

Vile 851

[Chapter 851 Anfang Alliance](#)

Eren knew Alephee was explaining the limitations of using the demons' method of exploring worlds for his well-being. But he had a different thought running through his mind.

'Most of the problems these so-called demons have are because they choose a beast vessel for their soul fragments. What if they choose a human or human-like being for their soul fragments?'

Alephee shook her head before replying.

'Things are not as easy as you are making them out to be. Demons' soul fragments can occupy beast vessels since they lack awareness and their souls are easy to suppress.

However, the slumbering human child's soul develops consciousness as soon as it is born. Or maybe even before that. What a mortal human infant lacks in physical capacity, nature makes up for it by giving them a strong soul that cannot be easily controlled. Especially when an otherworldly existence is trying to take over them.

Demon possession gets complicated even for mortal humans. Plus, the grand-scale isolation array makes things even harder for demons and denizens of other worlds. So you can forget about demons possessing humans and other humanoid races.

Of course, this is the general scenario. Although rare, demon possessions had taken place in other worlds.'

Eren nodded at Alephee and let her return to the main point she was trying to make.

'Of course, the demons have underestimated the strict control the establishments of Anfang have on their populace. I reckon almost all of their soul fragments end up in servitude. All they do is give the rankers a strong beast they could rely on and have a close connection with.

The establishments of Anfang treat demon possession with an even more heavy-handed approach than the monsters in the Badlands. That's because if a demon manages to get stronger in their occupied vessels, it would be much more difficult to deal with them.'

Eren had most of his questions answered about the demon beasts at this point. He knew that he wouldn't be able to experiment with demon possession anytime soon. However, he has decided to dabble in the subject when he is capable of doing so.

'Monsters and demons. These are the two types of intruders that I know of at this point. I wonder if there are others. Possibly the race of the giants? Those trophies of giants' skeletons the old hag has in her palace must belong to another world that is not the demon continent or Echidna.

Why are all the otherworldly creatures trying to enter the continent of Anfang though? They call it the land of the faithless, don't they?

A world that doesn't communicate with any other. Why are they trying to enter this world that is supposedly backward in terms of resources for them?'

Eren started thinking about various things at once. The talk about the otherworldly intruders brought him back to Eliza's palace where he had seen the giant skeletons. The ghost-from-the-past Sage had claimed that she had slaughtered the giants herself in Anfang's long past. And later on, got betrayed.

Eren was no history scholar. But through his experiences spanning over two timelines, he had become well-versed at planning deep-seated schemes. He could put himself in others' shoes and see where the evidence gathered so far points.

Eren started compiling the data he had obtained from JJ Edgar's journals, Eliza's talk, Altashia's explanation, and Alephee's information. They swirled around in Eren's brain and helped him make sense of the blurred picture.

Eren also had a brief talk over the spectral screen with Fiona's senior Sirius Fenris. Fiona had reached the Last Blood Bastion successfully and immediately contacted her senior and clan head Sirius about Eren's proposed deal.

Eren and Sirius had a serious conversation before the former started his marketing campaigns. The talk was regarding arms manufacturing and distribution. When the deal's base was set and Sirius agreed to meet him personally, Eren decided to ask him something about the topic.

He asked Sirius Fenris about Eliza. Being part of the half-blood clan and serving as one of the clan elders, Eren guessed that the guy was aware of a lot of things.

Sirius didn't say much regarding the history of Anfang. But the more he talked, the more Eren started connecting the dots.

The butcher came up with another hypothesis when he did this.

According to Eren's hypothesis based on Sirius' initial talks, Eliza was too powerful for the forces of Anfang to handle on their own in the past. But she still had some use when the intruders were trying to invade Anfang openly.

Then something happened and the threat of intruders was no more. Or to be precise, it was not as severe as it was before.

'Anfang's alliance that Marla talked about. All the top establishments in the world, the Amazons, and even some cultist organizations are involved in the dark. The alliance predates the kingdom's inception.

As per Edgar's journal and talks with Sirius, even the half-blood clans of the past would have been part of this alliance. During the wars against the intruders, their presence was overwhelming.

But for some reason, that was not enough. Despite their contributions to the alliance, half-blood clans were treated as outsiders.

The major players in the Anfang alliance must have neutralized the threat of intruders in some way. They must have done something drastic. The continental-encompassing giant array would be a part of that arrangement.

