

## Vile 71

### Chapter 71: Besanc

Eren went to his dorm room after that and told Reen to change into a necklace. He immediately wore the same and made his way to a particular facility that looked abandoned. The first-year students were still learning about things inside the academy and they were yet to realize the importance of this facility.

The evening had started to set in by the time Eren had exited out of the room post his consultation with Linda. So he didn't feel like resuming to attend Peter's lecture. Eren wasn't interested in homeroom lectures at all. None of the professors could teach him what he needed to learn the most. He needed to find other lecturers and attend their lectures by paying with merit points.

But before he started spending his merit points, Eren needed to secure a stable way to earn them. That was the reason for his arrival to this particular facility known as Regulatory Board for the Lionhearts Beast Sanctuary, AKA Besanc.

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Besanc had adopted the setup of a typical adventurer guild to make the students get familiarized with how the adventurers worked and their way of life. It regulated a large area known as the Lionheart Beast Sanctuary that spanned across the south-eastern side of the academy grounds and a small part of the gigantic forest known as Themyscira's Amazon.

A matriarchal tribe was settled at the border of Lionheart Beast Sanctuary that separated it from Themyscira's Amazon. The academy ground's borders ended before the Sanctuary, allowing for a neutral zone forming in the middle. This neutral zone would be visited by both LA students and the Amazons.

The academy had cordial relations with the Amazons. They had been given the autonomy to rule their lands by the Edinburgh kingdom and other kingdoms which had their presence in their respective territories. The tribe located at the border of the sanctuary was only a small part of the Themyscira's might.

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Coming back to LA. The facility for Besanc boasted a large hall. The inside of the hall was flickering with many spectral screens. This was the facility meant for every student of the academy, not just the first year.

The fifth-year students were completing their on-field experience programs. And most of the second to fourth-year students were on their long holidays. Only a few students had decided to stay inside the academy.

And yet, Besanc was filled with second, third, and fourth-year students. This wasn't surprising.

The students who had remained in LA during the long holidays were the ones who either didn't have a family/guardian to return to. Or they were too focused on their studies to care about anything else. Either way, accepting and completing missions issued by Besanc was a good way for these students to spend time and practise whatever they learned so far while earning merit points.

The flickering and ever-changing screen contained a lot of information regarding the sanctuary that might overwhelm a first-year newbie. Eren acted like a newbie from the outside too. But he wasn't excited at all from the inside.

Eren's last two years in the academy from the previous timeline were mostly spent in the sanctuary. He had only two years to at least become a passable berserker. So the Besanc and the sanctuary were more homely than his dorm room for him during those times.

Eren went towards a counter that catered to first-year students. The blonde girl wasn't expecting any student to visit her window anytime soon so she was surprised by his entry.

"Hello, ma'am. Name's Eren Idril. I want to register myself in the Besanc as an apprentice adventurer."

"Boy, Besanc on-field demo program wouldn't start for first-year students for another two or three months. We are yet to arrange the adventurers that can lead you. Come back after Besanc releases a circular notice for your year."

"Ma'am, your name is Sharla Hinsken, right? It seems there's a bit of misunderstanding. I'm not here for the on-field demos."

I'm here to register as an apprentice adventurer so that I can take up missions. The first-years can register in the Besanc after breaking into F-Rank, right? I'm a verified student of LA and also an F-Rank. And my BTP is 14, which meets the minimum requirement set by the Besanc."

The Sharla was again taken aback by the first-year greenhorn's knowledge about the academy's rules. He even knew about her names. Although this wasn't impossible for a first-year to know about her name, she still found it surprising.

The kid looked plain but his presence after he spoke exuded a kind of confidence Sharla had often found in the experienced adventurers.

"Alright. Allow me to scan your details."

The blond receptionist quickly got over her surprise and resumed her formal way of attending to apprentice adventurers. Eren soon received a prompt on his spectral screen.

"Besanc (Verified) wants to access your personal and academic information. Would you like to proceed?"

Eren mentally selected the 'Yes' option and his information was transferred to the openly visible spectral screen in front of the receptionist.

Sharla confirmed his details, especially his BTP before proceeding to send a Besanc membership token on his ID stone.

"Hmm! It seems everything is in order, Eren. Let me warn you about a few things now that you've officially entered into the Besanc. Don't head out to complete even the simplest of missions before getting your hands on suitable ranking techniques and spells. Otherwise, even a simple grab-&-fetch herb deposition mission would turn out to be deadly for you."

Your privacy is always respected by the academy.

But all bets will be off if a student dies in the forest and you are found to be involved in any way with that case. The tracking data will be retrieved from your ID stone and you will be punished by the law if found to be guilty. So don't commit any crime.

Always make a habit of checking out the updated map published by the Besanc over your spectral screens and open screens placed inside the Besanc's hall. This will allow you to know a lot about the forest's current power structure, its terrain, magic beasts' population density, and their distribution among other things. The information can turn out to be life-saving if you draw your plans related to the missions accordingly.

You can choose to share your location on the map to the Besanc network or only with your peers upon your choice. Or you can choose to stay hidden. The ones with their location encrypted will also not be allowed to know about the others' information.

The missions need to be completed within the due times mentioned in their details. Start from the missions that have the lowest BTP requirement and gradually move towards accepting more challenging missions. Don't get blinded by the merit points certain missions offer.

Choose missions that are suitable for your element, class, and BTP. You are allowed to stay inside the sanctuary for up to three days at a stretch unless you take prior permission.

If you fail to show up at the academy's border checkpoint within three days, you will be considered to be in danger. Your right to privacy will be overwritten and a retrieval team will be sent to your location after tracking your ID stone.

You will be taken back by the team even if you are found to be not in any form of danger. A penalty of merit points will be raised against you. So you'll either have to pay the amount upfront or in instalments.

Don't go solo for beast subjugation missions. Form a party of five or seven students to complete them. If you don't know anyone, you can request Besanc to form a party. We will send a prompt to other students' personal screens, and they will join you after knowing about the mission details. Is there anything you want to discuss or ask?"

"No, miss Sharla. Don't worry. I'm only going to claim the missions for today. I'll only head out when I have a few spells in my arsenal. I'll take my leave now. But not before confessing that your beauty exceeds the rumours that have been spread about you among the first-year students! It was my pleasure to meet a stunner like you."

Eren complemented Sharla in passing. The previous Eren wouldn't have done anything like that. But Eren of today knew women like to be praised every so often.

Eren wasn't technically breaking LA's rules by accepting missions right after entering the academy. But he was surely bending them in his favour. Therefore, he needed to smoothen out any friction that might arise due to it in the future.

Eren's smooth complement had its intended effect on Sharla. She smiled at him and allowed him to proceed further.

Eren did not have any questions regarding the information Sharla had provided him. He already knew about how Besanc worked. But he still let her finish what she needed to say as a formality.

A new sub-screen was available for Eren to see after that. It had the title of Besanc. Eren slightly bowed to thank Sharla before heading towards a big spectral screen displayed in the hall that was titled Available Missions.

The minimum requirement for accepting the available missions was a BTP of 14. Eren had barely made it.

But the Butcher had the advantage of being a first-year. He would be prioritized by Besanc's system over his seniors for low-level missions. For example, if there's a mission with a minimum BTP requirement of 14, then that mission would remain unclaimed for a certain period unless a first-year claim it. Only when there's no first year would the mission go towards the senior year students.

Emergency missions and extended missions came with their own guidelines. But generally, first-year students would be prioritized for low-level missions in all categories. The newbie students were not allowed to take up any missions that crossed a certain BTP value. But anything below that could be easily claimed by them.

Low-level missions produced relatively lowest gains in merit points. But they were easier to do than normal missions. A student would gain maximum merit points with minimum efforts if they could chain these low-level missions together. Eren was aiming to do exactly that.

## **Chapter 72: Effective Use of a Protagonist**

A student would gain maximum merit points with minimum effort if they could chain the low-level missions together. Eren was aiming to do exactly that.

Generally, the low-level missions would be released every day and get refreshed within a week. That meant there were around seven sets of missions for each day of the week. Each type would be released on that specific day and would be available for the next week after someone had claimed them.

But that also meant students would need to wait for a day or in the worst case an entire week to claim these low-level missions if someone pulls a fast one on them and takes all such missions from a particular set for themselves. Eren was going to claim all these low-risk-high-return missions in one go so that he could earn maximum merit points during this week.

Eren had stolen this idea from Ken Riverine of the past timeline. In that timeline, he was the one who took all the newbie missions to himself and faced the wrath of second-year students who were aiming for these exact missions.

Eren first went to Besanc's public restroom. He secured a cubicle and called forth his demon beast that was hanging by his neck in the form of a necklace. He had brought her here for a very special purpose. Not to attack someone but to make a fool out of his seniors.

The Butcher told Reen to coat his body in such a way that he looked taller and muscular. He had an image in his mind and Reen could see it with her mental connection with him. So she knew how Eren wanted her to make him take the shape of.

