

## Vile 751

### [Chapter 751 Talks With Tumko](#)

Alephee had managed to attack the second array eye all by herself while fighting off with the runic chains. She also didn't let Kavach and Hath Oda escape unscathed.

With her unpredictable lightning, fire, and time element attacks, she had almost killed the two rankers. Both the members of Tumko's team were in grave danger of dying. They had missing limbs and cauterized injuries as their medals for surviving Alephee's attacks.

And this was when she wasn't really trying to kill the two rankers. Eren had told them to be easy on Tumko's team.

Eren had a wild thought of killing Tumko right here and robbing him of his Ability with his bloodline powers. However, he knew that Tumko's Ability was so unique that only he could bring out its true potential. The Mentalist class was the furthest away from him. Thus, the Ability that focused so much on his class wasn't going to be of any use to him.

As such, it would be beneficial if he brings Tumko back to his team. He had contacted Agatha and Levine. Through them, he knew that there was a chance of war breaking out shortly between Edinburgh and Layos.

He knew all about Tumko. After all, Eren had dug up all that he could find about the guy that was public knowledge. The broken him had found a light of hope in his struggles.

Tumko had put in a crazy amount of effort to get to where he was. The guy was as hardworking as the current Eren if not more. In fact, one of the reasons Eren could stick to his bloody routine these days was because he knew that there was one guy out there who could pull off something like this. If Tumko could do it, so could he.

Tumko's awakened Ability wasn't a fluke just like it wasn't for Eren. Both had made conscious efforts to become one of the most norm-defying Adept-ranked entities.

Tumko was strong. His entire team was strong.

Eren needed strong allies in these turbulent times. So that he could make the right use of these times of war for himself. There were plenty of opportunities waiting to be claimed if and when the war did break out, provided that one was prepared.

Eren wasn't expecting war to break out in this timeline. He could guess that it was the butterfly effect at work. Nevertheless, he didn't regret any of his decisions. He even preferred there to be war.

Eren wasn't as weak as before. While he was still in the D-Rank stage, he could already tell that he was stronger than the last timeline's Adept-ranked-him.

Only strong and capable people were able to take advantage of the turbulent times. The low-ranked entities would be used as disposables in such times. The most casualties would come from them.

'A future that is unknown to me. This is fun.'

Eren thought to himself and smiled. He took out his Sativa stick and lit it up. He looked at the vigilant Tumko before speaking up.

"You were saying something to me?"

Tumko didn't try to rescue any of his team members. He knew that Eren was a deterrent he simply couldn't ignore. Also, he felt that Eren and his team members had not attempted the kill despite having the capability.

Tumko wasn't an idiot. He could see that Kirin was a capable fighter herself. Just a bit naive. As if she hadn't faced any real danger all her life despite being a C-Rank-- a sheltered ranker.

However, Tumko labeled Alephee to be the most dangerous among them all. He had watched her fight. For some reason, his senses as a veteran ranker were telling him that this black-haired girl alone was enough to take care of them all.

Still, they were all alive.

That could only mean one thing. The last chance. A way out.

"I... I am sorry that we tried to interrogate you. I just wanted to know if..."

Eren chuckled before speaking up.

"Heh! I'll be honest, Tumko. I have been to that place. I found everything I was looking for."

Eren said while releasing a dense cloud of smoke before continuing.

"As someone who has been into the Oni dungeon, let me tell you that it couldn't have given you any lucrative results. You would have died there or been taken as a guinea pig to a place you knew nothing about.

Especially during this period."

Tumko was trying to discern whether or not Eren was telling the truth or not. He was caught off guard when he heard his next words.

"I know about your Mentalist class. You can somewhat read minds and tell if a person is lying or not, right?"

The reason you were asking so many questions was that you guys wanted to get a read on us. So pay attention to me using your psychic powers when I say this: you would never be able to loot the riches that the Oni dungeon has to offer. At least not the way you would have wanted to.

Some or all of you would likely have died inside as sacrifices. Furthermore, you can't enter the place now since it's been locked. You can check the entrance yourself if you want to confirm."

Tumko found out that Eren had said these statements with clear consciousness, sans any mental fluctuations. It could only mean that he was speaking the truth. Or that he was a damn good liar.

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At first, Eren didn't understand why Tumko would try to access the entrance to the Oni dungeon this early in this timeline. In the previous timeline, he had taken his leave from the army and had been away for several years before coming back to this place.

However, Eren quickly zeroed in on a possibility after he heard Agatha's report right after he got out of the Oni dungeon.

War!

Tumko couldn't count on the fact that the region would be forbidden to be entered during times of war. It could become a conflict zone.

Therefore, he rushed to explore the Oni dungeon. As a result, he was here doing one final recon before proceeding with his plans. This was how he clashed with Eren and his team.

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"I... I see."

### [Chapter 752 War As A Blessing](#)

"I... I see."

Tumko spoke in a low voice after verifying that Eren was speaking the truth. He had tried to hide the disappointment in his voice. But even he knew that his efforts were in vain.

"Can I..."

Tumko asked Eren upon which the latter nodded his head before responding.

"Sure. Look after your team members after dispersing the isolation barrier. Then let's find a place to talk."

Eren started walking in a certain direction as he spoke-- The smoke of the Sativa Stick creating a trail behind him. His team members followed him without saying a word. Tumko took a long breath as he felt that a huge boulder had been lifted off of his shoulder.

'Only when you are strong can you afford to be benevolent.'

Eren thought to himself and chuckled. He felt like there should be a halo on his head for not resorting to purge Tumko's team right then and there.

The isolation barrier's array core was in Tumko's control. He did what Eren asked him to do and dispersed the isolation barrier before tending to his team members.

Eren created a place for a campfire not too far from where he was previously. He placed two large tree trunks on either side of the campfire, which would serve as seating arrangements for both teams. He then waited for Tumko to finish patching up his team members while having casual talks with Alephee and Kirin.

"You would have devoured him for his Ability if it was the Ace-ranked-you. Is that pragmatism I'm seeing?"

Alephee asked as she watched Eren making kebabs for all of them on a campfire.

