

Vile 771

[Chapter 771 Recruiting Arizihana And Marie](#)

Lensa's post-breakthrough elemental attainment was still growing.

Eren waved his hand at her even after knowing she might not be paying attention to him. He knew that it would be a while before stabilizing her breakthrough was as spontaneous as it was unexpected.

Plus, the Expert ranker must have sensed Lensa's breakthrough by now. She would be on the way to look after Lensa. Thus, it would be better if Eren got on with the next task in his hand. He wanted to meet up with one of the highest scorers in Minerva's Utopia.

After all, he needed a capable working bee for all his potioning projects.

He needed to meet up with Arizihana and Marie.

Top 50 ranking lists.

One of the most exceptional rankers of their generation was taking center stage in White Raven city. These lists were based on Minerva's Utopia's four testing grounds.

There were four Top 50 lists representing four testing grounds. They would get updated every month by a panel of rankers appointed by the White Raven guild. They would consider many parameters apart from the scores of the testing grounds to come up with the top 50 performers for each testing ground.

In White Raven City, the Top 50 performers would receive various benefits. As a result, becoming one of the top 50 rankers was something most adventurers aimed at.

There was also a Grand Top Ten list that took into account the scores a ranker received in every testing ground. The results of these separate tests would then be combined before coming up with the names for the Grand Top Ten.

These ranking lists weren't present in Eren's previous timeline. This was the butcher's brainchild to spark competition among all the rankers who participated in the exploration of the subspace. Plus, he wanted the scores rankers received in the separate dimension to hold relevance outside it as well.

That way, he could commercialize the competition.

Anyone who aspired to be in any of these ranking lists would compete on the testing grounds as if their life depended upon it. They would tend to buy better artifacts and better potions, and opt for high-tier disposable items to survive and thrive inside Minerva's Utopia.

Successful rankers buying such items from the city would encourage other rankers who want to be on the ranking lists. As a result, these competitors would keep on stimulating the city's economy to new heights.

The ranking lists were one of the reasons why the city was growing so rapidly. The butcher was using the ingrained competitive psyche of adventurers and hunters to make profits. And the best part of this plan was, nobody could stop it from not being lucrative.

Eren had also made facilities for rankers in the Top 50 to compete against each other in the presence of the audience and their supporters. The Top 50 would challenge each other or accept challenges from outsiders. The showdown would take place in front of the audience, further stimulating the economy.

The Top 50 were all happier about participating in these events because they would provide them with an extra source of income. The higher a ranked participant placed in the Top 50, the better the rewards would be for their participation and wins.

Top 50 lists and weekly events made some rankers very popular among the citizens of White Raven. Earning fame and money for themselves, the successful rankers were inclined to stay in the city for as long as they could.

A well-known inn inside White Raven city.

This inn was a preferred choice for a lot of adventurers because it was near to the subspace's entrance. It was affordable and could host a huge number of people at once with its spatial magic.

The inn was equipped with all the necessary amenities. Plus, it would give special discounts to rankers who were within the Top 50 ranking lists. So it was no wonder that Arizihana and Marie were staying here.

These two were slowly starting to make a name for themselves. Since there was a cooldown period between two successive entries into the separate mention, the repeat explorers would keep themselves busy by participating in these competitive events.

Arizihana and Marie were no different. Arizihana had emerged as a capable fighter after participating in these events a few times. Meanwhile, Marie had participated in potion-making face-offs and won them all.

However, Marie was a cultist with a bounty on her head. So she had changed her appearance a bit and was assuming a false identity. She went by the name Mica these days.

This afternoon, however, the inn management invited the two ladies to a luxurious room. Someone very prominent in White Raven city seemed to be interested in them.

"How can we help you, Adept Eren Idril?"

Arizihana bowed a bit in front of Eren as she asked. She was standing beside Marie who also copied Ari's gesture but didn't say anything.

The butcher smiled back and gestured to the two ladies to take seats.

"It's nice to meet you once again, ladies. I'd like to offer you an opportunity you might be interested in."

For some reason, the two rankers felt their consciousness getting pulled into Eren's emerald green eyes. Thus, they didn't notice that Eren had hinted at them about meeting beforehand.

Eren paused and let the two ladies sit in front of him before speaking up.

"I'd like to offer you a chance to work with me in the White Raven guild. I could use talents like you for my upcoming projects."

Eren lit up his Sativa Stick from the newly filled stock and smoked. He then operated on the small array imprinted on the table and made two glasses of beverages appear in front of the two ladies.

The two ladies were taken aback when Eren invited them to become guild members of his guild. Although the guild had just started making a name for itself, it was rumored to be backed by many big organizations. Plus, it had a stable source of revenue with its city and Minerva's Utopia.

Any seemingly unaffiliated ranker like them would happily join the White Raven guild, which had not accepted any official members for a long time. This was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for Arizihana and Marie who were not looked after by their organizations anymore.

Plus, the offer was extra tempting because the founder of the White Raven guild itself had decided to extend the invitation personally to them.

[Chapter 772 Blackmails And Deja Vu](#)

Eren had started hiring temporary staff after filling up the key positions in the guild.

He didn't want the guild to have a large number of members. He wanted his guild to run on the same principle House Lancelot ran its guild on— a guild of elites.

A few guild members he could count on to get the job done. This was not a tactic most start-up guilds would adopt because it hindered their growth at the start. But Eren didn't care about the hurdles the guild would have to face in the beginning. He was more focused on strengthening the guild's foundation by hiring elites or cultivating them from the scratch.

p Thus, getting a position in an up-and-coming guild with a meteoric rise like White Raven was not an offer most rankers would pass on. However, Marie shook her head in disapproval at Arizihana and let her know she wasn't onboard.

Arizihana sighed after seeing Marie's body language. She looked at Eren while pursing her lips before speaking up.

"I... I am sorry, Adept Eren. But we already have our plans. So I'm afraid we'd have to pass on your offer."

Arizihana spoke with a voice coated in a bit of helplessness. She then lifted the lid off of the glass of beverage that was placed on her side of the table and brought it closer to her mouth.

Marie was feeling a bit stressed because of Eren's gaze on her. For some reason, she thought that she had met this man before. As if this was not the first time he was looking at her.