This process only had one flaw even when the shape and stature of a person were nailed down to a T. and that was the way Eren looked. He still looked like a devil who seemed to have a blurred body.

Eren was yet to overcome this drawback. But he already had a plan in his mind. His blurred body would not cause any problem if it can't be seen. He did not do anything with his face. But changed into a full-sleeve cotton shirt and wore a hooded jacket over it before covering most of his face with it. His legs seemed weird due to Reen's leg extensions to make him look taller than he was but they were covered with his loose pants.

Eren looked completely different from his usual appearance. He got out of the restroom after confirming his look. Then he went near the big screen and his personal Besanc spectral screen got automatically in sync with it.

Eren immediately filtered out a list of all the missions that had the minimum BTP value of 14. There were 49 such unclaimed missions. 30 missions belonged to today's set. And remaining ones were pending missions from the day before, which would soon be allowed to get claimed by senior students.

Eren accepted a huge lot of the missions in one go. They appeared on his personal Besanc screen with the tag of 'pending' in front of them. They all had a time limit of a week. He'd face a penalty of merit points in case he fails to complete them during that window.

A huge chunk of screen space on the big spectral screen was blanked out right after that. It was a very eye-catching scene. Eren had not claimed all the missions. He purposely left a few missions for a certain someone.

Just as he thought, Eren's claiming of sweet-pie missions had created a commotion in the Besanc common hall. This had to be done by a first-year newbie because the missions that had disappeared were not open to senior years by then.

A lot of senior students were angry. They had just lost a stable source of merit points income because of a single first-year.

The students were angry at Eren not only because he had accepted all these missions without caring about them but also because they didn't dare to do so when they were in their first year. They felt that Eren was breaking the tradition they were forced to follow.

One such person from the senior year couldn't keep quiet after experiencing the brazen breach of the unwritten rule observed among all of the LA's students by a mere first-year who hadn't even completed a week on the academy grounds. He forcefully suppressed his rage from seeping into his voice before addressing Eren:

"Kid, I suggest you drop the missions that you've taken just now and make them go unclaimed again. You will lose some merit points as a penalty but it won't be that much since the time of acceptance and release is almost negligent.

Do this and we'll forgive your disrespect towards your seniors instantly. Refuse, and we'll make sure that your first year becomes a "memorable" experience for you if you know what I mean. So, what will it be?"

Eren heard the threatening speech coming from behind him and couldn't help smiling wickedly under his hood. He feared there's no retaliation and his efforts to take on an altered visage would go to waste. Thank the devil there was one such side character still available in the hall.

"These missions are meant to be taken by first-year students. Why are you trying to complete them instead of claiming the missions with higher BTP requirements and bigger rewards?"

"That's none of your business, you arrogant brat. Just consider it as a way to respect your seniors. Now release the missions you've taken just now. I might let you keep one or two of them if you behave obediently. Or...!"

"Or what? I don't care about seniority, you pathetic piece of shit. I'm not releasing any of the missions I've taken so far. And not only this set. I'll come again to claim the next set of such missions. And a set after that. What will you do about it? What CAN you do about it?"

Eren insulted the guy and claimed that he'd come again to claim missions from the upcoming sets. The guy was incensed after hearing Eren's naked disrespect towards his seniors. By then other seniors had joined the guy who had stopped Eren.

The group of seniors had decided that this rude first-year had to be taught a lesson. They would have never imagined in their dreams that a newbie would dare to not only raise his voice against the seniors but also diss them in such a way.

"Brat, I see that you've become a little rusty in your manners. Never mind. Life in the academy can teach you many things.

You have to go inside the forest to complete your missions right. Make sure you don't trip over something. Otherwise, the bones of your hands and legs might get broken, you know. Hahaha!"

The senior student spoke and chuckled to himself. He was joined by other seniors who had started jeering at him. Eren didn't have a shred of anger in his voice. He replied with the same calmness that his body was oozing out at the time.

"Are your threats even threatening enough if you have to say them in such a roundabout way? What can I expect from a fat-ass senior like you?

Have the guts to state your threats openly if you have balls between your legs, you scared little chickens. If you want to come at me, fokin come at me with all you got. Don't try to brag your ass in front of your crowd. Why don't you cut off your limp d\*cks if all you seniors can ever do is shame your manhoods by trying to scare a first-year student with your words and miserably failing at it?"

More seniors had started circling the duo of Eren and the guy who was facing all his taunts head-on. The faces of all the seniors were twisted after they heard Eren's blasphemous words. Before the senior student who has spoken till now could voice his rage, another second-year student had come forward and spoke with more authority than the former:

"That's it, kid. Do you want naked threats? I'll give you naked threats. Drop the missions you've taken just now and we'll spare you after roughing you up in the forest.

Otherwise, forget about walking effortlessly for the coming weeks. We'll f\*ck you so bad, you won't be able to get out of your dorm room, much less take on any more missions."

The crowd of seniors heard a vicious laugh coming from the first-year guy standing right in the middle of them without any worry. They got tense after hearing his next words:

"Hahahaha! It's the first time in my life that I've received a direct threat. This was fun. Come then. I'll take you on. The forest will be our battleground.

I'll teach you that there's no such thing as "seniority" that you so cherish and go gaga over without having sufficient power to back it up.

And remember the name of the guy who will be kind enough to teach you this hard lesson in life.

It's Riverine. Ken Riverine."

### **Chapter 73: F-Rank Spells**

"It's Riverine. Ken Riverine."

The first-year left the scene after stating out his name ever so proudly. Only then did the seniors get to know why this greenhorn was daring to cross with them with so much confidence. He was from the house of an Earl. Most of the seniors started regretting jeering at the guy. What if uses his mighty house's power to mess with them?

But not all the seniors thought like this. Especially not the guy who was the last one to speak to "Ken". He spoke out after "Ken" left and gave some assurance to the senior students around him.

"This Ken is a fool if he thinks his family name can safeguard him inside the academy. LA is the sole judge, jury, and executioner on the academy grounds. As for the outside threats coming from the house of Riverine, my family will manage them.

Name's Roody Orton.

My family is only a viscount for now. But my father serves in the royal court. He is enough to prevent the house of Riverine from acting out as long as we don't kill the guy.

Maybe the kid would realize his mistake later in the day after carefully thinking about it. We'll give him some time to do just that. But we'll make sure to make a better man out of him if he doesn't listen.

A few of us need to be looking out for Ken tomorrow at this place if he decides to show up and pull the same stunt he pulled today. If he does that... I swear to all the things I hold dear, I'll fo\*ck him up to six ways to Sunday!"

Roody assured the crowd with his name before declaring his stance. The students overcame their fear due to that and realized this was indeed LA grounds. There was no king or slave among them. They had seen the rich kids struggle the same as them in this academy. And Orton's family was there to take care of the outside threat.

Of course, most of the senior students didn't believe that Roody would uphold his promise once he took care of Ken. They needed to publicize the matter between Roody and Ken to make him accountable. The

senior students had decided to blame everything on Roody for whatever happened to Ken. a silent agreement was passed within the crowd.

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Unknown to all this, the 'protagonist', the real Ken Riverine, was going to come tomorrow to accept the same type of missions Eren had accepted. And then he'd get caught in a mess Eren had created for him.

Ken had accepted the same type of missions in the previous timeline. But he was aware of the unwritten rule. He didn't like to disrespect his seniors so he had only accepted the half of missions that Eren had accepted in number. Plus, he didn't act this rudely to his seniors when he was confronted by them.

So the repercussions Ken faced in his previous timeline were lighter in nature. They became a driving force for him to improve himself and beat the same seniors in inter-year battles eventually, making his name known across the students of all years.

But this time, "Ken" had taken almost all the sweet-pie missions and dissed his seniors horrendously. Only time would tell what his state would be after this timeline's repercussions befall him.

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The fake Ken found another facility and restroom inside it to change into his original form. Reen returned to being his neck pendant. Only then did Eren who also looked like Eren make his way towards another facility.

Eren was no fan of having an entourage of senior students hindering him while he roamed the forest to complete his missions. He had the protagonist shoulder all his burdens like a good guy he was.

Although the senior students might realize the guy who dissed them and the real Ken were two different guys later down the line, a rift would have been formed between them and the house of Riverine. Both sides would get too busy within themselves against their will to care about any other first-year after that. Just as what happened in the previous timeline.

This timeline's outcome was going to be the same as the previous timeline's. Only its severity had been altered. And Eren had intercepted the process in the middle and took all the benefits for himself.

Whatever happened to Ken or the senior students after his actions weren't Eren's headache. He was in a hurry to collect more merit points for himself so that he could use them all in one go during a particular event.

Eren found the building he was looking for. It was named Novice's Treasury. It was kinda a sacred place for all the F-Rank students. It contained all the ranking techniques and spells the academy had to offer for all the Novice rankers.