Alephee and Kirin were sitting on the wooden log while Kaal was standing behind them with his hands behind his back. Eren was tending to the fire. Tumko and his team were yet to join them.

Eren chuckled before answering.

"Pragmatism born through prioritization of self-interests. I was never a mindless bull, to begin with. You know it better than anybody."

"Mindless pull?"

Kirin asked in Edinburgh's tongue all of a sudden when she heard Eren's words. Eren and Alephee both looked at Kirin with blank expressions when she said that, letting her know that she had misinterpreted something.

"Mindless BULL, Kirin darling. A bull with two horns."

Eren corrected her and manifested his two Oni horns. Kirin chuckled when she saw Eren snorting his nose like a bull with the Oni horns. She also understood her mistake and nodded at him.

p Eren retracted his horns and looked at Alephee before saying.

"I need a multi-front approach, Alephee. So I need multiple capable teams for that. What we fought just now might be what we are looking for."

Kirin liked the tempting aroma of the kebabs Eren was cooking for her. He had all the spices in his storage and all the skills he needed to turn these campfire-friendly meals into an authentic gourmet experience.

Alephee cradled her face into both her open palms as she watched Eren work on his kebabs. "What are those plans?" she asked, looking at the dancing flames.

Eren narrowed his eyes before answering.

"I have Echidna's Authority in my possession now. I can do a lot more in Monster Canyon than even the most elitist of guilds could ever dream of.

All its rare resources are waiting for me to claim them. I need a team for this reason."

Eren applied some herbs and sauce to his kebabs. He took his time to continue.

"Then I need a team to take part in the war directly and indirectly. It would allow me to influence the war the way I want to. I have some plans. I don't know if they'll work out or not. But I want to give them a shot anyway."

Eren said and took a long breath. He felt that the chilly air around him had received the warmth of the campfire. The aroma of cooked meat was exciting his smell buds. He enjoyed these sensations before continuing.

"Finally, I need a team that would serve as the face of the guild. I want it to hog the limelight while my other two teams do their work in silence."

Alephee wasn't surprised that Eren had given a lot of thought to this topic. Since her soul was occupying a homunculus vessel, she couldn't read his thoughts like she was used to. So she needed to know his plans in the usual way.

"And which team will you be a part of personally, Lord Husband?"

Kirin asked with curious expressions. She couldn't understand Eren's plans completely. So she decided to just follow him.

Eren picked up something with his soul sense and knew that Tumko and his entire team were approaching him. He smiled while looking in Tumko's direction before responding to Kirin's query.

"Neither. These teams will do what I ask of them while I work on Sage Eliza's task.

Optimal allotment of tasks— in simple words.

I am not arrogant enough to think that I can do everything by myself. This is the reason I established the guild in the first place. So that it can serve as my proxy at multiple places.

I was under the impression that Edinburgh was running out of things it could offer me now that I have entered Adept rank. After some time, I was planning to go to the Asikha empire to investigate a few things, while my guild and my city prospered here.

But this war changes everything. It provides me with the smokescreen I need to deal with my enemies directly. I don't have to create a lobby in the royal court anymore.

They say that there's a chance that the war might break out sooner or later. Hehe. When the time comes, I'll be the first to alight the flames of war and fan them myself.

This war will be a blessing for me. And for that old hag as well. I guess she hasn't run out of luck just yet."

### [Chapter 753 Getting Tumko Onboard](#)

"This war will be a blessing for me. And for that old hag as well. I guess she hasn't run out of her luck just yet."

Eren said in a careful voice. He then shook his head and got up from his position. He offered the skewered shish kebabs to Alephee, Layla, and Kaal. he had reserved four shish for himself.

Alephee didn't need any food to survive. But she could always taste-test the food. Kirin was the most surprised among them all after tasting the cuisine. It was her first time trying food outside the Oni dungeon. And she was smitten by its taste.

Eren took his seat in the middle of Alephee and Kirin with Kaal standing right behind him. He started eating his kebabs as he watched Tumko and the team enter his vision.

"What do you want to talk about?"

Bhaa Laah asked impatiently while looking angrily at Kaal. However, it wasn't the Ogre Lord who replied to her arrogant tone. Eren took it upon himself to suppress the problem-seeking night elf himself.

In the next moment, Bhaa Laah lost all strength in her legs. She was brought to her knees suddenly. The night elf started screaming under the full moon till her vocal cords started hurting.

"Aaaaaah!"

Bhaa Laah clutched her head with both her hands as her mind was filled with feelings of unfounded anger. The overwhelming feelings were slowly taking over her, which scared her. It wasn't long before Eren's soul sense overwhelmed her completely, making her lose consciousness.

Before Tumko's team could think negatively and retaliate, Eren spoke up after gulping down the mouthful of kebab's bite.

"I just made her sleep. You see, I don't want any brat speaking in the middle when the adults are talking."

Eren then looked at Jaad Ugar before speaking to him in a commanding tone.

"Pick up your sister and make her sleep a bit away from us. It shouldn't take long."

Jaad didn't know what had happened at this point. But for some reason, he felt compelled to follow Eren's orders. He first checked her vital signs and made sure that she was okay and just unconscious before picking her up.

"That was kind of rude of you. She's just an elf child, you know."

Tumko said and sighed. He could decipher that Eren had used his soul sense on Bhaa Laah. As a result, he was even more convinced that Eren wasn't some pawn of House Derringer or House Montmorency like the rumors were saying him to be.

'This guy's a real deal.'

Tumko said to himself before making eye contact with his team's vice-captain Tal Waar. They both exchanged a glance before the former speaking up.

"We are willing to pay reparations for our actions. However, we'd like to know if the Oni dungeon can help us get out of Anfang."

Eren raised his eyebrows when he heard Tumko's words. It meant that he was really just seeking entrance into the Oni dungeon to get out of Anfang. The guy had managed to amaze him once more.

Eren smirked as he realized he had another bargaining chip to use with Tumko when he realized his intentions. A man that wants something particular can be controlled by setting particular conditions.