Once they confirmed that the threat of the intruders was no more, they got rid of the majority of the half-blood clans to suppress them. Eliza was supposed to be part of that culling too. But she managed to escape.

The half-blood clans now live in the shadows of Anfang. The establishments do everything in their power to remove the vestiges of the half-bloods. And Eliza is trying to get back at the Alliance for the betrayal she had to face in the past.

Hehe. Everything will eventually boil to a tipping point when that old hag manages to get her ranking status back along with a new vessel.'

[Chapter 852 God Sparks](#)

Eren concluded his hypothesis and looked at Alephee with a smile on his face. The latter was again impressed by how the butcher was able to connect the majority of the dots even after providing fragmented information.

'He was very naive in his past life. Very trusting and benevolent, I would say. But this version of Elder Seed....'

Alephee shook her head and smiled. Of course, she wasn't only talking about Eren's disposition in the past timeline.

The homunculus then narrowed her eyes before speaking up.

'What are the intruders looking for on the continent of Anfang, you ask? Why would intruders invade a foreign land in the first place? Because they believe that there are better opportunities for their growth in the land they are trying to intrude on.

There's no exception in this case either. All of them are looking for something precious. Something that they have possibly run out of in their respective worlds.'

Eren felt like Alephee had strengthened the barrier using her powers. She also started using mana from his mana core through Perfect Paradox to maintain the barrier.

They are looking for God Sparks, Eren. Something that the World's Will births for the chosen ones of its natives.'

Alephee's answers made Eren more curious about the past. He had decided that he would try to get more answers regarding them from Sirius when they meet up personally.

Eren had these thoughts in his head as he continued to listen to Alephee's explanation.

"Why would monsters send their denizens here, and why would the demon continent's denizens be interested in demon possession if God Sparks were easily accessible? They'll keep on knocking on the closed door because they know what is hidden on the other side of the door.

Anyway. It is too early for you to dabble in the game meant for Sages and above. You have already made full use of this opportunity. Now let us turn our attention to the Spirit Beasts.

Spirit Beasts are more relevant to us than God Sparks. I suggest we concentrate on the current tasks at hand.'

Saying that Alephee released her time-element spell. She started looking like she was out of breath all of a sudden. Her face became pale and she was about to lose her footing. Nevertheless, she was able to stay on her feet and look around.

Alephee told Eren and Kirin that they needed to move away from their current position once again. She also raised her hands and cast another spell to erase the signs of their presence from the surroundings.

The homunculus was worried about the Spirit Beast getting targeted by a high-ranking entity. She believed that the signs of a Spirit beast being bred in the surroundings were already there. It just decided to show itself when Eren and Kirin were around by chance. So the rankers who were aware of the signs must be keeping an eye on the place. This is in case the spirit beast manifests and shows up out in the open.

Eren agreed to Alephee's suggestion and quickly decided to follow through. He had Kirin summon a large flying cloud for all three of them. Soon, the trio disappeared from their spot along with the spirit beast Eren had captured for himself.

Alephee's suggestion turned out to be right. That's because a shadow appeared out of thin air over Lake Moonlight Death's surface a few minutes after the trio disappeared.

This seemed to be a man whose face had been covered by a hood. He had a tall and lean build. This man was wearing dark clothes and had a strong presence around him. His aura was intense and suffocating. His brown eyes glowed in the reflection over the surface of the lake he was standing on.

His presence was agitating the water, creating small whirlpools on its surface. This was just the man's water-element attainment manifesting around him because of the surprise he was feeling.

"Hmm? These signs... the spirit beast was taken away?"

The hooded man mumbled to himself in a voice coated in surprise. It looked like he had been waiting for the spirit beast to show itself for a very long time. But someone else managed to locate and claim the beast before him. That too without leaving behind any traces.

The lake's water started shaking when the hooded man's emotions of shock and surprise started turning into anger. The whirlpools were raised over the lake's surface and the masses of water used in them began boiling.

A distinct mana pulse was released from the man before the lake's peaceful atmosphere changed into something dangerous. The air in the region also started having water-like properties and created a watery suffocation effect.

Unbeknownst to Eren, the man had cultivated the spirit beast for over three centuries. He had created a favorable environment for it using the means available to him. And just when he thought that he would reap the benefits of his diligent work, the butcher had gone ahead and claimed his price for himself.

It was safe to say that the man was angry.