Eren wasn't surprised when he heard Ari's refusal. He had run some background information on Arizihana after finding out the two were in his city. He found out that she had given up her position and influence inside the city of Silvermoon.

There was no official information available on an assumed identity called Mica. but seeing her in person, Eren immediately recognized that she was Marie, Marla's sister.

Eren hadn't met Marie on an official level. But he had seen her when Marie and Arizihana were leading the Beast Bloods into hunting his altered identity Ron Damien. He had come face to face with Arizihana and Marie at that time before fleeing from the scene.

Eren had come back to kill two Adept rankers who were fighting with each other because of him at that time. But he didn't interact with any other ranker after making his kills. He had killed those two Adepts and disappeared into the night like a ghost.

However, Eren had heard about Marie from his teacher Levine and her biological sister Marla. After connecting the dots and seeing her in person, Eren was sure the one who was sitting in front of him was in fact Marie-- a cultist from the Beast Bloods who was used to running her own operations.

These two ladies were unhinged. But one of them had a shady background. Because of that, they couldn't join the White Raven guild as its members.

Or at least that's what they had thought.

"Look, I know you both want to earn a sizable chunk of money from this city before going on a hunt to explore new opportunities. But why not serve me if earning money is all you want?

I'll pay you a decent wage each month. And in exchange, you'd just have to do what I say. Something that won't be too complicated.

Just so that we are clear, let me tell you that I don't care what you were doing in the past. As long as you do good work here, you'd get paid and receive all the other perks that come with it."

Ari looked at Eren with a stoic expression when Eren spoke. She had come to realize that Eren might know about Marie by the way he had chosen to speak those words. She kept her silence and looked at Marie, telling her to take charge of the conversation.

Marie looked at Mica with closed eyes as she spoke.

"Adept Eren, sorry to be blunt but we won't be joining any guild. And that'd be the end of it."

Mica, aka Marie, spoke with an unflinching tone. She knew that Beast Bloods would have liked it if she made contact with Eren and chose to become a part of his guild. That way, Beast Bloods would have an agent in this city. Someone with better access to resources and information.

However, she was almost able to combine human potioning recipes with elven elemental attainment synthesis. She didn't want her organization's extra attention on her at this point. She was also not interested in working with Beast Bloods anymore now that she had obtained everything she wanted from them.

Marie was earning a decent amount of money that she could then use to support her experiments. To make the volatile potions stable and safe to consume, she just needed the missing ingredient. A breakthrough in her experiments would revolutionize the way humans made their potions.

Joining the White Raven guild would complicate things for her on multiple fronts. Eren wasn't aware of Marie's potioning needs. But he didn't care about any of the stuff the elf or the halfling were trying to say to him anyway.

"Hm. It's my fault. I didn't make this clear from the beginning. So it seems you have some ambiguity.

Either you'd work for me and get paid. Or you'd work for me for free. All you have to do now is to choose what you want to do."

Eren said while releasing a dense white cloud of smoke from his mouth and nostrils. His subtle smile had turned into a smirk, making the two ladies feel that they were inside some kind of a trap.

"What are you talking about?"

Marie asked Eren in a grim voice. The latter chuckled before speaking up.

"A traitor to the city of Silvermoon and a known cultist from Beast Bloods. Ladies, you'd want to work for my guild one way or the other. Or else..."

[Chapter 773 Emotional Manipulation](#)

"A traitor to the city of Silvermoon and a known cultist from Beast Bloods. Ladies, you'd want to work for my guild one way or the other. Or else..."

Eren ignored the panic, anger, and combination of other emotions both the ladies had on their faces. He looked at the smoldering end of his Sativa Stick with newfound interest before continuing.

"Or else, someone somewhere in the city will leak everything about you. I don't want you to get hunted by the kingdom's special forces and bounty hunters. That's why I want to keep both of you safe by turning you into my guild members.

After all, I care about your well-being."

Eren said with a gentle smile on his face as he smoked his Sativa Stick in front of them. Incidentally, it wasn't his first time blackmailing them.

He had pulled the same stunt on them before entering Purgatory. The guy was like a curse for both the ladies at this point. He had made a habit out of blackmailing them.

"You... how did you know? No. wait. We don't know what you are talking about."

Ari got flustered and panicked hearing Eren's blackmail. She was suddenly reminded of Ron Damien's face as she was looking at Eren. her subconscious mind tried to make a connection between the two. But her rational mind wanted her to deny the claims altogether.

Marie was in a better state than Ari. being a cultist, she had prepared herself for situations like these. If she couldn't get rid of the threat or run away from it, the most logical thing for her to do at that time was to negotiate. She quickly got rid of her previous scared-and-afraid mindset before responding.

"How can you bully nobodies like us? My bounty amount is nothing for you."

With serious expressions on his face, Eren responded promptly.

"I can steep to bullying Novice rankers if it suits me. And I am willing to mess with the Sages if it stands to benefit me. Ranks and moral grounds don't matter to me."

Eren got up from his seat after that. One last drag and he finished Sativa Stick before making it disappear in an instant. He released the smoke through his nostrils and started pacing around before adding further.

"As I said, I don't care about your background as a cultist or what you did in your previous organization. I just ask that you do your best for the work you are assigned. You'd get paid for the amount of work you put in. As simple as that.

I am indeed blackmailing you. But it shouldn't have to be an unfortunate event in your life. Not unless you want it to be.

And if you want to treat it as a bluff by saying I won't have enough pieces of evidence, I'll be more than happy to prove you wrong. But that will seal your fate forever. So take that road wisely."

Eren said while pacing around with his hands behind his back. Arizihana and Marie were looking straight in front of the empty chair Eren was sitting on a few moments ago. But they looked at each other when he stopped speaking.

Both of them looked at each other for a long time, as if discussing. Arizihana pursed her lips and looked straight again. She took a long breath before addressing Eren.

"What would be my duties, guild master Eren?"

Eren smiled when he heard Arizihana. He then walked up to the table and sat on its edge near Marie.

"What about you?"

He asked Marie. The latter shook her head before replying.