Eren first informed Tumko and his team that they did not need to pay him any reparations. He started telling Tumko about the things he had found in the Oni dungeon. Of course, he only described the dungeon and the resources it had. He didn't tell them anything about what really happened while he was inside.

He also told them that he knew a way to open the now-sealed Oni dungeon. However, he'd only tell them about it after they served him under his guild following their voluntary military exit, which was drawing closer.

Eren was planning to offer Tumko some of the resources he had with him from the Oni dungeon as well. However, he stopped himself when he realized that getting out of Anfang was more critical to them.

Tumko didn't seem to be in a hurry to get out. But he wanted to make sure that the exit would be ready if and when what he sees as the right time comes.

Eren and Tumko came up with a formal arrangement. Although Tumko didn't say it, Eren could see that Tumko wasn't completely trusting Eren, even though he could tell that most of the things Eren said were true.

Tumko wanted to check out the entrance to the Oni dungeon himself. Plus, he wanted to arrange a few things before he started working under the White Raven guild.

Eren had given him the freedom to lead his own team made of the same team members he always knew. And for the most part, he and his team would stay independent. He would just take up a few assignments from Eren and complete them using his own means.

Eren didn't care what the procedure was if he got optimal results without repercussions. This approach made it easy for Tumko to accept Eren's offer.

The butcher didn't stop Tumko and his team from checking out the Oni dungeon. He was the one who told Ror that the entrance to the Oni dungeon should no longer remain open as expected. They didn't need sacrifices anymore.

The talk between Eren and Tumko dragged on for hours on end. When they finally decided everything, Tumko couldn't help giving Eren a subtle warning.

"Our arrangement is based on the premise that the entrance to the Oni dungeon is closed and that only you can open it, which would in turn facilitate us to leave Anfang eventually.

The arrangement will change if either of these conditions gets changed. I hope you understand this in your heart."

Eren couldn't blame Tumko for not counting on him. He was sure that even if he wasn't lying, Tumko could decipher that he wasn't a model citizen of Edinburgh. As a result, some mistrust was always going to be part of the equation.

"Heh! No matter how the conditions change over time, I'll get what I want anyway."

Eren said while observing the smoke from his new Sativa Stick. He smiled at nobody in particular before moving his focus back to Kirin.

### [Chapter 754 "It's Complicated"](#)

Kukenan Plateau. White Raven city.

Agatha's office.

"Where the fuck were you?"

Agatha asked with visible anger on her face. Eren had tried to get handsy with the half-blood manager of his. But she slapped his hands before making him sit in front of her.

Eren chuckled and tapped the gingers on Agatha's work desk before responding.

"Hehe. I was looking for a place for both of us to unwind. And I finally found a suitable location."

Eren came up with a unique blend of bullshitery.

"You've been working too much, Miss manager. So I thought you could use a place like this. I came back as soon as I could after finding something interesting.

"I'll take you there when we get time. It'll be fun."

Eren said with a genuine smile on his face. If Tumko was here with his mentalist-class spells, he would find it difficult to say if Eren was lying or not.

Agatha wanted to argue some more. But there was a part of her that was delighted after hearing Eren's reply. Her anger was subdued a bit as a result. She started looking at Eren with less-troubled expressions.

Agatha froze in the rapid-fire round she had created for Eren who had decided to pop in front of her like a wild mushroom. There was someone else who used that chance to reveal herself.

"Lord Husband, why are you missing her when she's in front of you?"

Kirin appeared all of a sudden and asked Eren about the kingdom. One could say that her speech was almost indistinguishable from what was considered normal.

She had turned invisible with her spatial bending powers before Eren entered his city. It wasn't that Eren wanted her to turn this way. But it was something she would do on her own.

Only highly capable C-Rank entities or above would be able to sense her presence when she was hiding in plain sight. Therefore, Agatha was shocked to the core seeing a beautiful elf suddenly appearing beside Eren's seat. She was only calmed after seeing Eren's nonchalant reactions.

Eren frowned when he listened to Kirin's words. He pulled her and made her sit beside him before explaining that there were two meanings of the same word 'miss'.

Agatha found it odd that Eren was taking elementary language lessons of a fully grown elf. And he seemed pretty experienced at it. As if he had done this before. She found it even odder that this new girl was a Rank-C existence.

Then something even more profound and shocking came to her mind as a result of Kirin's way of addressing Eren.

"Lord... Lord Husband? What the fuck does that mean? When? Where?"

Agatha asked with a cocktail of emotions churning inside her heart. Eren, who was busy discussing a few more details with Kirin, found it tiring that he was having multiple conversations at once.

"Kirin darling, if you have any doubts, note them down and ask me at the end of the day. I'll be sure to clear them all."



Kirin nodded at Eren's suggestion, receiving a head pat from him in response. The latter then focused his gaze on an angry-looking Agatha. He shrugged his shoulders before responding.

"I don't know when I got married, Miss Manager. That custom came from where this lass is, and I became a part of it both intentionally and accidentally.

It's complicated.

I can't exactly renege out of this thing, you know. Not after killing her father. She'd be with me now."

Eren said matter-of-factly to Agatha. The latter's anger and shock turned into bewilderment when she heard Eren speak. She looked at Kirin with the same expression before asking her.

"Did... did he really kill your father?"

"Yes," Kirin replied with a nod and neutral tone.

"And you are still with him? Married to him by some custom?" Agatha asked to confirm.

It was Kirin's turn to look at her with a puzzlement of her own before replying.

"Um... yes. We take our customs very seriously."

"Unbelievable..." Agatha could only sum up her emotions with one word. Kirin didn't look like she had been forced into following such customs. Her expression changed to suspicion when she turned her gaze back to Eren.

"I have never heard such elf customs before."

Eren raised his hands in an "I am just as clueless as you are" manner before asking her the main question.

"How is our city doing financially these days? I see that it's bustling with a lot of new shops, new things added into the mix along with an ever-increasing population. But everything would be a waste if we were not earning a substantial amount of pure profit."