The man shook his head when he realized that he couldn't do anything to get the spirit beast back. It was most likely contaminated by supposedly a higher-ranked entity using its mana signature. So pursuing the matter wasn't worth it.

'Who's this damned lucky bastard who screwed around and got his hands on my spirit beast by chance? I swear I'll wring him dry of his luck if and when I find him.'

The man could still sense the obvious signs of the activity even when he couldn't recognize the identities of the people involved. It was as if the water element itself was trying to tell him last night's story.

The man knew there was no use crying over spilled milk. He sighed before disappearing into thin air like a mist.

From this day forward, there would be no chill-inducing anomalies in the Lake Moonlight Death. The phenomenon ceased to exist when the spirit beast was taken away from its environment.

[Chapter 853 The Way Of Water](#)

Eren closed his eyes.

Outskirts of the Moonlight Death Forest.

The morning sun was shining brightly in the sky. But the winter winds carried chilliness with them. The autumn leaves were falling off trees, covering the ground with reddish brown fall.

Kirin and Alephee were watching Eren from a distance as he was practicing his Rootless ranking technique. A technique that did not belong to any particular element, battle style, class, or any particular aspect of being a ranker. And in doing so, it belonged to every school, class, and style.

Eren was sitting on a stone platform in a meditative pose. The trees and foliage around him were getting rustled by the chilly winds. But even more chilling was the chilliness the spirit beast around him was radiating.

The blue-scaled fish was swimming in the air around him. Sometimes in circles. Other times, in weird patterns. The fish was free to swim away from him. And nobody stopped him from getting close to him.

Eren's lightning, fire, water, and other elemental attainments were manifesting around him. But they couldn't hurt the spirit beast or stop it from moving.

The spirit beast would occasionally turn waves of fire into drops of firey water. Lightning streaks would be converted into a mass of liquid electricity before the beast swam in it.

The spirit beast is completely attuned to its surroundings. It swam peacefully around Eren as they both deepened their bonds between them.

Under Alephee's guidance, Eren was able to form a connection with the spirit beast. He could have devoured the spirit beast whole using his Abilities. As the conscious fragment of the way of water, he could have gained everything the spirit beast held, but the homunculus advised against it.

She told him that keeping the spirit beast with him had more benefits for Eren. That's because the spirit beast was constantly learning from its surroundings. Each moment would deepen its understanding of the element it was born from.

The connection Eren shared with the spirit beast was faint and almost superficial. The spirit beasts did not possess physical bodies, so there was no blood ritual involved. They were also not summoned creatures brought into existence by the summoner. So one couldn't really control them the way they wanted to.

Because of the insights they offered, spirit beasts stayed with their alleged captors who attracted them with their elemental attainments. And they would share the insights they gained with their captors through a subtle mental connection.

Eren could feel that the blue-scaled fish had basic primary responses and a semblance of feelings that are born out of the need to deepen its understanding of the way of water. Apart from these, the beast was like a blank slate. Existence in its purest form, unadorned by anything or anyone. Only tainted a bit because of the mana signature Eren had imbued inside it.

The spirit beast saw that Eren's water-element manifestation had become prominent in his technique's cycle and its eyes sparkled. It swam toward Eren and immersed itself in the shapeless mass of water that was forming around him.

Eren felt like he was immersed in a huge mass of water that had no limitations. It had no dimensions, no entry, and no way to exit. A boundless form of water that contained a myriad of mysteries.

Eren felt like he was surrounded by the chill of tiny fish that swam around him in rhythmic patterns. It felt like they were moving according to the whims of water without making rational decisions. As a result, numerous fish moved at the same time in such synchronicity that they didn't bump into each other despite being fast and extremely agile.

These tiny fish taught Eren the flexibility of the water element. How malleable it was and how inclusive it could be. It was through the school of fish that he learned that water is plural in nature, even though it appears to be one and united. It could also diversify itself because of changes introduced by external factors.

Eren felt like some giant sea creatures had come to meet him. He wanted to be intimidated by their size. And he thought he would after feeling so defenseless in the water. But for some reason, he kept his eyes closed and found the experience to be peaceful.

Eren felt that the giant sea creatures around him had not threatened him. They had come to teach him about the weight and heaviness of the water. It represented how terrifying water could get if its volume exceeded a certain limit.

Water can be very destructive, even though it is known as the source of life.