"I... I am not sure, Adept Eren. To be honest, becoming a member of your guild is not that terrible. But... If I did that, the cultist organization I belong to would become more interested in my affairs.

If I start to have a normal life, it will be them who will threaten me the same way you have. What will I do then? Betray your guild to serve them? Or betray them to serve you? No matter what I choose, I'll eventually end up getting targeted and killed."

Marie clenched the armrest of the chair she was currently sitting on as she said it. She then looked up and met Eren's eyes before adding further.

"So you tell me. What should I do? Which is the path that leads to my salvation?"

Eren didn't like that Marie wasn't as easy to fall for the blackmail as Arizihana was. He could see a few of her sister's traits within her as well.

He replied to her in a grim tone.

"So you want me to take responsibility for what happens to you after you enter the White Raven guild? I'm sorry to say this young miss, but that's not how it works.

I haven't opened a baby's daycare here. I am running a guild. A guild that will do everything in its power to support you. But it will be upon you to fend off the repercussions of your choices.

Plus, I don't want to set a precedent for giving you extra care."

Eren said in a casual voice and folded his hands. He had come to realize that Marie was driven by her own goals. And she wasn't ready to compromise with them for the sake of safety.

Blackmail wasn't enough for such people. Eren needed to offer something else that wouldn't jeopardize his interests. As he continued to stare at the halfling, he added more.

"Maybe we can deal with your cultist organization together if and when they contact you. Maybe we can plan something special for them if they try to mess with you and my guild. Of course, that is as long as my interests aren't at stake.

If I was in your shoes, I'd choose to deal with the threat at hand and make a compromise now than think about a distant threat in the future.

I don't know if you have realized this by now. But I am your biggest threat. And by the time your organization catches up with you, I would have become a bigger threat than them too."

[Chapter 774 What Goes Around Comes Around](#)

"I am your biggest threat right now. And by the time your organization catches up, I would have become a bigger threat than them too."

Eren said and chuckled. He then scratched his beardless chin before verbally marching forward.

"But... if you want even more incentive or reason to join White Raven, then consider this.

Your sister Marla would join the guild in the future. I don't know how things are between you two sisters. But I imagine it wouldn't hurt you if you and your sister worked under the same roof.

Plus, I am Master Levine's official disciple. And she is working alongside my guild on this very land. There's no better way to convey to her that her decision to not take you under her wings because of your halfling lineage was wrong than excelling at the task I give you."

When blackmail failed, the butcher turned to emotional manipulation.

From his discussions with Marla, Eren could tell that she still cared about Marie despite her choice to be rogue and seek solutions outside the box. The half-sisters must have been very close to each other before one of them decided to become a cultist and the other decided to enter LA.

Eren was hoping Marie cared about her sister too. She would see Marla joining the same guild as one of the incentives of joining the guild.

He mentioned Levine's name for a different reason. His potioner teacher had told him about Marie. The Master ranker of the Montmorency clan had certain standards to maintain. Thus, she ignored all of Marie's pleas to become a disciple.

Marie was struggling with making potions at that time because ordinary methods wouldn't work for her. Levine's denial was the final nail in the coffin for Marie. As a result, she abandoned the usual and embraced cultist methods that promise greater results for her efforts.

Eren was sure that he would have done the same if he was in Marie's shoes. There was a certain charm in getting lost in the process of creating concoctions only a few people like him would understand. He could see Marie was one of them.

Marie didn't ask for an explanation from Eren about how he could learn so much about her. But her unflinching gaze was screaming at him for answers. The butcher smiled before explaining everything.

He told Marie about how he had served under Marla when he was in LA. He told her how he became Levine's disciple before proceeding to inform her about the current projects he and Levine were working on.

Marie's eyes shone with determination as she listened to Eren's words. She was having a feeling that the research she was doing on her projects and the experiments Eren and Levine were conducting in the guild's lab could complement each other.

'Maybe this is the missing ingredient I'm looking for.'

Marie had a sudden thought in her head as she looked at Eren's handsome face.

At the end of their discussions, Eren was able to get both the ladies on board. He then made a few arrangements for them before disappearing from the scene.

Agatha called him urgently to meet at the guild's headquarters.

"How long do I have to wait?"

A young man asked in a grim tone. He was in Agatha's office, standing by the large window which showed the cityscape in all its glory. There was a spacious balcony to the left side of the large window.

This man had long gray hair that was neatly styled. He had azure eyes and a sharp jawline. This handsome man had a kind of royal air around him. He acted like he was in charge of his surroundings.

She wore a concerned look on her face when she looked at this man. It's because he had Renar as his surname.

"I'm telling you, your highness Rehaal. You don't need to meet Eren. That's because he'd say the same thing. That we are not sheltering anyone named Rodrick Renar."

Agatha said in a careful tone. Meeting Rodrick who was a pretty easy guy to get along with had skewed her perception of the royals of Edinburgh. It was only after meeting Rehaal did she understand that the stereotypes were there for a reason.

Rehaal Renar knocked on White Raven's door for one reason. He wanted them to stop sheltering Rodrick so that he could eliminate him from the royal competition for all time. Of course, he didn't buy Agatha's argument that Rodrick wasn't with them.

Rehaal demanded that Eren Idril be summoned in front of him to discuss things further. Incidentally, Levine had sealed the entrance to the lab at this point. So Agatha couldn't reach her.

Agatha could only contact Eren after realizing that Rehaal wasn't someone she could handle on her own. She also hoped that things don't escalate any further.

Lightning flashed, and Eren appeared on the balcony. He had chosen to enter the guild's headquarters the same way he had exited.

"Nice to meet you, Adept Rehaal? How can we help you?"

He said casually as he entered the room that reeked of subtle tension. Agatha was relieved when she saw him and fought the urge to run toward him. She was in a royal's presence after all.

Rehaal looked at Eren keenly without saying a word as the latter sat down on the armrest of the chair Agatha was sitting on. He played with Agatha's hair as he waited for Rehaal to answer his question.

Rehaal didn't like that Eren had called him by his royal status and instead referred to him as an Adept. It indicated that Eren saw Rehaal on the same level as him because of their equal ranking status. However, he chose to ignore that and decided to pursue his goal.