Agatha looked at Eren keenly for a while after hearing the question. There were so many questions she had herself that she wanted to ask him. But for now, she needed to put them on hold.

She adjusted her hair before replying.

"Hmph. We are doing better than initially estimated, Mr. "Lord Husband!"

We made about 50 thousand Extols in purple profits yesterday. But since we are investing in our guild members, a fixed amount of that sum will be used for them.

Our tri-party deal with House Derringer and House Montmorency is also proceeding well. Our profits are bound to increase in the future. But that is when we are clear of our debts.

Still, 50 thousand Extols is not a small sum. Heh! It's almost the same amount you spent on a date with Altashia. That was one hell of an "investment" you made there, "Lord Husband."

Agatha said, her voice still coated in a bit of tantrum. Eren didn't mind being called Lord Husband by Agatha even though she had called him that way to taunt him. But he was surprised she knew about his dating activities with Altashia.

"Hm? How did you..."

Agatha produced an array disk that contained a spectral certificate before Eren could form his question. It stated that the loan on Eren's head had been cleared off.

"This is the first thing I did when we started earning, clearing your debt. I had been to the city of New Beginnings to do just that. Imagine my surprise when I learned that your "investment" turned out to be made for this preposterous reason.

We were already struggling at that time. You barely spent any money on me. And you went out of your way for that damn girl.

Where are your work ethics now, Lord Husband?"

### [Chapter 755 "Satisfaction Is The Death Of Improvement"](#)

Eren laughed when he saw Agatha fuming.

He only extracted the meaning he wanted to extract from her words— Agatha needed for there to be some sort of balance in him spending the money on his women.

He slapped Agatha's table before disappearing from his seat. There was a distinct smell of ozone Agatha felt around her when the lightning cracked in the front.

In the next moment, Agatha found herself lying flat on her back on her own work desk. The likes of scrolls and array disks were suddenly thrown off everywhere. Her arms were pinned to her on either side. Her eyes were staring right into Eren's emerald green eyes. His shoulder-length black hair reached for her.

"You.... You broke into D-Rank!"

Agatha was shocked when Eren revealed he was an Adept. The latter just smiled before looking at her with a playful gaze.

"But of course.

Fifty thousand Extols is nothing. You are in charge of my entire wealth, Miss Manager. I don't think I need to defend myself anymore."

Eren said before kissing Agatha. The latter was just flabbergasted by the whole turn of events. But that didn't stop her from responding to Eren's advances. She just felt weird that Kirin was looking at them with keen interest.

Eren realized that Agatha was conscious of Kirin's presence. So he broke the kiss and spoke up.

"Kirin darling, you should check up on Kaal. He is gearing up to enter Minerva's Utopia, which I had told you about earlier. You can join him if you want to."

Kirin perked up when she heard she would be able to explore something more. She nodded at him before disappearing from her spot.

"Now, where were we?"

Eren asked with a smirk on his face. Agatha responded by pulling his face towards him and continuing their lip lock aggressively.

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Evening 4 PM.

A large balcony was attached to Agatha's private chamber. A young man was occupying the balcony at the time, allowing him to observe the entire city view.

Eren was watching the ever-changing cityscape in front of him while enjoying his smoke. He marveled at the sight of his own creation. He felt a sense of achievement filling up his near-empty heart.

"Impressive, isn't it?"

Agatha came up from behind Eren and offered him a hot cup of brew. She was holding one for herself. Agatha had taken a day off from all her work. Eren had gotten rid of all her complaints out of her system with their intimate session that lasted for hours on end.

Agatha was wearing a loose-fitting gown made of silk. Eren had changed back to his previous clothes. It seemed he was ready to go somewhere.

Agatha had looked at Eren's back for a significant amount of time before approaching him. She remembered the healing scars she had seen all over his body. The flesh wounds had left their residual marks.

This was a shocking site for Agatha when she first saw it. The only reply she received from Eren was that he was undergoing special training. And that the scars she was seeing all over his body were temporary and would heal one day.

Agatha could only give up after Eren brushed off his injuries like they were nothing. She could also see in his eyes that he wasn't regretting the training he was subjected to. As a result, she had walked an extra mile to please him.

Eren stared at the cityscape as he took the cup from Agatha's hand. He smiled before he added.

"It is indeed impressive, Miss manager. But I want more."

Agatha narrowed her eyes at Eren before speaking neutrally.

"Not satisfied with what we got so far, are we?"

Eren chuckled when he understood what Agatha was trying to imply. Yet, he didn't shy away from replying with his honest answer.

"Satisfaction is the death of improvement. And men who don't improve are left behind. By women. By society. By time itself."

I'm not complaining. Just something I observed. It's easier to make progress than fighting off the system that's ingrained into our very existence anyway.

I won't have to hate the system if I know how to take advantage of it."

Eren said and took a sip of his brew. The taste of bitter coffee gave him the jolt he needed to get out of his reverie.

"I understand that you'd want more from this place than what it has to offer right now. But you should celebrate your achievements so far all the same.

This was your brainchild, Eren. And I helped raise it. As a co-parent, I'm happy with the way it is turning out to be and where it's heading."

Agatha said with a tone of contentment after resting her folded hand over the balcony's ledge beside Eren. Feeling nostalgic, she soaked up the city's reflection with him. Eren smiled in response to Agatha's words. A short period of silence that was followed was the sign of the agreement they received on each other's thoughts.

It seemed like yesterday for Agatha when they arrived at the barren place. Right after arriving, Eren had proclaimed that the White Raven city would one day be as noteworthy as the city of New Beginnings.

At that point, Agatha thought that Eren was just trying to encourage them all by saying things like these. However, as Agatha looked at the city that was in a constant state of building itself, she realized that Eren meant every word he had said.

Agatha also contributed greatly to this city. To honor her contribution, a permanent marker was erected inside the city.

Eren had tasked people to create a statue of Agatha in one of the most crowded parts of the city. It was placed in the middle of an artificial pond. The water inside the pond would swirl all around the statue from time to time using a simple array mechanism—paying homage to her bloodline powers.