Eren felt like he was experiencing many things at once. The presence around him changed and the water around him rippled with many concepts. Some he knew by definition but didn't fully understand. Some he was made to realize afresh.

In one moment, Eren felt like his blood was boiling. In the next moment, his blood was going to freeze in the chilliness that the water brought about. Even though the water's temperature was bone-freezing, the water itself did not turn into ice. It was as if the element could let go of the restrictions placed on it by the world using its own means.

Eren felt like this was how he wanted to be. Being part of the system but not restricted by its limitations.

The immersive kaleidoscope of life was based on the way water kept on changing around Eren, making him more profound in the element. His water-element attainment was catching up with his other main attainments at unbelievable rates.

Eren gained two Aspects of water at the same time as his understanding of water reached a tipping point. One was the chill it brought forth. The other was its boiling point.

The butcher felt like even with these two Aspects, he could sum up everything the element of water represented in all worlds just fine. Some elements just contained universal truths that were bound to remain unchanged no matter which world tried to capture them in their hold.

[Chapter 854 A Nice Autumn Evening For Ambush And Assassination](#)

Profundity in simplicity. Life lessons in obvious truths.

Eren felt like he had gained such a deep understanding of the water element so instantly. He felt that he could fuse it with any other element he had sufficient control over. He knew in his heart at this moment that he could try elemental fusion with lightning, fire, and even his wind element.

When he opened his eyes, the elemental manifestations around him stopped. The blue-scaled fish was nowhere to be seen. But a runic tattoo had appeared on the back of his right hand. It had the shape of a blue-scaled fish and minute runic engravings that represented elemental attainment.

Eren's vision was a bit blurry at first. He rubbed his eyes and felt that his eyes had turned watery for some reason. He wiped them and shook his head before looking around him.

It was still daytime. But Eren felt like things were not adding up. He looked at his pendant and tried to contact Alephee.

"You there?"

Eren asked in an inquisitive tone. In the next moment, a young girl in a sophisticated Gothic outfit appeared beside him. She was busy writing something in her grimoire.

"You were out for nine days. I told Kirin to proceed ahead without you."

Alephee answered Eren's question without him having to ask. The latter nodded at her and stretched his limbs.

Kirin had decided to do Eren's bidding. She was preparing to gather a small party under her lead and conquer Bigua's tribe. The butcher wasn't worried about Kirin's success. However, he hoped that the thing Bigua had in his tribe would remain safe in the aftermath of the battle.

He manifested a shapeless blob of water over his stretched right palm and decided to apply his Chill Aspect to it. In the next moment, the blob shrunk in size and started looking a deeper shade of blue. It did not turn into ice but it had become heavy and its viscosity had been altered.

The blob also became less agitated and almost came to a standstill. The water felt like it had lost all its vitality.

Eren stretched his other palm and applied the Boil Aspect of water to the manifested blob. Following that, it started expanding. It started displaying weird shapes and forms and became more agitated with time. As if it was trying to throw something out.

Eren combined the two blobs of water that were representing two different Aspects by bringing his palms closer. The two blobs merged seamlessly as soon as they came in contact. Despite their differences, they did not repel each other.

A peaceful mass of water was now suspended over Eren's palms. This was the normal form of water, which carried within it the Aspect fusion.

'Hmm. Every element is mysterious if one thinks about them. Each element can act like water. And water can act like every other element. It depends upon the person who is wielding the element.'

Eren thought to himself before dispersing the mass of water he had conjured. He then looked around before speaking to Alephee.

"We should go as well."

The lightning struck and Eren disappeared. Alephee vanished into thin air along with him.

A forest region outside the city of New Beginnings.

The evening sky was soon about to be studded with countless stars and a crescent moon, which had shown itself. The autumn air had dropped in temperature even further. The evening fog was starting to spread around the forest, slowly taking the entire region under its domain.

A nice autumn evening for ambush and assassination.

"It's been days since he dropped off the grid. When will he arrive? And how do we know he hasn't slipped past us?"

An irritated manly voice of unknown origin resounded in seemingly inhabited surroundings. Another feminine voice answered him with equal irritation.

"You keep asking the same thing over and over again. What part of "be patient" did you not understand the last time?"

My sources tell me he has finally come out of the Moonlight Forest Death. We don't know what he was doing inside for so many days. But it doesn't matter.

He'll leave the city soon. And he'll come this way judging by the direction he is heading.