"So you are the man they are talking about these days."

Rehaal spoke in a deep voice before walking up to Agatha's desk. Both his palms rested on the desk as he leaned towards the duo on the other side of the desk.

"I only want one thing from you guys. Kick out Rodrick Renar from your guild lands and we shall have no further problems.

Or else..."

Eren was stumped when he heard Rehaal's words. Not because he was scared of the royal. But because he couldn't help finding some sort of irony in the situation.

'Haha. What goes around comes around.'

[Chapter 775 A Teacher Fails If They Have Not Been Surpassed By Their Students](#)

'Haha. What goes around comes around.'

A subtle smile appeared on Eren's face as he found some humor in his situation. He kept on curling Agatha's white hair with his fingers as he asked Rehaal without looking at him.

"Who told you that Rodrick is here?"

Rehaal replied promptly to Eren's question.

"Hmph! Don't try to weasel your way out of this by saying he is not."

Eren shook his head before correcting him.

"I am not saying Rodrick is or isn't here. I'm asking who told you about him being here. Surely, a royal like you doesn't have anything to fear divulging the name of the person who gave you this information."

Rehaal looked at Eren with narrowed eyes when he heard Eren. The way in which Eren had asked him that question was forcing him to answer it honestly.

"Hmph! I would have told you even if I wasn't a royal.

It was the Escalon guild who told me about Rodrick's whereabouts."

'I fucking knew it.'

Eren smirked to himself when he heard the name Escalon. Since they couldn't mess with him or his guild personally, they had decided to involve a royal in the equation. So that he would do their job for them.

Eren also knew there was no way he could say Rodrick wasn't here if Rehaal was being tipped by the Escalon guild. He knew how the guild worked firsthand. They wouldn't mess with royal affairs unless they were completely sure of this thing.

Eren concluded that the Escalon guild would be performing regular stakeouts on White Raven city as a whole ever since its inception. They would be keeping a close watch on all the prominent figures of the city. This was the guild's standard protocol after all.

Know thy enemy.

This was Reva Rain's philosophy when it came to handling her opponents. She tried to know more about her targets so that she knew what would be more painful for them. She would then use that knowledge against them.

One could say that Reva Rain played a huge part in shaping how Eren had turned out to be. This change was specially apparant after he was given the second chance at life. All his torture techniques as well as the prudence he had developed came from knowing about her and how she operated.

Eren could guess that this was totally Reva's move. Getting your opponents into a brawl with bigger opponents and watching the show from afar.

'Heh! I'll have to tear a page from her books soon. Beat that bitch in her own game. After all, a teacher fails if they have not been surpassesd by their students.'

Eren let go of all his swirling thoughts before asking Agatha about it.

'Miss manager, did we start using the resources Rodrick had to offer to us?'

Agatha sighed before answering Eren honestly.

'Yes, we have. What was I supposed to do? Our guild members need potent spells and ranking techniques the most. That's the only way they could have an edge over their enemies that are not really monsters.

Rodrick's curated resources have helped us a lot.'

'I see.'

Eren replied to Agatha before turning his attention back to Rehaaal. He shrugged his shoulders before responding.

"We indeed have Rodrick with us."

Agatha looked stunned when Eren admitted that they were sheltering a rights-less royal against a legitimate royal's wishes. She thought that Eren's lies would prevail here as well. But it seemed like he was keen on selling Rodrick out.

Rehaal smirked when he heard Eren admit to Escalon guild's findings. He would have shown him the proofs that he had received from the guild if the guy was adamant about telling lies.

"It's helpful that you understand how things work. I expect you guys to kick Rodrick out of this city by evening. Honestly, I would have already taken action inside the city if I didn't care about the two big houses that are backing you."

Rehaal said with a casual smile on his face. It was only after hearing what he wanted to hear did he take the seat in front of Agatha.

Eren pursed his lips and scratched his chin before bursting into the royal's bubble.

"You got it wrong, Adept Rehaal. I didn't admit the fact that Rodrick was staying here to kick him out under your orders. I admitted to it because I want you to know we would provide shelter to him even after knowing it is against your wishes.

As backstabbing as I can get at times, I don't want to ruin my guild's reputation by being labeled as one. I know how the rumors spread and the way they affect the morals of people working under the guild's name.

Plus, I don't like to renege on my end of the deals. It's not in my nature to make unnecessary promises. But I try to keep the ones I do end up making."

Eren said while smiling at Rehaal. It looked like both Agatha and Rehaal were shocked by Eren's words. Agatha more so than Rehaal. She had thought that Eren wouldn't think twice before cutting ties with Rodrick when the royal threat was in front of him.

Apparently, Eren was changing a bit ever since he had stepped into Adept rank. Or he was becoming more of who he really wanted to be. His words were akin to saying 'fuck you' in Rehaal's face.

"Do you know what you are saying, Adept Eren?"

Rehaal said in a serious tone coated in suppressed anger. This was basically his first time receiving a 'no' from a commoner. As a result, he tried to put pressure on Eren and Agatha by manifesting his aura.

Rehaal was just a step away from entering the Expert rank. He was superior to Eren when it came to ranking status alone. As a result, Agatha felt suffocated as soon as the royal tried to dominate the duo.

Eren protected Agatha right away with his mana sense. But before he could respond to Rehaal's action in kind, the butcher frowned when he felt a known presence approaching them.

"Kiyeeeh!"

An eagle cry was heard when Eren was subjected to Rehaal's pressure.

[Chapter 776 Birds Of The Same Feather](#)

"Kiyeeeh!"

An eagle cry was heard when Eren was subjected to Rehaal's pressure. Although Eren wasn't threatened or bothered by it, the fact that a third person tried to bully his master irked the demon beast.

Following Eren's return to the White Raven city, Argo was let loose in the city. He was inside the beast space for most of the time when Eren was inside the Oni dungeon. So he preferred stretching his wings now that Eren was outside.

Eren had told his people what Argo liked or disliked about his food choices. The demon beast was well fed by the city's citizens after learning his identity. He treated the city as his territory and would use its skies to keep an eye on things.