Agatha was pleasantly surprised by Eren's gesture when she found out about the statue after it was made. By then, Eren had already left for the Oni dungeon.

Until this day, the half-blood Ace ranker hadn't conveyed how grateful she was for his non-verbal gestures of appreciation. So she made sure to thank him for it in her own way today.

### [Chapter 756 Reuniting With Jules And Lady Zee](#)

White Raven was still striving towards a higher standard and was far from achieving it.

Yet, the speed at which it was approaching the benchmark was unprecedented. It wouldn't be long before the big leagues start vying for a piece of this city all to themselves. Some of them had already started.

Dangers and opportunities were omnipresent around and inside the city. The cocktail of these two things was certainly adding spice to the city's lifestyle, making it livelier with each passing day.

"Have you explored the city yet?"

Agatha asked, looking at Eren with a gaze that said "I am head over heels for this bastard but I won't directly admit that." the latter shook his head in denial before responding.

"I came straight to meet you to find out what's going on. But I guess now's as good a time as any."

Eren said and released another lungful of smoke through his nostrils. He stretched his arms and legs before letting lightning streaks cover him.

"See you around, Miss manager.

Time to explore."

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Eren wandered the streets of his own city with a curious gaze.

The region he was visiting at the time hosted many food courts and restaurants. They contained a range of cuisines meant for rankers and mortals alike.

People were busy exploring the city just like Eren. Most of them were rookie adventurers who had come here to explore Minerva's Utopia. Some stayed behind for the growth the city had to offer.

People who couldn't afford to leave the city built habitations outside its walls. Eren knew such slum-like dwellings were part of any popular city's reality.

So instead of trying to prevent these dwellings, Eren had decided to use them for his own means. Renar was instructed to strategically place the spies in the slums he could count on and use them. This was so that the city's dark side wouldn't remain dark to Renar and Eren by default.

People who caused more trouble than the importance of the roles they served would, of course, be dealt with immediately. However, he let the city's dark side grow as per his invisible rules. He even participated in illegal import and export transactions within his own city, profiting from shady deals. Controlled chaos held unimaginable benefits.

Eren had put many things like these in place that he had integrated covertly and overtly with the city's very fabric of existence. As such, it was now working like a well-oiled machine. And he was now seeing the fruits of his labor.

Most people had only heard Eren's name at this point but hadn't put a face to that name in their minds. The butcher had prevented Agatha and others from creating any statue of him inside the city.

It was better if he stayed a mystery for the most part. It was better if rumors about him proliferated to an absurd degree. So much so that people would not believe it was him even if he shouted his identity to everyone present at the city square.

Eren wouldn't mind staying unrecognized as the city's founder if it could allow him to roam its streets freely. Something he was doing at this point without people approaching him. But that was about to change.

"Eren, is that you?"

Eren was just about to get inside a lavish restaurant meant for rankers when he heard a question thrown at him. He raised his eyebrows, surprised at the fact that somebody had managed to identify him.

"Hm? Ju..."

Eren stopped himself from casually talking to this person. He touched his face with his hands to confirm who he was at the time before continuing.

"Ace Julia. What a surprise!"

Eren was surprised to find Jules waving at him and calling his name. The last time he had seen her was when he had come out of Purgatory. But all his previous interactions with her were done using his fake identity Ron Damien, which he had discarded a long time ago.

As such, he held himself back from addressing her casually. He realized that he was meeting her as a student in LA. He waved her back before quickly glancing at the people that were walking behind her.

There was Tara, whom Eren had never seen before. Then there was a mature woman with distinct feminine curves who also seemed to be with Jules. It seemed that they were about to leave the city when they came across Eren.

'That woman!'

Eren's eyes shone with cold light when he identified who the mature lady following Jules was— Lady Zee. The butcher had decided to pay a quick visit to the duchy of Lionheart to meet this woman. Unexpectedly, it was her who approached him without knowing his burnt identity.

"What a surprise indeed."

Julie greeted Eren with a smile and an incredulous look in her eyes as she stopped only a few steps away from him. She looked at him from head to toe one more time before commenting.

"I could have never imagined the student who we had escorted from the city of Laurel to the city of Lionhearts would one day grow up to establish White..."

Julie Ekheart froze when she realized something after getting close to him and sensing his presence subconsciously. No matter whether Eren implied it knowingly or unknowingly to her, she felt a subtle suppression of higher rank.

"You... you broke through the Adept rank already? H... how?"

It seemed that the shock she received from Eren being an Adept was greater for her than coming to terms with the fact that he was the founder of the city she and her team were in.

Lady Zee joined the duo before Jules could express her surprise with words.

"Jules dear, would you mind making introductions?"

Lady Zee looked at Eren keenly as she said to Jules. Eren flashed a gracious and welcoming smile to all three ladies who had come to meet him before turning back. He spoke while heading towards the restaurant he wanted to enter.

"Let's get to know each other over a leisurely meal, pretty ladies. My treat."

### [Chapter 757 Once A Cultist, Always A Cultist](#)

"Let's get to know each other over a nice meal. My treat."

Lady Zee didn't like that Eren hadn't greeted her with etiquettes dictated by the rankers' code of conduct. She was an Expert— a rank above him after all.

But she decided not to create a scene against a man who owned the entire city for himself. No matter how small he was in front of her in terms of ranking status, he had created a status of his own.

In the face of overwhelming individual power, money and status did not matter much. However, they certainly held their values within certain frames of reference. Jules, Lady Zee, and Tara decided to follow Eren's lead unanimously, unaware of the fact that this was the man they were looking for.

Lady Zee had changed her appearance a bit using Tara's powers. She was a known cultist with a bounty on her head. Thus, she could only depend on such means to pose as a normal adventurer.

But the change in appearance wasn't enough for Eren not to recognize her. However, he showed the same signs on his face when he looked at Lady Zee. He looked at her as if he was seeing her for the first time, not letting her know that he had recognized her.

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Summer and greenfield vibes had arrived for Eren and his guests.

Eren had booked a private dining space at the same restaurant using his reach in the city. Spatial and illusion arrays created a landscape that looked like an endless expanse of pasture. There were faded mountain ranges and hills in the distance.