Anyway, it's not our job to intercept him first. Our job is to provide backup. Of course, we'll get to see the fun from here without being discovered. So just be quiet."

The feminine voice decided to divulge the information that her spies had informed her of. But it seemed that the man was done playing hide-and-seek with someone who hadn't even arrived to play the game with him for nine days straight.

The man decided to show himself over a large tree's thick and long branch. He was none other than Goro Jaan Remus— the man dispatched by House Remus to take care of Eren.

Goro Jaan Remus had a mix of black and brown hair with white highlights in between. He had large black eyes and a pronounced nose. His lips were a bit wider than usual. So whenever he smiled, his expression looked creepy.

Goro was a very tall man. He was 8 ft tall and had a lean but muscular build. He wore nothing covering his torso, exposing his abs and chest. He had strong and veiny arms. Plus, he wore two black arm guards.

He also wore a shoulder guard on his right shoulder, which was strapped around his chest. He wore a red hood over his head but did not make any attempts to hide his face.

Goro had a sheathed sword strapped to his waist. A black chain was wrapped along the length of the weapon sheathed in a red scabbard.

Goro gave off deathly vibes around him. The autumn leaves in his vicinity turned to ash and dispersed because of the death energy he was giving off. The tree's branch on which he was standing was starting to lose the life it had in it. It was slowly crumbling— its wooden scales chipping away.

"Tch. I can't just stay still for nine days, can I? I hope the guy doesn't disappoint me. He has killed two members of the Remus family. I have high hopes from this jackass since he made such a show of confidence. Hehehe."

Goro laughed as he talked about the deaths of his two clan members. He seemed excited to meet the butcher.

[Chapter 855 Blessed By The Heavens Or Delusional?](#)

A seemingly deserted region outside the city of New Beginnings.

Another isolated zone, obscured from view using a sophisticated isolation array. Not too far away from where Goro was hiding.

A group of rankers belonging to House Slughorn was stationed here. Two rankers in the group held the most commanding power between them. One was Sienna and the other was Regan.

Regan Slughorn was stunned that he had been assigned missions like these.

He was Sienna Slughorn's handler and had served as such since she was very young. He didn't think that Sebastian Slughorn would assign him to an ambush mission.

The old man was trying to make huge changes in the clan after he had met with Eren and Levine. He was trying to keep the sinking ship afloat for longer. At least during his lifetime, he did not want the clan's legacy to disappear.

It wasn't that Regan couldn't do ambush missions. But taking him away from his usual duties meant that Sienna had lost her position in the clan. This made things even more difficult for her than they already were.

The most upsetting thing was the fact that Sienna had been sent along with him. Sebastian wanted her to watch the real-life battles live from a safe distance. But Regan knew that there was no safe zone on the battlefield. Sienna was just being punished for her rash behavior by her great-grandfather. Or maybe he had simply given up on her.

"Old man, what are you thinking about?"

Sienna asked, looking bored out of her wits after being in the same place for almost a week. She was reading a romance novel in one hand and eating half-eaten fruit in the other. The girl was trying to live a laid-back life on what could be a battlefield.

"Sienna, I don't think you understand the grimness of the situation you are currently in. In dispatching you here, your grandfather has thrown you under a chariot on a collision course with a wall.

This is more than just a punishment for your actions if you ask me. This looks like he doesn't care anymore about you."

Regan said with a worrisome tone. His interests were tied to Sienna's progress. Of course, he would be worried about the things the girl did or the consequences she brought about.

Sienna closed her book and started laughing. She adjusted her hair and straightened her back sitting on a tree's branch. She swung her legs in the air even more while speaking up.

"Relax, old man Regan. Gramps Sebastian will come around eventually. This is not even that big of a mission. You guys are making such a big deal out of killing someone of my generation. Even if he carries a secret force in the shadows, I don't think you'd have many problems killing him anyway."

Sienna said uncaringly and got up from her seated position. She ran her fingers through her hair and adjusted her pretty hairdo before continuing.

"No matter what I do, things will always work out for me. I'm blessed by the heavens, you see. Hehehe."

Sienna's eyes shone brightly as she spoke. Her mana signature fluctuated and she started feeling like a different person. It was as if she was being possessed by something.

Regan and the rest of the Slughorn members had come to accept that this was the side-effect of using an illusion spell on Sienna. Ever since her memories were sealed, she has given in to her irrational thoughts even more. She would start acting like she owned everything around her and demanded obedience from everybody that was with her.