Argo shrunk his size midflight before entering Agatha's office through the window. He landed on Eren's right shoulder in his eagle form. He leaned towards Rehaal with his neck outstretched and an eagle claw pointing at him.

The demon beast spoke up in a beastly voice and stunned his audience.

"Who... this little bitch?"

Rehaal was too stunned by the demon beast's way of addressing him to maintain a stable aura. This was the first time in his life that he was called a bitch.

"What... what... what the fuck did he say?"

Rehaal looked at Eren with confused and angry expressions. He had even forgotten to register the fact that a D-rank demon beast could speak.

Eren chuckled in his head as he heard Argo's words. He then criticized the bird for using the wrong words. There was no need to call Rehaal 'little'.

Outwardly, the butcher shrugged his shoulders before answering.

"Don't take him seriously. He has a limited vocabulary and is still learning to speak. He addresses everyone with words like these."

What Eren said was partially true. However, Argo's foul mouth was due to Eren's deep thoughts that were being read by him. One could say that Eren's subconscious had a hand to play in Argo's limited vocabulary. The demon beast only picked up on the most used words by his master first and foremost.

Only now did Rehaal realize that it was Eren's demon beast speaking in human language. But before he could say anything to Eren anymore, the latter continued.

"Look, Rehaal. I don't want to get involved in royal affairs. Here's my offer. I'll let you talk with the guy. If you could sort things out between you, great. And if you can't, then you'd have to come to a different arrangement."

Rehaal opened his mouth to say something to Eren. But he stopped midway when he found the offer to be somewhat reasonable. Plus, he wanted to see Rodrick anyway. Thus, he nodded at Eren, prompting the latter to contact Rodrick right away.

The guy that was being hunted by the royal scions showed up in the room after some time with a smile on his face. Eren was the first man he saw.

"Haha! Eren, my friend, I'm glad I got to see you again. Let's go out for a few drinks..."

Rodrick was planning to speak with Eren freely, thinking the guy had called him to catch up with him. Eren hadn't told him anything about Rehaal. However, soon after entering the room, Rodrick stopped speaking midway and looked at the person who was sitting in front of Eren. Rodrick identified Rehaal right away.

'You bastard, you could have given me a heads-up.'

,m Rodrick looked angrily at Eren before speaking to him through voice communication. The latter just shrugged his shoulders before gesturing him to approach the desk.

Rodrick tried to maintain royal decorum when he saw that there was no way out of the situation without facing Rehaal. He gritted his teeth and clenched his fists as he approached the desk, standing beside Eren who was still sitting on the armrest of Agatha's chair.

"Rehaal."

Rodrick greeted Rehaal with one word. He didn't use any honorifics or say anything else, indicating that he had no interest in respecting him or talking with him. The latter was getting madder by the second because of the treatment he was receiving ever since he had stepped foot in White Raven city.

Rehaal narrowed his eyes on Rodrick and demanded in a commanding tone.

"Hand them over."

Rodrick tried to act puzzled before speaking up.

"Hand what over?"

Rehaal lost his patience when he saw Rodrick's poor acting skills. After breaking his chair with his mana fluctuations, he yelled at him.

"Don't fucking play with me, Rodrick. The pieces of the artifact the king of Edinburgh had given to all of us. By cheating, you have acquired 20 out of 50 pieces of the artifact.

Hand them over. Or be prepared to face the consequences."

Rehaal spoke, sounding and looking livid. Rodrick started laughing after he heard Rehaal say what he had to say.

"Hahahaha! By cheating my way, you say? Was there any rule about there being no cheating involved when it came to the royal competition? There was not. It meant that we were free to obtain the pieces however we wanted.

Plus, many other guys have used trickery to obtain the pieces for themselves. Why don't you reach out and ask them and see if they don't laugh in your face the same way I'm doing right now?"

Rodrick looked at Rehaal confidently as he said what he had to say. Even though he had lost his royal retainer and royal rights at the time, Rodrick had not lost touch with the fact that showing weakness in the royal competition was a sin. He would be devoured whole if he ever showed that he could be run over.

Rehaal looked at Rodrick angrily. He could see why the guy could get along so well with Eren. They were headstrong in their belief and would be able to go to any lengths to achieve their goals.

This was the first time Rehaal had met up with Eren. But he had read everything about him before coming here. Thus, he could draw parallels between him and Rodrick.

'Birds of the same feather...'

[Chapter 777 Everything In Life Comes At A Price P1](#)

'Birds of the same feather...'

Rehaal looked at Eren and Rodrick both with a single glance before fixing his gaze on his cousin.

"Don't complicate things for you and your friend here, Rodrick. Those twenty pieces you have stolen will eventually become your downfall now that you are merely in the Ace rank.

I'm only helping you by taking the heat away from you.

The other competitors won't be as considerate as me. They'll destroy this city if they have to to get those pieces before killing a whole bunch of people along with you."

Rehaal said, his voice getting deeper as he spoke. This time, his aura was even stronger than before. The chair that was cracked disintegrated into pieces when Rehaal's aura manifested. The ground would have cracked too if it wasn't fortified with the runes.

Both Ace rankers would have been brought to their knees if Eren hadn't protected them with mana sense. Argo was about to make a fuss. So Eren took him inside his beast space before looking at Rehaal.

Rodrick was about to respond to Rehaal as he gritted his teeth. He knew he'd sound pathetic if he started speaking under Rehaal's influence. Thankfully, Rehaal's threatening words had managed to drag Eren into the mess.

"If you want to threaten my city, say it to my face. Don't use roundabout ways to do these things."

Eren radiated a grim aura as he spoke, his voice grimmer than ever. In the next moment, the surroundings changed for those who listened to his voice.

A wave of invisible haze spread over the surroundings. It felt like Agatha's office had become submerged in deep waters.

Rehaal was brought to his knees. The royal was left aghast by the suppression he felt at the moment. He felt like he had been thrown into a pit of lava before someone closed the only way out of it.

Rehaal's heartbeats increased and his ears started hearing white noise. He started seeing haze in front of his blurred vision and he lost his ability to speak properly.

Eren had tried to control the effects of his aura on the royal lad in front of him. But his soul sense slipped into the equation, making things more difficult for Rehaal than Eren planned them to be.