Thousands of birds flew from nowhere to nowhere in the clear blue sky that served as an eternal stage for them to perform. They would produce their chirping sounds from time to time, highlighting their illusory presence.

The butterflies fly over the flowers and lush berries. The smell of earth and wild vegetation was barely masked by the food that had been waiting for its consumers. The food baskets and vessels containing a range of delectable cuisines as well as the jugs containing various drinks were placed neatly over a large wooden table.

This round wooden table, made of old red fire oakwood, was surrounded by a group of chairs. Soon those chairs were occupied by the newly arrived inhabitants of this illusory space.

"You are a man full of surprises, Adept Eren Idril. I never thought I'd get to meet the man who created this city just when I was about to leave.

You truly inspire me. I thank you for inviting us to share a meal with you."

Tara said, looking at Eren with stars in her eyes. She was really inspired by Eren's journey. She felt her adventure-seeking elf heart beat faster every time she looked at the man who was an Ace rank like her not too long ago.

Eren smiled mildly but didn't say anything. He let the three ladies take their seats and served them the food with his own hands. He got near each one of them and asked what they would like and the quantity they preferred before placing their platter full of food in front of them.

Lady Zee's slight irritation was soothed by Eren's gesture. She started seeing him in a positive light after coming into contact with his graceful and elegant personality.

Eren only took four briskets on his platter and an entire jug of special ale all to himself. This was the White Raven ale sample that Levine had concocted using Eren's recipes.

It hadn't been made for commercial use yet. The recipe still needed to be perfected and approved by him. But for now, he decided to taste-test it on himself and the three ladies.

"Hehe. I'm glad to meet you, ladies, as well."

Eren said, looking at all three women in front of him before focusing his eyes on Jules.

"How's LA treating you, Ace Julie?"

Jules, who was busy drinking the White Raven ale Eren had just poured for her, paused and looked at him before smiling mirthlessly. She cut a piece from her brisket with the knife and lifted it in front of her mouth using the fork before replying to him.

"It's been a while since I left LA. I'm no longer an assistant professor there, Eren. And I'm all the more gladly about my decision after meeting you. It would have been awkward for me to see a student getting ahead of me in ranking status in such a short time."

Eren was surprised when he heard Jules had left LA. For him, it didn't make sense. Although the fear of being persecuted by Arthur of the books was lifted, Jules had no reason to leave the protection she enjoyed.

Unless she felt restricted by the rules and regulations LA had placed on her, not allowing her to make full use of her cultist identity.

'Once a cultist, always a cultist!'

Eren thought to himself as he watched Jules enjoying her meal. He could also understand that part of the reason Jules might want to move away from her previous stage in life would be because of him. Specifically, his altered identity.

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Eren had gotten close to Jules to keep tabs on Lin Karr's investigation. And she had served her purpose well. Later, she was the one who had helped him get into Purgatory using her Illuminati reach.

Eren had been retrospectively all this time ever since he got out of Purgatory. After considering everything that had happened so far, he didn't regret the fact that he had gotten inside the subspace that was under Eliza's hidden control.



He regretted that it had happened too soon for him. If only he and Reen were allowed time to grow over time, things would have been different. Or at least he hoped they would have been. If nothing else, he was sure to get him and Reen out of harm's way with proper preparation in place.

Eren thus blamed himself more for not preparing enough for Purgatory. He didn't blame Jules for things that had happened to him.

### [Chapter 758 "She's The One!"](#)

Eren thus blamed himself more for not preparing enough for Purgatory. He didn't blame Jules for things that had happened to him.

However, there was someone else in this group who was responsible for launching a lethal sneak attack on him while he was in Purgatory. Someone who had come to visit his city under a fake identity.

It was only through sheer planning and sacrifice of one of his pawns did Eren manage to break free from the trap and keep himself alive. Otherwise, Eren would have died inside the subspace without anyone being the wiser.

Thus, Eren had a score to settle with a certain person sitting in front of him. However, he needed to confirm something first.

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All three Illuminati members enjoyed their meal.

Eren had a seamless conversation with all three ladies after the initial awkwardness all three ladies had observed for themselves. His well-articulated words and a friendly smile made the female rankers pay close attention to him no matter what he was talking about at the time.

Jules could find it easier to communicate with Eren because of her previous connections with him. She also felt a certain pull towards him— the kind that she felt when she was in Ron Damien's company. But her subconscious mind overlooked that fact.

As such, Jules talked with Eren a lot, unaware of the fact that she was feeling attracted to him once again. Tara was no exception to this pull either. The young elf was the easiest to influence and reel in his talks for Eren.

Lady Zee had introduced herself as Catherine since her name was mentioned in the cultist bounty missions. It was her into whom Eren had to put in a lot of effort.

Eren had used a lot of mental icebreakers to get Lady Zee to open up to him. Eren wasn't as easily trusted by her as Tara was. He had to reply to a lot of her trick questions with reasonable answers for her to start letting her guard down in his presence.

Eren eventually got all three women comfortable talking with him. It was as if his linguistic skills and the way he could lie had also been ranked up along with his rank.

After that, it wasn't long before Lady Zee could feel the familiarity she had developed with Eren was enough for her to raise this question to him.

"Eren, you are an enigma, aren't you?"

Who could have thought that the founder of such a glorious city was walking down the streets like a newbie adventurer? Even obscuring his ranking status!

You don't want people to recognize you by your deeds? Should I call that modesty or sneakiness? Hehe!"

Eren chuckled at Lady Zee's question before answering.

"Haha. I have done a lot of such deeds without taking credit for them, Expert Catherine. Some of my finest works' credit has been taken by someone else without me ever planning about it.

So this is not my first time staying lowkey. And I can tell you with certainty it won't be my last either."

Eren said and put down his knife and fork. He draped his mouth with the tablecloth that had been kept beside his plate and took a long breath. He then drank the White Raven ale in his mug and felt content having such delicious food.

The butcher then lit up his smoke and took a long drag. Each of his actions was effortless and adhered to proper table manners.