Regan knew Sienna from her childhood. She was always a bratty girl who had been pampered a lot, thanks to being part of the main branch of the clan.

But she was never this delusional.

Sienna was a scheming girl who knew how to think for herself. She was not hard-working. With the right use of her influence, she was able to cover up her flaws in the past.

However, everything changed when she visited the city of Nilaami and was sold as an experience pack. She became a different person after that. She still tried to think out of the box and bend the rules her way. But she didn't have her exceptional wits with her anymore.

That incident altered Sienna's personality gradually. The treatment she received for that incident treated the symptoms but not the root cause. It looked like the illusion spell was also giving her the impression that she was a special child.

Someone needed to give Sienna a reality check. Thus, Regan decided to be the deliverer of just that.

"Things will work out for you no matter what you do, huh? I mean... Haah!"

Regan massaged his temples and exhaled loudly before speaking up.

"Okay. Riddle me this. What is the basis for your confidence, Sienna? You had told us that you'd be apprenticed to Levine after joining LA. You had told us that you were planning to marry Ken Riverine and obtain an earl's backing for the clan.

You assured us that you would focus on potioning. You promised that you'd stop creating trouble for anyone you meet. And despite everything, you told us that you'd take charge and handle the clan's business affairs.

Have any of the things you promised to do come to fruition? Now you have been relegated to conducting ambush missions. Something that is completely beyond your level of expertise.

Your position in the family also has an impact on me. And things are looking really grim for me if I have to conduct ambush missions at this age."

Regan finally said what he had been thinking. He had been wanting to say this to Sienna for a very long time. But he couldn't do it because of her status. Now that Sebastian had lost all importance for Sienna, Regan dared to speak about it.

Sienna scrunched her nose when she heard Regan's rant. She wanted to defend her stance using the right words. But somehow, she couldn't find them. She stomped her feet before speaking up.

[Chapter 856 Shalen And Oslo](#)

"Look here, old man. Don't forget that you are still my subordinate. No matter how low my position has gotten inside the clan, I'm still well above you. Did you forget that?"

Sienna spoke in an angry tone and looked at Regan hatefully. Her aura was turning darker while she was processing a range of emotions in her head.

"Look. Things are not as bad as you think they are."

'They are terrible,' Regan said in his head. But let the girl continue her speech.

"You don't understand the deeper meaning behind the actions of these old foggies like I do. Yes, I may have acted out of impulse on some occasions. And it is indeed true that Gramps is angry at me.

However, I am the only ranker from the main branch to have a semblance of talent in potioning in my generation. As such, my position is not as easily replaceable.

You know what Gramps had sent me here to watch a real-life battle?"

Regan didn't have to answer the question. He knew it would be answered by Sienna herself.

"He wants me here because of your targetâ€” Eren Ilijah Idril. Gramps Sebastian wants me to see Eren's struggle to survive the onslaught of such a huge joint force up and close. The guy is from LA. He was in the same class as I was back then.

That's why Gramps wants me to draw a comparison in my head. A guy with no background achieves so much in such a short time. And now many organizations have come together to kill him and share equal responsibility. And then he wants me to think about where I stand in front of him.

Pfft! Such outdated views. He doesn't understand that he shouldn't compare me to the likes of him. A cockroach that learns to fly is still a cockroach."

Regan was reminded that Eren was Sienna's batchmate in LA by her. He had tucked that fact in the back of his mind while he was on the mission. In the new history of the kingdom, it didn't make sense that someone of such a young age and without a background could accomplish something of such magnitude.

He couldn't help asking Sienna about their target.

"Sienna, do you remember what Eren was like? Did you two meet at the academy? Did he always have plans to visit the Nightshade dutchy?"

Sienna was a bit surprised by Regan's question. The guy wanted to know about his potential victim before killing him. She chuckled at first. But then she pondered a bit before replying.

"I remember this boy named Eren. He was very inconspicuous when we were in the academy. You want to know if he showed his potential in LA, don't you? The answer would be a strict no.

I remember he tried to push Ken toward that damned elf for some reason. He was friends with Ken and would talk about the two as if they were already married.

I bet he was the reason why things couldn't work out between me and Ken."

Sienna started cursing Eren in her mind after that. Mostly because she was looking for someone to blame for why things didn't work out her way. And she finally found her excuse.

