

"Old man, I meant it when I said that you did a great job. That wasn't a sarcastic comment. You figured out what I meant by my previous decision and worked to keep that decision intact while moving forward in achieving your goals.

You understood the assignment.

Sometimes, the one who is at the top is not always right. I'm no exception to this rule either. But you'd have to forgive me for coming up with that decision because I underestimated your ability."

The butcher said and took a bite out of the lightning apple he was carrying in his right hand while pacing around in the chieftain house's main hall. He chewed the fruits some more before continuing.

"I think in more ways than one, you are a better leader than me, old man. A better chieftain. I'll not shy away from admitting that.

Sometimes being the most powerful is not enough to lead a group. Being the smartest isn't a hard and fast rule either."

Eren paused after he said that. He stepped into the garden and observed its scenery once again. He looked at the ground that had enabled him to unlock his soul sense by lying on it and chuckled.

This was daytime. The morning sun was just beginning to spread its brilliance all over the land. Eren walked a bit and lay on his back, on the same spot he had last time before taking a lungful of fresh air.

Eren's incomplete point left Baran unanswered. So he followed his chieftain and sat near him before asking.

"My liege, what is enough to lead one's tribe?"

Eren had a smile on his face as he replied while closing his eyes.

"It's the ability to connect with your subordinates on a deeper level. You can do a better job than me when it comes to that.

Being a leader also means choosing the right person for the right job. In that way, I'm also a capable leader because I chose you to lead the tribe in my absence."

Baran cackled when he heard Eren tooting his own horns while praising him. Praises coming from Eren felt weird to him. This was something he felt Eren would say instead.

Eren chuckled as well before continuing.

"I remember the very first time you decided to show up to save an Orc Leader from being killed by me. I took your actions into account when I decided to make you my commander.

But I could have never imagined that you'd be able to do this with so many Orc Leaders" connecting with them on a personal level the way you could. This is something only you can do.

Old man, it's admirable that you are sharpening your leadership qualities like this. Because I'll soon make you lead a monster army that would be much more than you thought you could lead. Hehehe."

Chapter 639 Prelude to Chaos: Little Eel P1

Eren talked at length with Baran and gave him a few commands to follow. The most critical command he had given them was to relocate the tribe to the Monster Canyon.

Baran had stress lines on his forehead when he heard the butcher's decision to move the tribe. But Eren retrieved an array disk from his storage space. This disk contained a rough map of the Monster Canyon and the safe passage Baran could take to move there from the tribe's current location. All the while staying inside the Badlands.

Eren had used the Edinburgh army database to create this safe route for his tribe's relocation. Baran just needed to follow the route to its T and relocate the tribe to Eren's intended spot.

Relocating the tribe was not easy. Especially when Baran had such a large tribe. So the safe route Eren had given him that missed the other monster tribes made Baran breathe a sigh of relief.

Eren told Baran he did not have to rush the relocation project. He told him to take a few days to prepare. And asked Baran to prepare a special troupe that could be used to lead the tribe members. Meanwhile, he suggested to Baran that he should task Orc Leaders to capture and tame mana beasts that could be used in this project as mounts and more.

After saying what he had to say and doing what needed to be done, Eren bid adieu to Baran, other Orc Leaders, and his treasures. With every pending task taken care of, the butcher was now ready to enter the oni dungeon.

A mysterious mountain top was seen to be shrouded in mana fog.

This mountain-top was usually barren. But now it had hordes of undead walking and running around everywhere with their junk armors and mangled bodies.

A young man with a lightning affinity was seen battling with wraiths. He was butchering the decayed and rotten flesh on these wraiths without any remorse, disgust, or apprehension. The title of "Osan Woods Butcher" wasn't wasted on him.

He had green-lightning-clad daggers in his hand. He would use his movement spell and his mastery over his element to deal critical damage to every wraith he came across. No wraith horde was able to hold him down for more than a few seconds.

Additionally, he was using his beast contract spell creatively. He would create a giant apparition of his purple lightning snake with green lightning tongues around it. He would then use its trunk as a safe passage for zipping through his opponents. It is as if an electric eel had created its own lightning water stream to overwhelm its undead enemies.