Eren was here to get his hands on the most basic lightning-element spells. He didn't need them for his missions inside the sanctuary because he had Reen. But the entry of his acceptance of spells was needed in case Besanc checked his pre-mission battle status.

The butcher was going to hold on to get a ranking technique. Even the lowest of a lightning element ranking technique would cost him a lot in merit points. But the real issue wasn't just the wastage of merit points.



Eren knew he was going to get his hands on a better ranking technique within a week. Why would he even start practising a ranking technique for a few days only to abandon it and make all the efforts go to vain?

Of course, not having a ranking technique was going to affect Eren's post-battle recovery. But that was something he could manage somehow. He just needed to make sure that he doesn't engage in a situation that he can't deal with quickly. If everything fails, he still has Reen who he will call forth only as a last resort.

Eren found himself in front of another counter. The receptionist was a male. Eren asked him about the lightning element spells in F-Rank with each of them having a cap of 100 merit points. The latter sent him a list on his spectral screen in response.

[F-Rank Spells.

Filtered out by the cap of 100 Merit points and arranged in descending order:

Blitz Steps (Three-star)- 100 Merit Points

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Blitzortung (Two-star)- 100 Merit Points

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XX (XX)- 89 Merit Points

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Rayo (Two-star)- 87 Points

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XX (XX)- 89 Merit Points

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Blitzstrom (Three-star)- 85 Points

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Eren had zeroed in on spells named Blitz Steps, Blitzortung, Rayo, and Blitzstrom. They would collectively cost him 461 merit points that would get taken out from his current balance of 1000 merit points.

Blitz steps was a movement type spell. It would make Eren's feet get surrounded by tongues of lightning and increase his speed after he channelled his mana in a specific way.

Blitzortung was a defence-type spell. Meant to be deployed at crucial times. It would create a layer of lightning around Eren that would last for a few seconds before disappearing.

Rayo was a solo attack spell meant for close combat style. It would generate a slim rod of lightning from Eren's index finger that would have a high penetrating power.

And finally Blitzstrom. It was an AoE spell meant to be released when the user gets surrounded by enemies from all sides. It would generate untamed lightning streams that would wreak havoc around the area with Eren in the centre.

Eren had covered his basic needs of movement, defence, attack, and AoE with these spells.

#### **Chapter 74: Converting Extols into Merps**

Eren had covered his basic needs of movement, defence, attack, and AoE with the spells he had selected for himself.

The stars in front of the spells conveyed their effectiveness.

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Spells are also ranked as per their usage by ranked entities. That means there are F-Rank Novice spells for F-Rank Novice rankers, E-Rank Ace spells for Ace rankers, D-Rank Adapt spells for Adapt rankers, and so on.

Each ranked spell further gets divided into five grades or stars. A five-star spell of a particular rank will have the highest potency and effects than any of its lower-star counterparts within the same rank.

1-star: Initial grade

2-star: Mid grade

3-star: Upper grade

4-star: Peak grade

5-star: Supreme grade

Each ranked spell is only suitable for a mage in that same rank. That means an F-Rank entity in any stage can use the F-Rank spell of any star. But they can not use even the initial-grade spell of E-Rank without facing severe consequences.

Of course, a higher-star spell was more expensive than its lower-star counterpart in the same rank. The five-star spell was the most expensive of all its lower-star variations.

Furthermore, defence-type spells were usually more expensive than attack-type and movement-type spells. That was because they were few, especially when it came to derived elements. Plus, the students could not neglect their defence no matter which class or path they choose for themselves. So paying a higher amount of merit points for a two-star defence-type wasn't questioned.

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Eren informed his spell choices to the receptionist. In return, the latter sent him a deduction request worth 511 merit points. The extra 50 merit points were processing charges. Eren clicked 'Yes' and his points were deducted.

The receptionist handed him four scrolls after confirming the merit points deposition. The scrolls seemed new because they were recently created for the current first-year students.

The data on the scrolls could be digitized and stored on an ID stone. But LA prevented students from doing that without buying the spell scrolls first.

First, the academy wanted the students to have a physical copy of the spell scrolls in case their ID stones stopped functioning due to various reasons. Second, it wanted every student to pay for every spell they take with their own merit points.

Otherwise, there were ways to share the digitized copy among students through their respective ID stones' spectral screens without involving LA in the transaction. The academy wanted the merit points economy to thrive. And this would have been detrimental to their cause.

Of course, the students were allowed to store the data printed on the spell scrolls onto their ID stones after completing the transaction with the academy. They were just prohibited from sharing the data with any other student.

Eren had to sign a D-Rank binding contract with the receptionist. The surcharge of 50 points was due to this contract. The contract was placed upon the students to assure that they would not illegally share the contents of the spell scrolls they received. Sharing would be prohibited to any entity related or unrelated to the academy, as physical or digitized copies, consciously or subconsciously, through themselves, other personnel, or via any other means.

The contract covered every possible loophole the potential contract breachers might use in their favour. Every student had to sign these contracts before receiving the spells, ensuring that the spell scrolls don't get copied and shared across the crowds of students.

Eren wasn't going to share his spell scrolls anyway. He didn't mind signing the binding contract. But receiving spells was not the sole reason he had come to this facility.

"Sir, I want to convert my Extols into merit points."

The Butcher declared his second reason for being there. He had already exchanged the Extols he had received from Isaac and his team with different ones in the city of Lionhearts when he was roaming its streets with Jake. He didn't want those Extols tracked to him, after all.

Even if LA wasn't seriously looking into Isaac's case, they were still all academy's students. Eren didn't want to give the case a breakthrough at his expense.

"Hmm? Kid, are you sure? The Extols could still be used on the academy grounds for various facilities. The Extols, once converted into merit points, can't be given back to the students even if they get ready to pay a higher exchange rate in merit points to do so."

The receptionist warned Eren. He couldn't be blamed. The Butcher didn't look like he was born rich with his visage or his clothes.

"I'm sure, sir. What is the current exchange rate?"

"135 merit points for one Extol."

'Not bad. I was expecting an exchange rate of 140 merit points/Extol. But this is not out of my expectations either. The rate would only get worse in the coming days as more students opt for this way. I should exchange more than half of the Extols I have with merit points. I'll store the rest of the Extols for emergencies.' Eren thought to himself before replying:

"That's fine. Sir, I want to convert 100 Extols into merit points."

Eren said this before taking exactly 100 Extols out from his storage space. The receptionist opened his eyes wide in surprise after looking at the kid, his clothes, and then at the amount of Extols he had so casually produced in front of him.

The receptionist of Novice's Treasury thought the greenhorn in front of him must have exhausted all his Extols reserve to earn merit points when the exchange rate was relatively favourable. He appreciated the lad's boldness and decisiveness when it came to exhausting his wealth for his education.

“Alright, kid. Let me analyze the Extols first before transferring your merit points.”

The receptionist made Eren place all the Extols he had onto an array that had been lit up on top of the reception desk. The said array lit up and confirmed the authenticity of every Extol. The Butcher received 13500 merit points quickly afterwards as a one-time payment for all the wealth that he had just emptied on LA.

“Kid, do you want a lightning element ranking technique? I can give you a four-star technique in that element for just 10K Merps (merit points) if you want. We keep limited copies of this technique and won’t sell another one for a certain period unless there’s a special case.”

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The ranking techniques were categorized by stars as well, just like the spells. They were tremendously more expensive than buying a few spells. Usually, students would only be able to afford a three-star or lower grade ranking technique after a few months when their Merps reached a satisfying level of deposition.

This was detrimental to most of the students’ growth as they won’t be able to progress in their ranking journey without these techniques given to them. But LA could also not just circulate these techniques among students as freebies and demean the techniques’ values. It would be taken as showing disrespect to the creators who crafted these techniques. And students would also stop working hard for these techniques if they were to be easily made available.

That’s why the academy would organize an auction event for the students every once in a while. This event would allow the students to get the techniques they want at a relatively lower amount of Merps.

Students would have different inherent natures even if their elemental affinities were to be the same. So they won’t face much competition for getting a compatible technique for them. The students would still have to cough up a decent amount of Merps. It is just that the amount won’t be breaking their banks and backs in the process.

Furthermore, the students could also place any valuable item they have for the auction event. The academy would only charge a meagre amount of Merps and the rest of the buying amount would get deposited to the original owner’s account linked with ID stone.

The free-flow of Merps would facilitate students paying more Extols and any other form of wealth at expensive exchange rates. This would result in LA getting the best out of every deal the students make for themselves.

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Coming back to Eren’s current predicament. He wanted to invest his newly earned Merps into the four-star technique, which the receptionist metaphorically dangled in front of him like it was some form of bait.

But Eren knew that the very first auction event for the first-year students would be organized a week from now on. That’s the reason he was desperate to earn merit points before the end of the week at the risk of offending his seniors. A risk he had now outsourced to Ken Riverine.