Sienna then became excited to watch Eren's downfall with her own eyes. The idea of an exceptional achiever from her generation being destroyed by her clan somehow pleased her.

She started gloating at him even before they came face to face. Subconsciously, she felt that she had an irreconcilable hatred for him. As if her subconscious had access to memories and insights she was disconnected from.

Sienna suppressed in her subconscious the fear she felt toward Eren. Just like her unexplainable hatred, she couldn't pinpoint the reason behind her unfounded fear of him.

Nevertheless, Sienna was happy that Eren would get destroyed by the joint forces in front of her eyes. She also wished for Ken and all the other promising students in her academic batch to meet the same fate.

Regan could only sigh after listening to Sienna and watching her facial expressions. It was clear that the girl had become a mental case.

The things she said made sense on some level. But that didn't change the fact that Sebastian was looking for her replacement.

Sienna was Sebastian's project-in-the-making for a very long time. She had been provided with the highest quality resources and care from the moment she stepped on the path to becoming a ranker. She demonstrated a promise to lead her clan with her wits. But if she didn't even have those with her, there were no other redeeming qualities Sebastian could count on.

The rankers from House Slughorn that were standing behind the two kept quiet as Sienna and her handler had their talk. They would only come into action when Eren shows up.

Another zone serves as an ambush point outside the city of New Beginnings.

Escalon guild forces and Demonmir's faction forces were working in tandem.

At this point, all the groups that were part of Eren's ambush plan had come to know that Eren had come out of the Moonlight Death Forest and left the city. This was the most crucial moment for the ambush, as it was about to start.

"Expert Oslo, what if he decides to use his demon beast?"

Shalen asked Oslo in a curious tone. She was playing with a runic dagger in her hand.

Shalen had scored well in Minerva's Utopia. She had participated in the test of Bravery and became the first rank holder in the test because of her exceptional fortitude and performance.

The blonde-haired assassin had received a lot of rare and precious rewards from Utopia as a result. She broke through the Adept rank quickly using those resources on her, raising her value in the Escalon guild even more.

[Chapter 857 Meera Medinah And Rehaal Renar](#)

Shalen found it ironic that she was assigned to kill the same person who was indirectly responsible for her prosperity.

However, a job is a job. Especially when it comes to a field like hers. The most Shalen could do was try to give Eren a swift death as a show of gratitude.

Oslo was from Demonmir's faction.

He had been dispatched to get rid of Drin's party in the Badlands a few months back. But the members of the Escalon guild under his command messed things up. They failed to choose the right battlefield and allowed the White Raven's team to separate from each other and save themselves.

Oslo was called out to action by Demonmir's faction, and he agreed to it immediately. Since it was about ambushing the head of the entire party that had slipped past him, he had to clear his name by killing Eren.

"You mean he'd use Argo to get past us? They say the brat's demon beast is a foul-mouthed menace. Don't worry though. He can't use his demon beast to slip past us without anyone intercepting him in midair. Senior Nico had come personally to assure us of that.

He can take flight using his demon beast to prevent the brat from getting away from us."

Halen felt reassured after hearing Oslo's words. He was wearing his signature mask and armor.

Shalen had worn casual wear in the form of a floral top and sleek pants. Her hair was perfectly styled, and she had worn minimal but sophisticated accessories that matched her vibe. Her appearance didn't suit the job she was about to do. She looked like she was on her way to meet someone in the city.

Shalen nodded her head and kept quiet. She was a professional assassin. She didn't need small talk to entertain herself while staking out targets. However, she was a bit stressed nonetheless because she had been given the responsibility to intercept Eren.

"Don't worry, Shalen. Make your move first. We'll follow you right afterward. You can fall back when the actual battle starts."

The joint force had suspected that Eren was carrying a security detail on him with the way things had happened. They suspected that the summoner class ranker was part of that security detail as well. To ensure the success of the ambush, the joint force had brought many rankers as a fail-safe measure.

The various factions of the joint forces were given specific tasks they needed to perform in case Eren's security detail emerged. What they didn't count on was the fact that the summoner class ranker they were considered to be with Eren was none other than Eren himself.

Meera Medinah felt bored after waiting for her target's arrival for more than a week.

She wasn't particularly interested in this mission since it wasn't related to monsters. She liked killing monsters because they posed a greater challenge with their relatively higher body stats than humans.