Lady Zee could conclude that Eren was hinting at something huge he had done in the past for which he didn't get credit. But she couldn't just narrow down what kind of scandals he might be involved in from Edinburgh's recent past. In the end, she could only give up before developing a newfound interest in Eren.

Eren then discussed the taste of White Raven ale with the three ladies and asked for their opinion. He had come up with his own theories about how to further improve the taste and effects of the ale.

At this point, the current variant of White Raven ale only stimulated the rankers' mana circuits and provided some marginal health boosts. However, it didn't positively influence the rankers' elemental attainment like the real elven ales were known for doing.

Eren ignored that aspect of the elven ale for the time being and focused on nailing down the rest of its features. Even as a knock-off, he wanted his ale to get as close to the real as possible right from the get-go.

The three ladies didn't have much to add. They couldn't articulate what they wanted from Eren's brewed ale. But every opinion mattered for a seasoned merchant who was in the business of pleasing people with his products.

So Eren noted the suggestions the three ladies gave him and thanked them for it. He also said that the ladies had paid for the meal themselves by offering to be one of the first to criticize the ale.

When everything was said and done, Eren retrieved a strange vial from his storage and placed it on the round wooden table. He took another drag and released the smoke slowly before speaking up.

"This is another concoction the White Raven guild is developing. Expert, Catherine, mind taking a closer look?"

Lady Zee was puzzled when Eren made that request. But at this point, she had subconsciously begun to take Eren's request seriously. So she smiled and nodded at him before lifting the vial with her hand. She observed the concoction's effects with her mana sense after bringing it closer to her eyes.

The colorless concoction inside the transparent vial was already changing its color to red when Eren brought it out. But the rate at which it turned red intensified after Lady Zee got hold of it.

The thing had turned dark red by the time she was holding it right in front of her eyes. Lady Zee didn't understand the cause and effect of the potion turning red. So she looked at the vial with puzzled expressions for some time before directing those same expressions to Eren.

"I don't get it. What kind of potion is it?"

Eren had a smile on his face as he watched the shade of the concoction turn dark red. Only he knew what was happening and why the concoction's color was changing.

'Sangria red hue. She's the one!'

### [Chapter 759 Speak Of The Devil](#)

'Sangria red hue. She's the one!'

Eren narrowed his eyes briefly before releasing his smoke all at once. He couldn't help smiling when he thought that he had completed one of the tasks of the Lazarus project just by having lunch with these cultists.

Swoosh!

A gale was generated that snatched the vial from Lady Zee's hands before it disappeared into Eren's storage once again. He chuckled before proposing his offer to the three cultists who he knew had an ulterior motive for coming to the White Raven city in the first place.

"Meh! Forget about that potion. More importantly, ladies, would you like to stay in White Raven city and work for my guild?"

Eren said and looked at the faces of Illuminati members with intrigue in his eyes. He knew what their answer would be anyway.

Lady Zee immediately looked at her subordinates with an exciting gaze. The job they had come here to do for their cultist organization was to see if they could get a piece of the profit through direct or indirect means.

Lady Zee, Jules, and Tara had collected a lot of data regarding Minerva's Utopia because they had been there. But they didn't find anything substantial on the guild and its allies that managed the treasure trove.

But what if they were part of the guild itself? Being part of the guild would allow the three cultist rankers to get more data on it as well as keep a close eye on its activities. Plus, they could enjoy all the guild member perks that could be availed before entering inside the subspace.

"Are you sure, Eren? I mean, I'm an expert ranker and have prior commitments. I wouldn't..."

Lady Zee was about to complete her sentences when Eren interrupted her with his assuring words.

"Hehe. Your pay and tasks will be in line with your rank, Expert Catherine. You don't have to worry about that. Plus, you'd get additional benefits for exploration into Minerva's Utopia."

Eren then discussed the benefits of becoming a member of the White Raven guild with the three ladies. The cultist-in-disguise female rankers shared their concerns and queries with him before finalizing their arrangement.

Eren had quickly arranged for Lady Zee, Jules, and Tara to live in the White Raven city. He also arranged a place to stay for them, making sure that the perfect vessel remained in his grasp.

The butcher then left the three ladies to their devices before continuing his exploration of the city. There were a few more things he needed to do before leaving the city.

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The residential district of White Raven city had begun selling real estate.

As a result, a township was established for rankers. Property in this township would be bought by prestigious names and well-known families in the kingdom.

One such plot was bought by the House Carren in the White Raven city. It was a casual purchase for the clan even though it had cost them thousands of Extols.

A three-story white condo was surrounded by a lush gardenscape. A large area around the house was protected by the isolation array, making sure that nobody enters the premises without the owner's permission.

This white condo welcomed its residents and guests with a spacious hall that had a huge chandelier. Minimalistic furniture graced this spacious hall, adding a touch of elegance to its grandeur.

Someone was sitting on a lavish, plush sofa. They were looking at the person in front of them, listening keenly to the report they had to say.

"Lady Lensa, Master Dan is leaving no stone unturned to cause House Slughorn maximum damage he can. We have already targeted their most popular products, creating counterparts for them and selling them in the open as well as in the black market.

Plus, Master Dan has moved ahead and initiated a claim of harvest on three of House Slughorn's exclusive resource-rich lands. We are getting support in the royal court for his absurd claims.

Hehe. I have never seen this old man this motivated to do anything for decades. The last time he was this motivated was when he was wooing his wife."

A middle-aged elf reported to Lensa with a smile on her face. The latter smiled bitterly before commenting.

"Maybe I shouldn't have gotten Gramps involved in this matter. He is retaliating way too hard than I had planned it to be."

Lensa hadn't forgotten the insult she was dished out by Sienna a few months back without any rhyme or reason whatsoever. Using her clan's reach, she decided to retaliate.

Lensa reported the incident to her uncle Devon and grandfather Dan Carren. Since then both of them had decided to make it their mission to hurt House Slughorn in every way they could.

Slughorns retaliated for what they thought was baseless aggression by the elf clan. Soon, however, they discovered the reason behind it. It was their own sapling that was producing unwanted fruits.