The academy would also control the number of spells and techniques it distributed to the students from a particular academic year. This was done so that the students won't copy each other and end up colluding their ranking path due to someone else's unhealthy influence.

Eren didn't attend the auction event in his previous timeline because he wasn't an F-Rank back then at this period. He was still practising the Edinburgh traditional technique for rankless entities. So the auction event wasn't useful for him.

That's why Eren didn't know what to expect from the event. He wasn't sure if he could find anything worthwhile in the upcoming event for himself.

Almost nobody would be aware of the auction event, including most professors and their respective panels as well as the academy staff. LA made sure to keep it that way. Otherwise, the rich students would start converting their wealth into Merps at relatively profitable exchange rates for themselves before the start of the event.

The academy would be forced to hand out Merps at lower prices than their expected hike. It could not raise the exchange rate before the news of the event spreads forth. It could also not circulate the news earlier than a day before the event takes place. Or else it would break the most fundamental rule of business, i.e. demand-and-supply.

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What Eren was doing today was exactly what the academy wanted to prevent rich students from doing. He was taking full advantage of knowing about the upcoming events.

Eren thought of trying his luck in the auction event. He would have a better chance of trying his luck in the upcoming event than getting the technique right here from the receptionist. He might still get what was being offered to him currently. Even in the case the auction gets over and he doesn't find a better, more compatible technique for himself.

Even if he didn't know about the items and techniques getting auctioned in the event, Eren was sure they would be a tad better and a bit cheaper than what he could get from Novice's treasury.

"No sir. I will hold on to these Merps for now."

Eren finally decided to deny the offer. He bowed and left the Novice's Treasury. The receptionist could only look at Eren's departing figure with his now-narrowed eyes.

## **Chapter 75: Fine-tuning**

The day was going to set when Eren was done with his business in the Novice's Treasury. Eren had a hearty supper in the canteen before heading to his dorm room. He needed to re-learn the spells he had bought.

That's right. Eren had already learned these spells in his past timeline. He had selected the same spells because it would be easy for him to execute them because of his previous familiarity.

Eren remembered the spells just fine. But he bought the spell scrolls so that he could explain their origins when he executes them in front of the students. He would be able to cast them without having to worry about coming up with explanations.

Eren locked the door behind him and sat cross-legged on his bed. He first opened the spell scroll of Rayo, the spell he was most familiar with. He analyzed the mana pathways and mana points that needed to be activated in sequence inside his body for the spell to get activated.

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Primary mana pathways will be created as soon as the ranker steps into the F-Rank. These mana pathways can be assumed as veins through which mana gets circulated inside the body.

These mana pathways draw mana from the mana core located below the ranker's navel. They are interconnected at a specific distance and interval, where the mana gets accumulated before it travels any further. These points of intersection where the mana accumulation takes place are called mana points.

The mana points are found in abundance inside a ranker's body. They only grow in quality and quantity as the ranker ranks up. The F-Rank entity is only privy to the most elementary form of these mana veins and mana points. That's why the whole circuit consisting of these two aspects is called the primary mana pathway system while the ranker is in low ranks.

A spell describes a specific way and sequence with which a ranker is needed to circulate his mana inside the mana veins. Certain mana points get activated as the previously accumulated mana starts to travel to the next mana point in the mana circuit or get dispersed. And the now-empty space is taken over by a new deposition of the mana drawn from the mana core.

The caster needs to make sure that only the mana points mentioned in the spell scrolls are activated and other mana points don't react to the circulation of mana inside the mana veins. They also need to ensure that mana dispersion occurs at specific mana points while the remaining mana points send the accumulated mana inside the mana circuit again.

The dispersed mana brings forth the required effect intended by the spell while the mana that gets circulated keeps it powered up in case it is a prolonged cast. The mana circulation will take place even when the spell doesn't need to be maintained over a period. It's just that a ranker will face less trouble if he doesn't need to maintain the spell.

Any minute failure in sequencing and execution might result in the spell not getting cast at all. Or it can end up in a skewed spell effect. In worst cases, the ranker can feel some side effects due to their mana pathways and/or mana points getting injured due to improper execution.

F-Rank spells were easiest to get accustomed to because they were based on the primary mana pathway system. A ranker had few mana pathways and points to worry about. So the casting took less time and there was less room for errors.

Generally, a ranker would be able to learn to cast a spell within two-three days if the spell was of the same element as their elemental affinity. The further the element of the spell was from the caster's elemental affinity, the more were chances of the caster not mastering the spell even after a long time, the spell getting miss-executed, or in the caster getting injured in the worst case.

That's why it was necessary to choose the ranking technique and spells according to one's elemental affinity. The synchronicity in elemental affinity would result in the spell quickly getting mastered by the ranker, with enhanced output and efficient usage of the limited mana storage.

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Eren already knew about the mana pathways and mana points needed to get activated to execute a Rayo beam. He closed his eyes and confirmed the sequences mentioned in the spell scroll are in sync with what he remembered.

Eren opened his eyes suddenly and activated the mana points needed to get activated for the spell with utmost precision. It took just a moment before a straight purple-blue beam emerged from the tip of his right index finger. He maintained the 4ft long beam and observed its effectiveness.

The blue beam had tiny tongues of lightning surrounding it. It looked like it had taken a solid form. But one could see that it was still ethereal upon closer inspection.

The beam was less than 0.5cm in diameter, making it highly penetrable. It could cut or tear through a thick wooden log or a small rock like they were made of papers. But it worked most devastatingly on one's flesh.

Eren could control the beam's diameter and length by tweaking the flow of mana inside his mana circuit. The beam's penetration power would be at its maximum if Eren kept its length under 3-4 feet while narrowing its diameter as much as he could.

Eren knew the rankless people and beasts couldn't threaten him anymore with just this spell alone. The body of a rankless entity was extremely fragile as it wasn't imbued in mana. Rayo could easily cut a rankless person from head to toe vertically in a straight line without facing many obstructions.

Rayo's use wasn't limited to the beam deployment alone. It came with a dagger art that could enhance the penetration power of a ranker's dagger. Eren needed to slightly change the activation sequencing of mana points to make the dagger imbue in Rayo's coating. The dagger's edge will have streams of lightning dancing on it.

Plus, there were other variants of Rayo that Eren wasn't used to yet. He had focused on potion-making at the start of his academic journey in his previous timeline. The F-Rank elemental spells that he had practised unrelated to the potion-making were limited in number.

Even the spells Eren had just gotten in this timeline were the same spells that had accompanied him at the beginning of his berserker journey. He had practised them when he was a berserker, so it felt different when he executed the Rayo now. He felt it was lacking in output even when it showed unbelievable penetration power from a rankless' perspective.

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A berserker class was straightforward. The berserker could use the most spells of close combat expert or many other compatible classes. The ranking technique of a berserker would help them pump up the spells' effects. And the effects would only multiply after the consumption of the berserker potions acting as the external power sources.



This was the relation between a berserker and a close combat expert. A close combat expert is what one would get after they make a berserker skip on steroids. The ex-berserker would then have to focus on close combat skills and points of impact instead of cranking up the raw power to the max.

This cranking up of raw power was what made the berserker's combat technique different from that of a close combat expert. The spells' effects would extend in range and power due to the berserker's way of executing them. That allowed the berserker to remain at a distance from their enemies while they focused on normal spells that acted as AoEs. So a berserker didn't need to get close to their opponents to beat them, unlike a close combat expert.

That's why the founder of LA and renowned berserker of his generation, Ivar Ironside chose to become a close combat expert after he experienced an incurable injury. That injury forced him to let go of the path of a berserker.

But Ivar wasn't willing to start from scratch. So he opted for the path of a close combat expert at the cost of regressing in his ranking journey. The regression wasn't that heavy due to the path of a berserker and that of a close combat expert didn't have much conflict between them. After that, the bearer of the title Lionheart became equally famous in the path of a close combat expert.

This is the reason LA focuses the most on three paths: berserker, close combat expert, and potioneer.

The directly proportional relationship between a berserker and a close combat expert had given Eren the confidence he needed to change his class in this timeline while keeping the advantages of his previous experiences almost intact. He knew he would master the path of a close combat expert eventually for this exact reason. He had realized that his lightning element and his inherent nature of speed were more compatible with the finesses of a close combat expert than the wild nature of a berserker.

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Eren knew the seeming lack of power came from him not being a berserker anymore. This was the spell's original effect without it getting enhanced by the path and powers of a berserker.

Eren needed to adjust his battle style according to his new reality.

Eren then spent the night doing the same with the rest of the spells and confirmed that he could execute the spells without having to worry about casting failures. He would scare Jake with his learning speed if the latter came to know that he had mastered four spells in one night. Only when he was assured that the spell execution had no problem did he sleep post-midnight.

Eren skipped his homeroom classes and decided to pay a visit to Novice's Training Center. It housed private training rooms for Novice rankers. The training rooms were big enough for rankers to cast any of their spells.