The purple lightning snake was not compatible with green lightning anymore. He needed a different contract beast. For now, however, he made do with what he had.

This young man was a prodigy in his own right. With a stoic expression on his face, he dealt with dozens of wraith hordes quickly. It looked simple. Only he knew how hard he had fought to gain control over his way of element like this. Or how hard he had struggled to execute the beast contract spell in this manner.

He had way too many close calls this year. He wondered if there was a part of him that died during this time. The part that sought recognition. The part that sought to prove to his grandfather that he should have counted on him more than his abusive brother.

The young man had suffered greatly in this isolated environment where all he was told was to fight and do nothing else. He was thankful for this place for that. That's because loneliness bothered him. It reminded him that he was not welcome in the outside world. That he would be skewered alive for something he hadn't done.

So this torture palace became the young man's paradise. It was his personal brand of hell that he found comforting.

"Lightning Wave!"

The young man mumbled to himself as he decided to finish the rest of the wraiths with his AoE. He had not learned this spell through any scroll. No. It was his own creation that he had created after receiving an epiphany. An epiphany after months and months of battling and doing nothing else.

A cluster of light green lightning was created around the young man before turning into a green-liquid-like substance.

A lightning element spell that had properties of water.

The streaks of green lightning were like water-immersed branches of money plants that didn't disappear. They stayed in the lightning water and glowed green in color as they multiplied.

The young man swung around himself with his dagger drawn and raised at both his sides. The lightning water that was created around him spread in all directions.

As the lightning water spread, a bright green glow appeared. The lightning branches that were immersed in the elemental water latched onto their targets before glowing brighter by the moment.

The young man had kept his dragged into his storage after executing that spell. He was breathing hard. And he had sweat on his forehead. But one could tell he had no problem standing toe to toe with the wraith hordes once again. He had the energy to spare and could dominate.

Crack. Crack. Crack.

The wraiths' bodies burst open. Their armors shattered. Their weapons were thrown away from them. Even the ground that the wraiths had occupied cracked below them. Those cracks resembled lightning patterns found in lightning water.

Clap! Clap! Clap!

"Little eel, I must say you have improved yourself tremendously over these past few months. I am thoroughly entertained by your performance."

A charming yet dangerous woman appeared out of nowhere in the air behind this young man. The latter didn't say anything. He still had deadpan expressions in his eyes. But he turned around and bowed a bit before raising his head.

The dangerous lady nodded after she received that bow. She slowly made her descent and touched the ground with her right foot ever so slightly. In the next moment, she was standing close to the young man who was still bowing down to her.

"Your way of lightning has taken a divergent turn. I am not sure I have seen any lightning element ranker with this version of lightning attainment. I am not sure if there would be anyone in the present who could pull off something like you.

Then again..."

Chapter 640 Prelude to Chaos: Little Eel P2

Then again..."

The young man was visibly distressed at the sight of this lady. He knew she was watching him. His miseries were a way to entertain herself after all.

But he didn't dare raise any objection. For he knew there were things worse than death when it came to dealing with a Sage ranker like her. No matter if one of her feet was in the grave or not.

The young lady chuckled and looked at her hands which were manifestations of her soul sense. She touched the back of her right hand with her left hand to feel something she wasn't feeling. It was as if she was missing something. Something she had been craving for centuries on end now.

"Then again, it's been a long time since I was out. At this point, anything I see would be a surprise to me. I'm excited, little eel. Excited to get out."

Eliza addressed Ivor Osan, who was bowing down in front of her. He knew that even if these words were addressed to him, they were more intended for the speaker herself than for him.

Ivor raised his head after a while. He didn't meet the lady's eyes. But he could feel that his skin would start to melt in her presence because of the aura she gave off. The Enderflames were part of her existence. They didn't need to manifest themselves to make Ivor this apprehensive about them.

"Is it time?"

Ivor asked, guessing Eliza's intentions. The young lady chuckled before answering.

"Fufufufu. That crafty kitten is up to something again.

He has solid plans, though. I give him that. And they seem sane enough. Layla is on schedule with her plans. So, she might need your help. So I want you out."

Eliza said and surveyed the area around her before scrunching her nose in disgust. She raised her right hand and made a half-lotus gesture with it. In the next moment, stress lines appeared on Ivor's forehead as he experienced a dreadful sensation all around him.