House Slughorn had tried to sort out the mess Sienna had created by trying to initiate talks with House Carren. As a means of reconciling their relations, they offered a substantial amount of reparations.

However, House Carren had taken their scion's insult very seriously. It had also broken up the formal engagement she had with Ken Riverine based on Sienna's statements. As a result, House Riverine was equally angry with House Slughorn even though it continued to maintain cordial relations with the Carrens.

All these series of events had happened in the last few weeks, giving House Slughorn no choice but to get aggressive in retaliation. They had dropped the prices of their products by a notch just to maintain their previous market presence, which was showing signs of recovery only recently.

"Thank you for the information, aunt Dineria. Is there any news about Eren Idril you received recently? It's been months since his disappearance. I.... I am a bit..."

Dineria lifted her right eyebrow when she saw Lensa getting stressed about something or someone.

"Worried? You only met that boy once right, child? I...."

Dineria was about to finish what she was saying when she received voice communication from one of her subordinates. She looked at Lensa with a somewhat surprised expression before blurting out.

"Heh! Speak of the devil..."

### [Chapter 760 Meeting Lensa With A New State Of Mind](#)

Around 7 PM.

House Carren's estate in White Raven's residential district.

Lensa was amazed to see the guy she wanted to see for so long at this point.

She was left alone in the grand hall with him. He was sitting in front of her on a plush sofa, looking at her with a subtle smile on his face.

She was amazed by the difference in appearance and presence Eren had with his past self. As an elf who had experienced a peculiar state of epiphany, she was more attuned to her surroundings than the humans. She could sense that Eren's presence had taken a drastic change, even more so than his physical appearance.

The glass chandelier was exuding a faint natural light in the grand hall, providing its occupants with optimal illumination. Eren looked at his reflection on one of the reflective surfaces of one of the gems the chandelier had as its component.

Eren adjusted his hair in that reflection before speaking up.

"Um... it's a pleasure to see you again, Lensa. Heard you left a message with Agatha and checked up on my well-being. So I came to meet you in person."

Eren said while weaving the fingers of his hands together in front of him. He then arched forward before adding up.

"I hope you don't mind the late hour. I was busy doing Agatha... Err... Agatha's pending work that needed to be done from my end."

Lensa smiled in response before commenting.

"It's fine, Adept Eren. I'm glad to see you too. You... you have changed a lot. For better, I would say. Hehe. Look at how fast you've changed since we met. It seems like we met so long ago.

You have already achieved the rank of Adept. What's even more astonishing is the fact that you have established a city for yourself. Imagine my surprise when I learned that the founder of the city was the same boy I had met up in the city of Silvermoon."

Eren chuckled when he heard Lensa's subtle compliments. He adjusted his gaze on Lensa too with a hint of nostalgia in his eyes, comparing the current her with what he remembered about her.

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Lensa was sporting shoulder-length golden brown hair at this point. Her green eyes had become more mesmerizing than before. Her facial features had gotten even more attractive than before while still retaining the cuteness she had.

Eren could feel that Lensa was even more attuned to her elemental attainment than her Ace rank dictated. She didn't feel any rank suppression from him even though she was a rank lower than him.

Lensa had gotten more ladylike, leaving her girlhood behind. Her graceful presence was only complemented by her mild and friendly nature.

Eren remembered his night of passion for Lensa as he kept on staring at her pretty face. The butcher did not feel any regret even after facing the repercussions of binding with Reen. He did not feel any regret about meeting with Eliza and losing his shit in front of her.

However, at this point, after meeting Lensa, he felt a bit regretful for treating her as some disposable pawn just to settle a score with Ken. Especially when she remembered him after all this time, even reaching out to Agatha and asking about his well-being.

As a way of strengthening her friendship with Eren, Lensa offered her clan's support to the city of White Raven. Agatha couldn't contact the butcher at the time so she had requested the House Carren to wait till Eren got back.

The half-blood manager of Eren made sure to tell him about Lensa's visit. So he had come here to meet up with Lensa.

When Eren used Lensa to get back at Ken, he was a different animal. He was still bitter about everything because he was living in his past timeline.

The butcher was also afraid of the future he had envisioned for himself. Knowing about the future had become a source of worry for him since he could feel that time was slipping from his hand.

Stuck between a bitter past and a worrisome future, Eren had developed tunnel vision as a way to cope with all that he was feeling. He couldn't see past the goals he had set for himself. He also wanted to make his bitter past less painful for him by getting back at people who had hurt him.

Eren hadn't become a completely reformed person from what he was back then. The darkness he carried in his heart was still there. But he stopped having the same tunnel vision anymore.

Therefore Eren did not hesitate to admit to himself that what he had done with Lensa was uncalled for. It didn't need to be said out loud for him. He didn't need to offer any reparations. It was just a feeling he had at this point for himself.

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The talks between Eren and Lensa continued for hours on end. Both the rankers were surprised they had so much to talk about despite having no apparent common ground.

The conversation they had was seamless. The topics they discussed would pop up naturally as if they had planned their talk from the get-go.

Lensa felt like she knew more about Eren than she had initially thought. She could feel an unexplainable resonance with him. However, she tried to hide that feeling from him, lest he thinks she is imposing on him.

Eren told Lensa how he had come to establish the city. In recounting previous events, he downplayed a lot of his achievements.

However, Lensa could tell the guy was humble. Either that or it wasn't in his nature to hog all the glory for himself. At least not without gaining anything equally worthy in return.

When Lensa was about to address Eren formally once again, the latter made a stop sign with his hand before commenting.

"Hey! Drop the formality, Lensa. You can call me Eren."

Eren spoke with fake anger on his face before breaking into laughter. After looking at her cute nose for a while, he added more.

"It seems you are not that far behind either. You might break into Adept rank at any point."

Eren said with a look that said 'I'm impressed.' She was somewhat expected to advance in her ranking journey with such speed due to her elf lineage and the enlightenment she had received.

However, Eren could tell that the elf girl had invested an equal amount of effort to make her natural blessings even more fruitful for her.