The rooms would come with special equipment to measure the output of the spells if the ranker was willing to pay more in Merps. There were also other services available, but that came with their own Merps costs.

Eren went towards a counter and booked a plain room for himself without any services or add-ons.

The no-add-on booking would cost him 30 merit points per hour. Eren booked the private room for 10 hours today and 10 hours tomorrow.

But Eren didn't care much about the lost Merps when he had so much to gain from his trip to the sanctuary. He needed to fine-tune his basic combat prowess, his spells, and his E-Rank strengthening with Reen's help. The private room had cost him 480 Merps but it had given him the privacy he needed to do all that he had planned.

Eren spent the two days training in the private room. He got used to the spells. He still carried his habits from being a berserker so his new battling style had many flaws. It neither looked like a berserker's or a close combat expert's way of doing things. But it was the best he could do for now without the guidance of an expert.

Eren used his ID stone to unlock the giant door and got out of the private room. He was sweaty all over, bruised, battered, and exhausted. But he had a smile on his face.

Eren was finally ready to visit the sanctuary tomorrow!

### **Chapter 76: Levine de Montmorency**

Eren woke up early the next day. He got ready and wore all the F-Rank gears Nina had given him. Jake caught him in the living room and was surprised to see the latter in combat mode.

"Bruh, where are you going this early in the morning? That too in a get-up like that? The intra-class war still has 4 days remaining, you know. And homeroom classes aren't that bad. Plus, they are free. You'll not lose anything if you attend them."

'I'll lose my time though.' Eren thought to himself. But he didn't say it out loud. He just informed Jake about his departure to the sanctuary.

"I'm aware of that, Jakey. It's just that I've decided to accept some missions from Besanc. Shouldn't take me more than two days."

"Oh. Alright then. Speaking of Besanc. Do you know Ken Riverine from our class of 1/C got beaten up by unknown assailants yesterday? Rumour has it that he had accepted low-level missions from the Besanc that the senior students were eyeing. The guy has been hammered badly and is currently admitted into the academy's infirmary.

Almost the entire first-year influential lot is standing behind Ken now. A lot of renowned first-year students have used their advantage of getting prioritized for low-level missions and started accepting them after finding out about Ken's serious condition. It is to make a statement to the senior students that they can't just bully us first-years.

But the seniors seem to only focus on Ken for now. They are often seen near the infirmary as if to scare Ken some more than they already might have. I don't know what the guy did to piss off the seniors like this! But neither side is going to back out now. Especially the upcoming inter-year ranking war between first and second-years is going to get heated up more than usual.

The academy is staying true to its stance and playing neutral. It has basically made it clear that the students would have to sort out the mess that they had created. It won't intervene and play as a mediator.

Ken has a lot of allies and enemies after just three days into the academy. Can you believe it? The name Riverine is enough to rile up the masses, I tell you.

You must have applied for Besanc after this event as well I reckon. Although the seniors aren't targeting any other first-years, it is better to be safe than sorry. So you might want to stay alert about any possible ambush in the forest."

Jake saw a radiant smile forming on Eren's face after he told him about the latest and most gossiped about event among the first-years these days. He was about to ask the latter why he seemed happy about the news but was faced with a sudden request from him:

"Yeah, Jakey I'll be careful. Don't worry about Mr. protagonist. He'll be fine on his own. Meanwhile, do me a favour, alright? Go to the potioneering lab for the first-years and see if there's a notice about Levine starting her lectures or not."

"Hmm? Levine? THE Levine De Montmorency? Why do you want to attend that hag's potioneering classes? From what I've heard about her, her Merp charges are high per lecture. And she is very serious when it comes to any matter related to potions.

They say that Edward Jener is a much better choice than any of the potioners available in the academy for first years. First, he is the in-charge of the first year's potion lab. Second, Sienna Slughorn has decided to join his classes. You already know about the girl's family background. Who doesn't know about the Slughorn potions?

A lot of students from our class as well as the students from other classes have decided to follow in her footsteps. Why don't we join Edward Jenner's lectures too?"

Edward Jenner. The same lab-in-charge who was in cahoots with Sienna in Eren's previous timeline. The butcher knew that this timeline was no different in that department. The old him would have thought like Jake and opted for Edward's classes. But he was not old-him anymore.

"Jakey, if you want us to be learning potioneering together, we can't even think about joining Edward's classes ever. Trust me on this. Let's just say the guy is bad news and would someday lure a calamity on himself and his students."

Jake could feel Eren was being serious. What Eren said sounded less like a prediction and more like a prophecy.

Eren had exuded the exact seriousness when he told him and his father that they should stop interacting with Jason Storm. At least till they complete their trip to the city of Lionhearts. He knew exactly what happened after that. Therefore Sullivan Jr. decided to trust Eren this time too:

"\*Long sigh.\* Alright. I'll check out the lab and find out about Montmorency's classes. Someday, we'll sit with mugs full of root beers in our hands and you'll have to tell me from where you get such news. You know this right?

Anyway, I'm getting late for Ace Julia's classes. Most of us guys attending her lectures don't care about illusions and shit. But we sure like looking at her figure getting seen through semi-revealing clothing during her lectures. Hehe!"

Jake attempted to entice Eren into attending the homeroom classes but it was in vain. The duo bid adieu to each other in a hurry and went their separate ways after leaving their dorm house.

The sanctuary was a few hours away from the first-years' dorm township region. Eren had to use Blitze Steps a few times to get there. Not only did it make him get there faster but also allowed him to practise the spell while moving to his destination.

The academy had deployed an energy shield around its borders.

But the sanctuary did not get included in that protected region. This was the deal with the Amazons. The academy would keep their rights over their portion of the Beast Sanctuary intact without having to deploy the energy shield around the forest. The Amazons would be allowed an unhindered entry. And in return, the students would not be prosecuted if they got into the land protected by the Amazons.

Therefore, LA had the department of Besanc create a check-post to allow its students to enter or exit the Beast Sanctuary. It would keep track of the number of students and their status in the forest. And would deploy rescue or investigation parties if any emergency arises.

This post would also serve as a contact and connection the academy had with the Amazons. So naturally, LA employed the Amazon it had in its ranks as its representative to make that connection smoother.

"Good day, miss... err... Adapt Marla. Looking as stunning as ever, I might add. I'm here to enter the forest for my missions."

## **Chapter 77: The Amazonian Way**

"Good day, miss... err... Adapt Marla. Looking as stunning as ever, I might add. I'm here to enter the forest for my missions."

In front of Eren stood an Amazonian lady with jet black hair, olive skin, and light brown eyes. She was holding the reins of her ferocious-looking stallion while standing near the beast. Behind her were her subordinates and other academy staff managing the check-post.

Usually, the matters related to the students' entrance and exit to and from the sanctuary were handled by the academy staff and Marla's subordinates. But Eren acted like he didn't know about these things.

Eren greeted Marla who was appointed at the check-post as an apt representative of both sides, the Amazons and the academy. He made a fist out of his right hand and placed it over his right peck, just above the heart while he bowed a little in front of her.

This was a formal way of greeting the superiors in the customs of Amazons. Eren had come to the sanctuary many times in the past timeline after he had started walking on the path of a berserker. Therefore, he had interacted with a lot of Amazons.

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Amazons respected everyone even when they were a matriarchal society. The male members in their ranks were treated as respectfully as their female counterparts. It's just that they didn't have any claim in family inheritance or any other important place in society. There were other small restrictions and rules placed on the males, but they weren't too demeaning or something difficult to follow.

The Amazonian females had special rights. They would serve as the family heads of their respective families. The leader of any hunter or adventurer party would almost always be a female unless there's some special situation.

Plus, the Amazonian women were free to have intimate relationships with almost anyone as long as consent was involved. The concept of marriage existed in them. But it wasn't forced upon.

So usually, the females would go through the pregnancy without marrying the father of the child. The couple could choose to stick together to be there for their child or could get separated while ensuring that the child is adequately looked after.

But great powers came with great responsibilities. The females were more responsible for taking care of their families and parties. They would be trained harder than their male peers from a very young age. And they would be the ones serving in the front lines in case of any conflict.

The Amazon had their own ranking techniques especially suitable for females. These ranking techniques allowed the females in their ranks to assert dominance over their male peers despite the innate physical prowess advantage of the latter side.

The Amazons were very particular about not letting these ranking techniques get out of their folds at any cost. The rankless entities had to sign an extremely restrictive contract to get access to these Amazonian ranking techniques.

But any Amazonian girl would gladly sign the binding contract after observing the effects it had on the practising female rankers. Overwhelming power was the way with which the Amazonians would make their presence known in society.

The rule of the strong gaining more benefits was observed in almost every society.

But it was observed more thoroughly by the Amazons, with advantages tilted towards the females.