A sea of Enderflames had been summoned on the mountain top out of thin air. In the blink of an eye. That spell's level was Sage-level. If it wasn't for the barrier Eliza had created around Ivor, the guy would have been baked to perfection with just the heatwaves alone.

A cooked eel on an air fryer.

After Ivor's second blink, the Enderflames were snuffed out. He gulped as he witnessed a Sage spell being used casually to clean the wraiths' bodies. They were no more. Their armors were no more. Their smell was no more. Their residual mana signature was no more.

It was as if the place had never seen an outbreak of wraiths before.

"Sage Eliza, you know I have a bounty on my..."

Ivor felt his spirit catch fire when he tried to object. Eliza wasn't doing anything to him on purpose, of course. Each emotion she felt was making the Enderflames manifest all around her. And right now, she was a bit irritated.

"If I say you need to be out, you will go out, little eel.

Of course, I know there's a bounty on your head. Don't worry. I'll let you walk out without anyone keeping tabs on you. No historian assigned to track you would be able to get to you."

Eliza said and pursed her lips. She then kept her index finger on her lips as if pondering over something before correcting herself.

"Umm... nobody would be able to track you unless you are being tracked by a Grandmaster ranker or above. Or a Master ranker historian who is very skilled. Then I can't help it."

In frustration, Ivor clenched his fists when the absolute certainty of a Sage ranker turned conditional. But he tried not to think about anything. He knew she could read minds when he was this close to her. So he kept his mind serene and empty of all thoughts as he listened to her patiently.

Eliza chuckled when she observed Ivor's reactions. She had to admit that in those months, Ivor had not only grown physically but also showed extreme improvement in his ranking journey. By now, he had also strengthened his mental fortitude in dealing with her.

The almost-mummified Sage liked teasing young boys with her frightening charms. She sighed when she got no response from Ivor about how bitchy she was and continued.

"I have kept tabs on the outside world through the reports sent by Layla. Therefore, I don't see a Master ranker or beyond tracking you since the heat around Osan Woods Butcher has died down a lot.

Therefore, you should be fine with the measure I provide you. You have stepped into Adept rank now. So that's another level of protection you would have against historians and users of Seer arrays, who would be trying to pinpoint you once in a while."

Ivor nodded at Eliza's statements after he heard her. Just yesterday, he had stepped into Adept rank after he was done battling with four Draconic lizards at once. That was another instance where death almost embraced him and he ended up breaking into Adept rank.

'Guys like you shine brightest in adversity.'

Eliza had said that to him after his breakthrough. It was her way of complimenting him. It was also her way of telling him that his breakthrough was thanks to her. After all, she had given him those adversities.

"That's it? Just help Layla out? I'll be free to do whatever I want after that?"

Eliza chuckled before starting to speak. Of course, things weren't as simple as Ivor had hoped. But they weren't as complicated as they seemed either. She just needed another pawn from her side before the process kicked off and ended up being the poster definition of Domino's effect. She would pay Ivor his due rewards. She wouldn't care what happens to him after her work is done the way she wanted.

Ivor was about to be out of Purgatory after what he felt like decades. The place had given him dark circles around his eyes. He didn't know how he was going to feel after seeing something normal and mundane from the outside world after all these months.

One part of him was scared to venture out and wanted to stay inside this dreadful place because he had grown familiar with it. But then another part of him grew excited. If he could enjoy being surrounded by wraiths, draconic lizards, and monsters for most of the day every day for months, how hard could it be to step outside and feel the thrill of being chased by the entire kingdom?

The title of Osan Woods Butcher had not been obtained by him. But perhaps he should be the killer the kingdom sees in him. That's what he felt as he listened to Sage Eliza's words. He nodded at her in the end, attesting that he would listen to her.

Ivor Osan was out the next day. With a seemingly different appearance but there were a few similarities with the original him. He looked older than before. He also had a different mana signature. A complete makeover that paid tribute to his former self.

He was a different person from the inside too when compared to the one he was before entering Purgatory.

The guy had dropped his edgelordness. Now he was a calm storm. And this storm was heading toward Nightshade duchy. Towards the White Raven guild.