The thing about the soul sense was that once it awakens, one could not precisely control it like their mana sense. Extreme emotions and other reasons could cause the soul sense to inadvertently manifest itself.

Soul sense was even more potent than elemental attainment in this case. Both would get influenced by their wielder's emotions and personalities. However, soul sense begins affecting the living beings first and foremost in the surroundings rather than the surroundings themselves.

Therefore, it was dangerous for people with slumbering souls to be anywhere near someone who had awakened their soul sense.

Eren only realized what had happened to Rehaal when he saw his condition. The guy was looking at him with extreme fear. The butcher could read the royal's mind and knew that he was trying to flee the place due to a senseless fear that took hold of him. But his body wasn't listening to his orders. So he couldn't get up.

'Heh! I was once like this.'

Eren smirked when he saw Rehaal gasping for breaths. He couldn't help remembering when he was on the receiving end of the same ordeal. Only, his condition was much more severe because the soul he was affected by belonged to Eliza.

Eren controlled his aura and soul sense to offer the royal a much-needed relief. He didn't want to upset Rehaal's retainers any further than he already had.

Eren was genuinely angry when he heard Rehaal speaking about destroying his city for the royal scions' royal competition. Eren's soul sense manifested as a result, and Rehaal received a mentally scarring punishment.

Cough! Cough! Cough!

Rehaal started coughing and began taking quick breaths as he felt the suffocating pressure getting lifted. He didn't know what had happened to him but he knew who caused it.

"You....."

Rehaal looked at Eren wearily as he managed to blurt out a word. The feelings of wanting to run away from the guy in front of him were still trying to take over him. However, the royal fought against those feelings in order not to ruin his royal status any further.

Rehaal eventually stood up with his shaky legs and retrieved a strange potion from his storage. He uncorked the vial before drinking the contents inside it. Only then did the color on his pale face turn.

Rodrick and Agatha had been exposed to Eren's soul sense as well. But thankfully, they weren't affected by it because Eren's anger wasn't directed at them.

Nevertheless, they both could vaguely understand that Eren was much more than he let on. That his ranking status alone wasn't enough of a parameter to gauge his strength. Anyone who did that and tried to mess up with him was bound to be up for some rude awakening.

Rehaal was very angry at himself for getting down on his knees in front of a commoner. Even worse was the fact that he did it while Rodrick was in the same room.

Eren walked towards the now-standing royal with hands behind his back, prompting the latter to take a few steps back. He enjoyed watching a royal become more frightened with each passing moment because of his mere presence.

The butcher chuckled before speaking up in a clear voice.

"Let me get this thing clear to you and your retainers, Rehaal. I'm not preventing you from participating in your royal competition. I have no interest in being part of this charade.

But you need to find some other way to get Rodrick out of the city. Maybe you can set a trap for him outside the city when that happens."

"Oi...!"

Rodrick suddenly had stress lines on his forehead when he listened to Eren's words. He wanted to call Eren a conniving son of a bitch. But he knew that the guy would simply accept whatever negative thing that is being said about his mother.

Eren ignored Rodrick's objection and carried on.

[Chapter 778 Everything In Life Comes At A Price P2](#)

Eren ignored Rodrick's objection and carried on.

"I won't stop you from getting whatever you want from Rodrick however you see fit as long as you keep your conflicts outside the city. But you can't depend on me to kick the guy out for you. That would be against the arrangement between my guild and Rodrick.

I don't know what the royal competition is and I don't care. Frankly, if it were up to me, I would throw all the royal scions into a giant cage and tell them to do their worst to each other. Whoever comes out on top would be the successor to the throne. Simple as that."

Rodrick and Rehaal both looked at each other with a bit of worry in their eyes when they heard Eren's way of organizing a royal competition. The guy just wanted there to be a mass genocide among royal scions to select a successor.

Not that life wasn't on the line for contestants taking part in the ongoing competition. But only now did both the royal competitors realize that things could have been more disastrous if their current king was as ruthless as Eren.

Eren stopped walking towards Rehaal when the guy was almost at the door. Anymore, and he would have retreated outside Agatha's office.

Eren looked at Rehaal coldly before speaking up.

"As for royal scions destroying my city to achieve their goals...."

An eerie silence engulfed the room when Eren paused his statement. The air felt heavy to everyone around him.

'My friend... don't say anything that is considered treason.'

Rodrick sent a voice communication to Eren when he thought the guy was about to say something that they all might regret. However, his fears were unfounded. The butcher was in complete control of his senses and his speech.

"I'll simply say... Try me."

Eren said and flashed a gracious smile at Rehaal. The latter remained stunned at his position for a while before regaining control of his movements. He refused to look at Eren's face and only looked at his feet. He then glanced at Rodrick for one last time before leaving the premises in a hurry.

Soon, Rehaal's presence and the shadowy presences that were with him were nowhere to be found. They retreated as fast as they came. Rodrick spoke only after observing that there was no external presence.

"Hahaha! That served that bastard well. He had his nuts..."

Rodrick was about to gloat some more at Rehaal's condition but he suddenly felt pain in his guts as Eren punched him out of the blue. Of course, the butcher had controlled the punch in a way that wouldn't seriously injure him.

Rodrick too was brought to his knees by Eren's sudden attack. His face reddened and his eyes had a bit of moisture in them as Rodrick processed the pain that came with the punch.

"Eren..."

Agatha cried out when she saw Eren punch Rodrick. She wasn't sure what he was thinking about. He was trying to mess up with all the royal competitors at this point.

Cough! Cough! Cough!

Rodrick started coughing when he felt the effects of Eren's punch. He was about to throw the food he had just eaten. But somehow he managed to gulp down the content that was trying to come out.

"You know why I hit you, right?"

Eren said, looking at Rodrick with narrowed eyes. His expressions seemed even grimmer than he had when Rehaal was in the room.

Rodrick knew what Eren was asking about. He had basically tried to manipulate Eren into defending him. And he had only succeeded in it because Eren let him get manipulated so as not to destroy the guild's reputation.

Rodrick had first manipulated Altashia into taking pity on him and fighting with him. Win or lose, he would have profited greatly from the battle eventually. After all, Altashia's family could have been a huge supporter of him.