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Coming back to Eren's current situation. Marla was surprised a little by the kid's way of greeting her. The Amazonian greeting wasn't exactly a secret. But she didn't expect a first-year LA student to perform it with the right posture and apt bow while maintaining eye contact.

The greeting was extended to the senior members of the Amazons by their juniors. So Marla didn't have to perform the same greeting. She just patted her stallion to calm it down and nodded her head at Eren with a smile on her face before replying:

"Hmm! Kid, it's good that you know the way of the Amazons. Therefore, I'll allow you to call me Miss Marla. You don't have to sweet-talk me into anything you know. I'll let you enter the forest as long as you have missions under your name and a clearance from Besanc."

“Aah! You got it wrong Miss Marla. I’m merely stating facts about your beauty. I’m sure you must have been told the same thing by hundreds of people if not thousands.

I know a novice like me shouldn’t talk to an Adapt like you without due prudence but I couldn’t help praising you a little after looking at you.

Isn’t there a saying in the Amazons?

‘The feminine deserves all the good things that come it’s way.’

Maybe my little praise was already heading your way before I said it out loud.”

“Hehehehe! Kid, did you date an Amazon girl before coming here to LA? How can you know so many little things about our society?

I can see that you are good at flattering the ladies. But I don’t dislike it. Anyway, usually this procedure would be handled by the academy staff you see behind me. But I’ll make an exception today. Show me your mission details.”

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Eren did not praise Marla without any reason. She was an excellent close combat expert. In the past timeline, she had taken Ken as her apprentice after seeing his potential. But in this timeline, he was bedridden. This was a perfect chance for the butcher to make Marla take HIM as her apprentice after displaying his potential.

Ken didn’t know that someone was screwing him over and over behind his back. He wasn’t sure about taking Marla’s offer yet. But the same offer was already eyed on by a vile evil he wasn’t even aware of.

Eren wasn’t delusional enough to think that these praises would be enough to make him replace Ken. The interaction was only supposed to make Marla see him in a better light. He still needed to prove that his calibre as an F-Rank novice was as good as Ken’s if not more.

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Eren’s spectral screen had a new prompt after Marla asked him to show his mission details. The prompt was asking permission to allow Marla to see the missions and the details he had taken under his name. The butcher allowed her to read the contents without any delay.

“So your name is Eren Idril. Let’s see. BTP of 14! Not bad. Recently registered with Besanc. Hmm? So many missions in one go! Are you trying to break a record or something?

Eren, the missions you’ve taken are all low-levelled but they increase in difficulty if you look at them collectively. Are you sure you can complete them all by staying three days in the forest? You might lose more Merps than you would gain in the tally if you take on unnecessary risks.”

“I’m sure Miss Marla. I’m planning to finish all the missions in two days, in fact.”

“Hehe! I like your confidence. Let’s see if you can complete all the missions in two days then. I’ll give you a three-star weapon if you can do that.”

“Hmm! Let’s talk about a different reward after I’m done finishing everything served on my platter first. I’m sure a magnanimous Amazonian like you would grant me this simple request of mine.”

“You want something else? Your ambitions seem higher than what I gave them credit for. Alright, let’s see your worth as a novice. Then, I’ll see what I can do about your request.”

Saying that Marla accessed her spectral screen and created a giant opening in the energy shield. Eren could pass through the shield now to enter the sanctuary.

The butcher bowed to Marla again before taking his leave. Marla’s subordinates and the academy staff were shocked by the kid’s confidence in talking to an Adapt ranker directly without even flinching.

Somebody higher enough in the administrative ladder used his credentials to pull up Eren’s record and found out that he had a C-Rank healer listed as his guardian in his records. Only that allowed the onlookers to make sense out of the kid’s bold behaviour. He was used to interacting with a C-Rank entity. No wonder he could hold himself talking to a D-rank one.

“Lady Marla, you want me to follow the kid? Maybe he’ll cheat to finish all his missions within two days to gain favour from you.”

One assistant professor from Marla’s panel asked her. She thought the kid was a little impudent talking to Marla so casually like that. The excuse of watching over him was just that, an excuse. She wanted to reprimand the scoundrel so that he wouldn’t make the same mistake again.

All of Marla’s panel was made of women. They were Amazonians too, just like Marla. But they were young and newly appointed by the settlement to serve under her. They hadn’t yet mixed with the outside society much. So they couldn’t think about a junior like Eren approaching a senior like Marla even in their imaginations.

“Almera, how many times have I told you? This is not our settlement. The academy and the society outside our forested heaven have their own customs. You don’t want to watch over him but teach him some form of lesson, don’t you?”

Leave the boy to his devices. The test is to see if Eren could complete the missions in two days or not. It is not about how he does it.

And I’ll ask him in detail about how he managed to achieve his feat if he achieves it, that is. If I find out that what Eren did wasn’t impressive enough or if he is lying, I’ll just flat out reject him giving anything in return.”

## **Chapter 78: Di\*k Destroyer**

A fleeting shadow could be seen traversing through the dense vegetation of a forest at amazing speed. It had feet covered in lightning. Every step it takes would generate an electric illumination that was visible even during the daylight.

This shadow was none other than Eren. He was executing Blitz Steps to increase his speed. First, it was to avoid any possible repercussions heading his way due to his talk with Marla. He knew about Almera and how she behaved. Second, it was to get to a specific spot to start off completing his missions.

Eren had accepted an array of missions that varied in their type, difficulty level, location, and ETCs (estimated times of completion). Ideally, he needed to be careful about doing any of these missions recklessly, but he had Reen with him.

Eren asked Reen to assume a random girl's avatar that she had eaten in the past. He gave her clothes and a mask to wear. He wore a mask as well.

It would be better if Reen took action after she had assumed the shape of a human rather than shapeshifting in the middle of a crisis. She didn't need any artefacts to wear, so Eren didn't give her any.

"Where are we going, Eren?"

Reen asked in a 16ish year girl's voice. She was following Eren normally even while he was using Blitz Steps, sans any effort. Apparently, she didn't need any movement spell to keep up with an F-Rank's spell.

"We are going to our first mission site. The first mission is to collect 7 claw sets of F-Rank wind wolves. We can also exchange their other body parts at Besanc for more merit points."

"But I'm hungry, Eren. I'll need to feed on their bodies."

"You can eat all the pack of wolves, except any seven needed for my mission. We'll also have you eat anything you want during our travels. Let's quickly go to the pack's known lair now. We are short on time."

Reen had her saliva dripping out of her mouth after Eren confirmed he'll feed her with those innocent wind wolves.

It's been a while since Reen had her last good meal. She had started eating human food now after Eren fed her some as a trial. She didn't dislike it. But she found out that human food didn't give her the same type of satisfaction as her natural food.

The demoness slime quickly established her mental connection with Eren again to read his memories and route of the place. She quickly grabbed Eren and lifted him in her arms before running off in the same direction at breakneck speed. She just couldn't wait anymore now that her feeding time was this close.

The duo quickly reached the place. Eren saw two wind wolves dispatched as sentries by the pack. He got down from Reen's princess-carry and told her to stay back and let him deal with it.

Reen was unhappy Eren was going to toy with her food but she obeyed nonetheless. She got back and let Eren handle them.

The wolves saw the intruders and howled quickly after to let others in the pack know about the situation. They adopted a defensive position.

Reen was still masking her aura and a lot of her powers. But the beastly senses couldn't be fooled. The beasts immediately came to the conclusion that Reen standing at the back was a bigger threat than the kid who was trotting about in front of them.



Eren retrieved his pair of daggers from the storage before wielding them in front of him. He was ready to execute Blitz Steps again.

Eren still couldn't use Blitz Steps at its fullest possible potential. That was because it gave him tunnel vision at high speeds.

The tunnel vision made it difficult for him to land his blows on opponents with precision. Therefore, in his previous timeline, Eren had used Blitz Steps only when he intended to travel from point A to point B at extreme speeds or when dodging an incoming attack heading his way.

The past-Eren rarely used Blitz Steps during his attacks. Because it made it difficult for him to face any incoming counter from a different direction in case his attack is somehow parried or deflected.

Eren has decided that he'll overcome the spell's shortcomings in this timeline. He needed practice and more practice to achieve this difficult feat. Today was as good a day as any to start with the same.

Eren saw the wolves were afraid of Reen standing behind him. They were trying to buy time so that the reinforcement could join them.

Eren needed to act fast if he wanted to take care of this mission without Reen's help. He couldn't let the reinforcement arrive before the two wolves are dead and done for.

Blitz Steps was executed. The wolves saw Eren's feet getting coated in tongues of lightning before he almost vanished in front of them. But the beastly instincts allowed them to feel a puny kid had closed in on them from behind.

The beasts were about to turn around and face their intruder but one of them howled quickly after, unmistakably dripping in an insurmountable amount of pain.

Eren had cut the balls of one of the sentry beasts from behind them. He also chopped off its thing and smiled with unmasked cruelty in his eyes. Like his long-awaited dream has been finally committed.

The wolf that had its cojones and thing cut off jumped off in the air quickly after and started running madly. The other beast was first startled and then alert by the sudden turn of events.

The altered beast quickly shifted his position and secured his groin in the opposite direction. He used his claws to attack the vile creature that was targeting their balls and malehoods.

Eren was ready for the beast's attack. He used both the daggers in his hands to block the attack. But the wolf had covertly launched a wind blade attack in that move. The mana powered ethereal wind blade couldn't be parried with Eren's daggers and it landed on Eren's chest.

Eren's shirt tore up quickly as a result. But the F-Rank chainmail armour he was wearing inside blocked the attack from harming his body.

But the armour couldn't block the impact the wind blade had generated. Eren was thrown in the air at a distance before landing on the ground.

Now Eren was 10m away from the altered beast. The agitated beast had joined him by then and was growling at him with hateful eyes.

The beasts had forgotten about Reen in the heat of the battle now. They only cared about the fight's outcome. Eren knew things had gotten difficult. But he wouldn't have it any other way. This was the best battle to test the thrill of close combat style while venting his frustration from the previous timeline.

Eren threw both his daggers in the air right above the beasts' position. The altitude was high so it would take some time for them to land on the ground.

The sudden daggers throw distracted the beasts a little and they couldn't help looking up, eyeing the weapons that had the power to harm them. Before they could check the position of the vile creature who was the owner of those daggers though, they realized he had again seemingly vanished from his previous position.

Eren appeared right over one of the beasts' heads and touched its forehead with his right index finger.

"Rayo!"

Eren spoke the name of the attack to subconsciously execute it in the right way at the right time. A beam of lightning was generated from the tip of the same index finger that was touching the beast's forehead.

The beam easily pierced the beast's hide and his skeletal obstruction before destroying the brain matter within. But it couldn't be contained in that space. The beam was seen piercing the other side of the beast's head, coming out from the bottom of its jaws.

The beast that faced the Rayo point-blank was dead then and there but its body was yet to hit the ground. Eren knew the beast that had its malehood chopped was going to attack him soon after.

He used the dead beast's pierced head as a platform to jump in the air. He executed Blitz Steps at the same time to make his jump gain more altitude.

Eren executed Blitzortung as soon as he grabbed the daggers that he had thrown in the air beforehand. A layer of lightning soon covered him. It generated a repulsive field around him that nullified the wind attacks launched by the other beast.

Eren got to behind the dead beast by then and slashed at its balls and penis with his daggers. Only then did the dead beast's body hit the ground.

Eren still had Blitzortung active but he knew he wouldn't be able to maintain it for a long time. He quickly launched a frontal assault on the remaining beast without worrying about the incoming attack.

The beast launched wind blades after wind blades with its limb swings but they were all deflected by Eren's defence type spell. He quickly closed in on the beast, used one of his daggers to parry the claw attack from the beast, and the remaining dagger was lodged in the beast's head through its jaws from down below.

Eren's defence type spell vanished. But the beast was also no more by then. The wind wolf's di\*k-less body was dropped on the ground hard in front of its slayer.

Eren could hear the approaching pack as it had started surrounding his position. He knew he was soon going to face an entire pack, but he wasn't worried.

“If you want to blame anyone for the way you died, blame that fokin wind wolf that bit my di\*ck off and killed me in my previous life. I’ll demand repayment from your entire race for that blasphemy, you di\*ck destroyer race of wolves.”

## **Chapter 79: Sharing a Secret**

Eren was done with killing eight more wolves the same way before he ran out of mana. He then ordered Reen to start her long-awaited feeding session after securing the bodies of his kills in his storage space.

Reen had used her deterrence as a demon beast to make the approaching wolf pack halt in its steps. Then she only allowed six more beasts to attack Eren in the pair of two so that he could practise his spells and battle style.

Eren had stopped using Blitzortung after its first time. The spell was taxing on his mana reserve. And he didn’t have a ranking technique yet to recover from the state of lack of mana quickly.

Eren’s clothes faced the burnt of the wolves’ attack as a result. His chainmail armour could now be seen in the open. He had cuts and bruises on his skin due to the effects of wind blades and claw slashes aimed at him by the wolves.

Eren had understood a lot of his flaws in that controlled battle. First, Blitz Steps was incompatible with close combat style no matter how he executed it.

Blitz Steps gave Eren the element of surprise when attacking his opponent. But it was a dual-edge sword. It also sent him right in the opponents’ attacking range. If his attack was failed or deflected at that time, the counter would be too heavy for him to face it without the artefact or defence spell.

And Eren couldn’t see the counter coming at him due to the tunnel vision. He had the means to dodge that attack with his Blitz Steps, but the same spell had become a reason for him to not see the incoming counter.

Plus, Eren’s berserking habits made him unable to fully utilize any openings properly. Other aspects needed some amount of fine-tuning as well. But Eren needed to prioritize a few of them first before thinking of doing anything else.

Reen was soon done consuming the pack of wind wolves one by one. Her devouring speed had increased and she didn’t need to shapeshift her whole body to digest her prey now.

Reen would just extend her arm and it would extend like a lasso before forming a slimy mass of a bubble at the place where her palm was. She would drop that slimy matter on her prey while it was still connected to her torso through the very lasso-like semi-transparent thing that once acted like her arm.

The magic beasts would get digested thoroughly inside that slimy bubble. Then the nutrients and purified mana after the digestion would travel back to Reen through her lasso-like arm.

Reen was satisfied after she ate almost 24 wind wolves this way.

She retracted her arm to its normalcy and used the same hand to control her burp in a ladylike manner. Her mannerisms were perfect, thanks to reading through Eren’s memories. But the noise of that burp was earthshaking, making her seem like a demoness that she was.

“Where are we heading next, Eren?”

Reen asked Eren who was busy changing into a new shirt. He drank an F-Rank healing potion that he had obtained from Isaac’s party before replying,

“We have saved a lot of time on this mission. Ideally, students are suggested to lure the sentry wind wolves away from their pack one or two at a time before commencing battle.

It takes a lot of time and planning. But our frontal assault has cut down on that ETC tremendously.

Today, we’ll focus on completing missions like these nearby while completing the herbs collection mission simultaneously. It won’t be too difficult for us to locate the herbs with your ability anyway.

Tomorrow, we’ll head inside the deeper parts of the forest before returning to the academy’s check-post.”

Reen just nodded her head at Eren’s plan. She was happy as long as she got to eat plenty of food in the process.

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Eren got back to the academy’s check post after completing all his missions. The site had a facility managed by Besanc for students to deposit their in-mission items.

The butcher visited that facility and deposited all the items in one go. There were magic beasts’ carcasses, all kinds of herbs, and minerals. They were all related to his missions.

Eren had also mixed in random items that he had picked up while doing the missions. These items will also be converted into random Merps based on their actual values.

Eren also added an E-Rank Mana Blessing he had collected from the Osan woods in the list of things he claimed to have found in the sanctuary. The Besanc staff was surprised before getting all excited about Eren’s luck. He was ready to offer the kid some Merps in thousands to get the MB from him. But Eren denied that offer.

Eren only showed the E-Rank Mana Blessing so that it gets added into the Besanc records and its source could be justified. He knew the amount he was offered for the Mana Blessing was good. But it wasn’t the best he could get for the stone. Especially considering the upcoming event.

The Butcher’s account was credited with around 3K Merps for all the missions he had completed so far. He now had around 17K Merps in his reserve.

Eren got out of the Besanc’s collection facility feeling refreshed. He hadn’t slept much in his stay in the forest, but the heavy Merps account became the reason for his rejuvenation.

Completing all the missions in two days was a pinch. The butcher wouldn’t have been able to pull it off had it not been for Reen.

The day was going to set. Eren soon found Marla near her cherished stallion. He quickly made his way towards her.

“Miss Marla, I’m back.”

“Yo. Eren right? Did you complete all the missions you were assigned with?”

“Yes, ma’am. You can check my Besanc record if you want.”

“Don’t mind if I do then.”

Marla immediately sent Eren a read request to access his Besanc records. The latter accepted it just as quickly:

“Hmm. Let’s see. Herbs collection missions have gone smoothly. Too smoothly if I may add. But it might be that you are just that lucky.

The beasts’ carcasses have taken some damage. It seems you’ve ruined some parts of their bodies. There was a penalty of Merps for that. But overall you did well.

The earning is around 3K Merps. Too bad, the academy doesn’t convert Merps into Extols. Otherwise, it would have been a pretty good way to exploit the system.”

Eren didn’t say anything in response. He let her analyse the Besanc records her way. He could have dealt with the beasts with more finesse to make more profit out of the deal. But that would have been detrimental here.

Marla needed a weak point, a blemish in Eren to make sense out of his achievement. Too perfect a result would raise suspicion in everyone’s mind.

“Hmm. Eren, I’m satisfied with your result. You wanted something else instead of a three-star weapon, right? State your reward. I’ll accept it if it’s within reason.”