However, meeting Eren changed his life and his point of view altogether. He placed all his bets on Eren when he figured out what he was up to. Then he began working on his plan to get as many pieces of the royal puzzle as he could before retreating into a safe zone.

Of course, Rodrick knew he couldn't afford to mess with Eren's guild without offering it something worthwhile in return. That's why he had come prepared before meeting with Agatha.

Eren had read Rodrick like an open book in the past as well as in the present. He knew what the guy was doing and still let himself get manipulated by him. Rodrick could only guess Eren would one day knock on his door for a payback.

Rodrick hadn't thought of betraying Eren. But the fact remained that he had tried to use Eren for his advantage.

In more ways than one, Rodrick was a lot like the current Eren. And Eren didn't like that part about Rodrick the most— the part that was identical to him.

"You know why I hit you, right?"

Rodrick heard Eren's question directed at him in a neutral voice. He stood up and took long breaths to stabilize himself. The royal competitor smiled mirthlessly at Eren before nodding at him.

"Yeah, I know. I'm sorry, Eren. It was for my survival. And for the survival of my close ones as well."

Eren looked at Rodrick intently when he heard his response. He smirked before adding further.

"Very well. You should also know that everything worthwhile in life comes at a price. When the right time comes, I'll demand that price from you.

Make sure that you will be able to afford it in the future."

Rodrick and Eren looked at each other without saying a word. Agatha wasn't sure what the two were discussing or not discussing. But at this point, she didn't care. She just wanted to get on with her current work.

Rodrick chuckled before responding.

"Become capable in the future, huh! I got it. Believe it or not, I like to protect my hide at all times."

Rodrick said and put his arm across Eren's shoulders. He led him outside Agatha's office as his fading voice was heard by a pensive-looking Agatha.

"Drinks on me."

[Chapter 779 Graduation Plans](#)

Eren's private chamber. White Raven guild headquarters. White Raven city.

"What was Layla talking about?"

Alephee asked Eren while he was being subjected to his hellish training at midnight. He was sleeping on the bed of thorns with his back getting carved by the elemental shards Alephee had created using the array setup.

Eren had paused his training session midway when he received the voice message from Layla a few moments ago. Alephee was curious about it.

"She..."

Eren had a red face while he was suffering through pain and misery. He shook his head and continued speaking. It was almost like he didn't feel pain anymore. Or he stopped processing the pain the usual way.

"She tells me Arthur's forces are getting desperate. They are trying to close in on her and Ivor from various fronts.

So far, they have managed to stay ahead of his forces. They plan to face all of the forces at once and eliminate them. They are a hindrance to the Lazarus project after all."

Eren said with a steady voice before releasing the breath he was holding. He then followed up on Alephee's instructions to operate on her mana circuits. More wounds were created when he failed to match up the mana flow with the shards' movements. However, the wounds this time were significantly less than what he had faced the first time. He was improving.

"And? That brat won't report to you her updates unless something major has happened or she wants something from you."

Alephee asked while standing outside the array looking at Eren with her hands folded under her bosom. Eren chuckled before answering.

"She is planning to set a trap for all of them soon. And needs my assistance in handling some of the heat Arthur's forces bring."

Eren said and rolled to his side. He wished the bed of suffering he was using for his training of mana circuits could be used from all directions. His pain would increase but at least he would save time.

Three weeks had passed since Eren came to White Raven city. He had handled various matters related to the guild and Minerva's Utopia these days, ensuring that everything ran smoothly inside his city.

During these three weeks, he would spend his nights training his mana circuits. He would spar with Alephee in the morning to digest his gains and see the effects of his training.

Fighting with Alephee was always an eye-opening experience for Eren. he would often learn something so obvious about the way he could improve his battle style. However, he knew it would only become obvious after Alephee showed it to him. Otherwise, he'd have to spend a long time coming to the same conclusions.

Eren would often spar with his teammates during these three weeks whenever they were available. Drin and Bianka had groups to lead. Tumko Darata's team will serve as another full-fledged party for the White Raven when he and his teammates officially join the guild.

Eren was also in touch with various others who were planning to come to White Raven city to meet him. Aunt Nina and Marla were one of them. Dianna Remus also had a grim piece of news to share with him regarding her family's stance. She was expecting to meet him during one of their army assignments that he would take on soon.

Marla confirmed Eren's hypothesis after he contacted her. She had told him LA was planning to keep the graduation ceremony on hold till the postponed event came to pass. She was asked to hold her position in LA until that happens. Thus, she couldn't join White Raven right away.

Just like Altashia, Eren should have graduated from LA because of breaking into the Adept rank. Nevertheless, the kingdom of Edinburgh decided to go all out in recruiting students into its armed forces. It had changed the rules of all five elite academies and made them halt the graduation of their Adept-ranked students.

Last time, the event in question was postponed because of the social turmoil created by the news of Ivor Osan being the Osan Woods Butcher as well as Isen Osan fleeing to the enemy kingdom. Due to the potential war with the enemy kingdom, the stakes for the event were expected to rise in all aspects.

The graduation ceremony would take place in Edinburgh's capital in a few weeks. Eren was bound to attend that. One of the highlights of the graduation event was that it would be a joint venture by all the top academies in the kingdom. Meaning it would pit students from all five academies together.

The event would be broadcast throughout the kingdom. The purpose was to improve the citizen's faith in the kingdom and its potential elites. It was also to demonstrate to the kingdom of Layos that Edinburgh was cultivating a powerful force. Because it knew the enemy kingdom would keep track of the kingdom-level event like this.

Eren could only smile mirthlessly after understanding the reason behind things that were happening around him and to him. Not that he didn't like the event getting bigger than his previous timeline. The more prestigious the event, the greater the rewards that come with it.

Eren had a smile on his face as he thought of graduating from LA once again in this timeline as an Adept. Last time, he was barely a Novice when he cleared the academy somehow. Although he had managed to get through academic life, he entered the world of rankers with scant experience and a ruined name.

In this timeline, Eren had a guild and an entire city to himself. Ranking-wise, he left assistant professors in LA behind. His name was spreading throughout the kingdom as the guild master of a rising city and guild.