Eren was waiting for Marla to say those words. He replied to her without wasting time:

“Miss Marla. I know you’d appreciate a straight shooter. I want to be your apprentice and learn close combat style from you.”

“Hmm? You want to be my apprentice? Aah, you must have been there in the crowd when I offered it to the Riverine kid. You even know about my path. But sorry kid, I doubt you have what it takes to be my apprentice.

Don’t get me wrong, I don’t want to underestimate you. It’s just that a BTP of 14 isn’t going to cut it if you want to follow the regime I will set for my apprentice. I’d suggest you ask for some other reward.”

“Please hear me out, ma’am Marla. I have a lightning element, same as you. I’m sure you’ll find out that I’m better suited for your apprenticeship than anyone else in my year.

I might not be the best candidate when it comes to the BTP value. But I have what it takes to stand at the top of my class if given enough time and nourishment by the academy.”

“Oh! Tall claim kid. I suppose you seem smart enough to come up with a way to prove that claim.”

“Indeed ma’am. You can watch my performance at intra-class and inter-class battles to know about my calibre.

And I'll let you in on an academic secret I accidentally got privy to if you allow me. You can consider that as my gift to you for being my mentor."

Eren flashed a cunning smile after saying that. Marla was hooked.

"Hmm? What is it?"

Marla's voice got lower when she asked it. Eren came closer to her and almost whispered what he had to say in her ears:

"I heard the conversation between two academy staff and got to know this information. LA is going to organize an auction event for first-year students four days from now on. You know what that means right!"

Marla was surprised by Eren's revelation. The auction event was as important for professors as it was for the students. That's because they would have an auction event of their own after the kids' event took place.

The same restrictions and then some more were implemented in the professors' auction event as well. That's why knowing about the event came with a certain advantage. Marla could immediately stock up on Merps to get maximum benefits out of the event.

Of course, the stakes were bigger in the auction event meant for E and D-Rank entities. So the prices for products getting sold in the event were also higher.

"Kid, I'll have to liquidate a lot of my assets. If I find out that you were lying..."

"Rest assured, ma'am Marla. I'm not lying. Why would I lie to the person who I want to take as my mentor? Plus, why do you think I decided to complete all the missions?"

Eren and Marla both smiled cunningly at each other after knowing about this. Eren also let his potential mentor know that he was going to sell an E-Rank Mana Blessing in the auction meant for E and D-Rank entities.

Marla didn't need an E-Rank MB for her anymore. But she could tip off the professors under her about the product that was getting auctioned. They could prepare in advance for the same.

Eren scored some more brownie points in Marla's book. She couldn't help but say:

"Alright, Eren. If the news about a "certain" event is true, and you perform well in the ranking wars, I'll take you as my apprentice. I'll give you a worthy gift if you get selected. And I'll still give you a decent reward even if you fail to do so. Is that alright?"

"Certainly, miss Marla. I look forward to your teachings."

Eren bowed to Marla before turning his back and walking off in the opposite direction. Marla's horse snorted its nose in response to the lad's suave. But the D-Rank Amazoness couldn't help observing his back far longer than she cared to admit.

## **Chapter 80: Levine's Test**

"Hmm? Eren! You are back. Did you complete your missions?"

Jake asked as soon as he entered the dorm house and found Eren reading a scroll in the living room.

“Hmm? Oh, yeah. They were all low levelled ones, anyway. Did you find out about Adapt Levine’s classes?”

Only then did Jake realize why his friend was waiting for him in the living room. It wasn’t that the guy felt like talking to him after his missions to vent out any built-up excitement or frustrations he had.

Eren was only focused on what he had asked Jake to do. The latter smiled mirthlessly before replying:

“I did. You were right. Adapt Levine did put a notice regarding her upcoming classes. She says she’ll be conducting them twice a week. She’ll be starting them a few days after the first round of intra-class ranking war commences.

This hag is charging double the Merps than what Edward Jenner is charging. But there’s a way to get around it.

Day after tomorrow, she will organise a practical test for all the novice potioners. The ones who pass that test will only be required to pay a meagre amount of Merps. The discounted Merps charge is way lesser than Jenner’s charges. It seems she only wants to get top students for herself at the expense of discouraging a majority of mediocre ones.

I don’t know about you, but I don’t think I’ll be able to pass the test. I can handle elementary potions if I know about the exact procedure. But I’ll not be able to make even a one-star F-Rank potion. And the test needs at least a two-star outcome in the same rank to clear it.”

Jake conveyed his lack of optimism in clearing the test.

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The creation of F-Rank potions was a lot similar to elementary potions in many ways. The only difference was that the potion-in-making liquids need to be imbued with one’s mana at the right time in the right quantity.

Other subtle steps needed the intervention of mana imbuing from a potioner’s side. The imbuing part wasn’t difficult itself. Anyone could do it.

But the test of the potion makers lied in imbuing their mana without disrupting the potioning process. There were numerous ways with which the potion-in-making could get affected. The most common way among them was imbuing the ingredients with elementalized mana where it was not needed and not regularizing the mana elementalization where it was needed.

Plus, the inherent nature of a ranker also had the power to affect the potion’s quality positively or negatively depending upon the way they implemented it in the manufacturing process. Absolute control over one’s mana imbuing, spells, right timing, and a hint of sixth sense was necessary to become a successful potioner.

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“Don’t worry, Jakey. A day is enough for us to polish our skills. I’ll teach you. We’ll convert this living room into a potion lab and practise our skills here. Are you in?”

Eren offered a helping hand to his housemate. Jake never expected the latter to be this approachable. He had come to terms with Eren's recluse nature. But the guy still had some surprises in store for him.

"Are you sure? Of course, I'm in. I want to be a potioneer too, you know. That's where all the money is. But it'll still be difficult to crack Adapt Levine's test. I'm not that skilled in potion-making yet.

Don't get me wrong. I trust your potion-making and teaching skills. Madam Nina must have taught you well. But you had just broken into F-Rank before coming to the academy. So all your in-lab experiences are only related to making elementary potions.

We don't even know the potion's name which is going to serve as a test. We only have enough time to practise potion-making for two potions, if we cut it close. If they don't appear in the test, it's game over for us.

Plus, we don't have any lab instruments. And I can guess we don't have enough Merps to get the sets from the academy even with both our accounts combined. Unless...!"

Jake paused midway and looked at Eren, receiving a smirk in response. The latter proceeded to take out all the instruments required to set up their lab.

"Unless I have the instruments. Come on, man! How can you think aunt Nina would send me empty-handed without the right apparatus for potion-making? We'll still need to buy a few things and some necessary ingredients. But that shouldn't stop us from turning this living room into a full-fledged potion lab.

Don't worry about my skills. They are enough to make us pass the test and enter Levine's elite club of students. And I know which potion is going to appear in Levine's test! We only need to practise that potion's manufacturing for the entire day. That is enough time for me to teach you in making a two-star variant of the solution."

"How do you know which potion is going to appear in the test?"

"The same way I knew about the incoming assassinations and bandit attacks on Jason's carriage when we were coming here."

"Why won't you tell me then, what is your source? And will you ever give me a complete piece of news without hiding anything from me?"

"Trust me, man. The less you know about the source, the better. All you need to do now is go to sleep and wake up early tomorrow with me. We'll hit the lab as soon as we can, take the necessary apparatus and ingredients from it, and start setting things up in this room.

You'll skip the homeroom lectures. You will have to stop attending the homeroom lectures most of the time from tomorrow on if you want to keep up with me. Don't depend on freebies, Jake. Heed my advice. Invest in the knowledge that is worth your time.

Your father is still in the city of Lionhearts, right? Tell him to send you all the extra Extols he has. Ask him to liquidate some of his wealth if he can. You are going to need a lot of Merps in the coming days."

Eren talked with Jake for a while, giving him a detailed plan of what he was going to do. Jake was really impressed with him. But he had noticed that a lot of his planning was based on certain conditions that



may or may not happen. Jake didn't know from where he got the confidence to base all his planning on his self-made assumptions or seeming information leaks.

"Alright, alright. I'm in. But you will pay the Merps for all our ingredients and apparatus. I will return the invested Merps with 10% interest only after your planning comes to fruition."

"10%? Jakey, my man. I'm taking all the risks in this deal. I'll take 20% and that is final. Don't start haggling like I'm some sort of a customer of yours in your shop now."

"Haah! Fine. Have it your way then. We still have Edward's classes if this endeavour of yours fails. It'll be fun to see your face if all your investment goes to waste. Hahaha!"

Eren chuckled at Jake's taunt.

He didn't feel angry. The guy was trained as a businessman from his childhood. He wouldn't take unnecessary risks in the market he was unsure of.

It was Eren's job to make a frugal person like Jake bleed Merps, no matter how cautious he was.

"And it'll be fun to see yours when you have to pay 20% more in a few days!"