Fame. Money. And power.

The butcher had everything in this timeline. Although his face wasn't that well-known, he wasn't disheartened. The comparison of his past and present lives made him feel a bit satisfied with his current progress. But there was a part of him that wanted more. Even more.

Even the whole of Anfang wouldn't be enough to quench his thirst for something more.

'Altashia cleared her graduation just at right time, huh! Never mind. I wanted to be part of the event anyway. There's something in that event I need.'

Eren thought to himself as he carried on with his training. He had a smile on his face when he sorted his thoughts.

Alephee was irked when he flashed a grin while being subjected to pain.

'And he wonders why people call him a masochist!'

[Chapter 780 Lord Of War](#)

The next day.

Inside Eren's potion lab. Underground facility. White Raven guild's headquarters.

Eren had gotten refreshed after completing the nightly mana circuits training and sparring sessions with Alephee that followed afterward. He was now looking at a giant array that had been created by Alephee in an empty hall space.

Alephee entered the array eye and began her operations. There were various sections inside the array that were created by the intersection of complex runic details. Some sections contained metallic ores while the other sections contained various weapon artifacts.

The various chunks of various metals found in various sections of the array were obtained inside Minerva's Utopia. There were some metallic chunks that Eren had personally bought from external sources upon Alephee's suggestion.

Then there were sections for raw ingredients inside the array that belonged to different elements. Eren was sure that if Durbag had been here, the guy would have been blown away by the complexities of the array Alephee had created.

The weapons artifacts that could be found inside the array all belonged to the Novice rank. Eren had bought them in large quantities from his sources for this experiment.

All the ingredients, weapon artifacts, and other items that had become part of the array by being inside were levitating at a fixed distance from the ground. The weapons and ingredients would only move under Alephee's control.

She would move them inside the central array eye to process them and create a high-ranked weapon artifact.

However, what Alephee did with Eren's weapons and what she was doing this time using the array was a bit different. It was not the existing Novice weapons that she was converting. Instead, she was making brand-new artifacts while using the existing artifacts as a foundation that could be copied.

Alephee would then use the chunks of metals and other items to create an identical-looking weapon to the original artifact. Only that its rank would be higher.

Alephee's Perfect Paradox was at work in this case. The spell was used differently using the array setup.

Alephee closed her eyes and concentrated. She didn't have any stressful expressions on her face. It indicated that operating arrays of this level was not a big deal for her. Her Homunculus body was the only limit to her powers. And yet, she was doing what might seem impossible to most people.

Eren was having his breakfast as he watched Alephee potentially making more money for him. This was not his first time seeing the phenomenon. The homunculus had already operated on the array a few times, giving him loads of Ace and Adept-ranked artifacts.

Crunch! Crunch! Crunch!

It looked like Eren was chewing on blocks of berry-shaped ice as he watched Alephee work. But it was a very rare ingredient. This consumable ingredient was known as Ivory Ice Berry.

After getting intimate with Lensa once again, for some reason, Eren had received some of her elemental attainment from her. He could vaguely guess that it was his Sin series Ability evolving. But he couldn't be sure.

It could just be because the couple enjoyed each other's company so much that they ended up creating a rare phenomenon. Similar things had happened in the past.

The act of intimacy would sometimes pull people into a state of epiphany. Sometimes, they wouldn't even be aware that such things had happened to them because their senses get overwhelmed by waves of ecstasy.

Thus, Eren would only believe that the portion of elemental attainment of ice he had received from Lensa was from his Ability if and when the same thing happens a second time with a different ranker.

However, how he had received elemental attainment didn't matter to him for the time being. He focused on making the most of it by increasing it even further and solidifying it. He had even bought a couple of ice and water element spells to experiment with them.

Thus far, his results have been satisfactory. Especially after considering the fact that the ice element and by extension the water element were completely unexplored territory to him in both his timelines.

Eren spent thousands of Extols on such a rare D-rank ingredient without batting an eye after knowing about its benefits for ice and water element users. He was earning money through his guild so he could spend it on things like this.

A bite of an Ivory Ice Berry was akin to discarding hundreds of Extols. Most ice and water element rankers would only use them when planning an isolated meditation inside an elemental array. And yet the butcher ate the ingredients for a mundane breakfast as if they were peanuts.

The ice-element ingredient would freeze his tongue and then create a layer of ice over his face and neck every time he took a substantial bite. But it would disappear just as quickly when he gulped the berry down.

The ice-element ingredient would then provide a soothing cooling effect to one's mana circuits once it entered the system. It also had the property of healing injuries attached to it.

Eren's brain would sometimes get filled with various ice-element nuances he could apply to his newly learned ice-element spells. His understanding of the water element also improved, helping him catch up with his current rank in terms of his mastery over both these elements.

Eren was saving years of grueling work, training, experimentation, and time by eating a raw ingredient like this, in an insane quantity. Agatha had stopped giving him money after seeing his ridiculous expenses. She had flat out told him to look for another source of income if he wanted to be such an insane spender.

Eren chuckled when he got a reality check from Agatha. He didn't want to give a financial blow to his guild that was slowly rising to prominence. So he agreed with her and stopped buying expensive raw ingredients for the time being. He would only buy them a fixed amount, in a fixed time frame. That way, he would be able to make use of his money and not burn a hole through his sleeves.

Crunch! Crunch! Crunch!

With many thoughts swirling inside his head, Eren kept eating the ranked ingredient and watching Alephee work. He would digest all his ice elemental attainment he derived from the berries while seeing the artifacts getting a revamp in front of him. Before he knew it, an hour had passed.

Just when Eren snapped out of his semi-conscious state and was done eating, he saw that Alephee had also finished operating on the array.

Loads of weapons had been created from their lower-ranked counterparts. Smiling, Eren dusted off his hands to get rid of the frost and ice that had accumulated over his arms holding the Ivory Ice berries.

Eren had a gracious smile on his face as he watched the manufactured goods. He couldn't wait for the war to break out between Edinburgh and Layos. No matter which side comes out on top, he was sure to turn into a lord of war by driving the war-based economy his way.