Meera was also part of Edinburgh's special forces. It was she who met with Bigua and Drin in the Badlands under the lead of Kev Larson.

Meera was dispatched here under the orders of Kev Larson. Rehaal Renar had used his royal reach and pulled some strings. He made the kingdom's special forces help her with his private affairs.

Meera wore a bodice-like top and armor as usual. The special forces member was wearing a pair of arm guards and shoulder guards, giving her a hardcore veteran vibe.

Meera was beautiful. Her olive skin and brown hazel eyes made her look even more attractive under the moonlight.

The lady had a slim waist and ample feminine proportions. She had a sword sheathed on her back, ready to be drawn at a moment's notice.

Someone appeared behind Meera as she was watching the moonlit forest in front of her with keen eyes. It spoke very humbly.

"I know you are not particularly interested in doing this task, Miss Meera. And I thank you for showing up on the field anyway. It means a lot to me. I'll certainly do all I can to ensure that your efforts are better rewarded in the future when I get chosen as the successor to the throne."

Rehaal Renar said while trying to sound grateful. He had actively become a part of the joint forces that had been established by Sebastien Slughorn to take care of Eren.

Rehaal was very angry at Eren for mistreating him in front of Rodrick. It could be said that the fear Eren had planted in the royal's mind was manifesting in the form of pride and anger.

Eren suggested to Rehaal that he take a different approach to get his hands on Rodrick. Anything except targeting him while he was inside the city of White Raven. But the royal interpreted that suggestion very differently.

Rehaal decided to deal with Eren for all time so he could get to Rodrick. This way, his personal vendetta against the butcher would be fulfilled. Plus, Rehaal will be kicked out of the city soon when Demonimir's faction takes over.

Thus, Rehaal immediately got to work after he received word from Sebastian Slughorn. Almost all of his personal wealth was empty and he used his connections to hire members of the kingdom's special forces.

He wanted to employ Meera's in-charge, Kev Larson, as well. But he couldn't afford to do so due to his finances. Kev held a kingdom-bonafide title. His involvement wasn't something an Adept-ranked Rehaal could afford.

Of course, asking for the special forces' involvement came with a clause that their real identities wouldn't get exposed after the mission. The citizens of the kingdom didn't need to know that the kingdom's forces could be used for personal affairs given the right price.

Meera scrunched her nose before replying to Rehaal.

"You don't need to hype me into working for you, brat. As I have received my resources from you, I shall do my part well.

I'll give it straight. There's this guy named Drin who I want to bring into my fold. He is in the White Raven guild. Killing Eren here might result in the disbandment of the guild.

You lack the political power or wealth to move special forces according to your whims. But you are lucky that our interests align."

[Chapter 858 Target In Sight](#)

Edinburgh's special forces preferred hiring rankers with special elemental affinities.

Krista, Rupen, and Lambert were hired into the Blood Punisher force for the same reason. They were then groomed by the kingdom's elite rankers and given top-tier resources to develop their skills.

Such rankers were the team's asset. They held the potential to make difficult tasks reach their conclusion with sufficient ease.

Drin's shadow element was well suited for shady jobs that would usually be handled by the special forces. Even Kev was interested in bringing Drin under the kingdom's thumb for the same reason.

Meera wasn't interested in the job at first. It was Kev who told her she should take Rehaal's offer to free Drin from his current responsibilities. Upon thinking about it, it made sense to her as well.

Rehaal was humbled by Meera's words right away. He learned that Meera had accepted the mission for her own interests first and foremost. The fact that the mission assigned by him aligned with her interests was only a mere coincidence.

He was again made to understand that his royal status didn't assure him that he would be able to order the members of the special forces around. He could only spend all of his resources on them and hope for the best.

Meera chuckled after Rehaal fell silent. With her response, she tried to reassure him further.

"Hehe. Does it matter for what reason Eren gets killed? You are granted your wish. And that should be something you can look forward to.

Now keep quiet and let me focus. The job's about to start."

Meera said and narrowed her eyes. She had received the signal from the joint forces that Shaen was making her move.

Eren Elijah Idril appeared on the site.

A colt-driven caravan was making its way through the forest surrounding the city of New Beginnings. There were two Ace-ranked handlers in charge of the caravan, which traversed a known route.

Eren was lying flat on his back on a plush bed. Through the use of spatial magic, it would transform into a seating arrangement. In Edinburgh, this was one of the most convenient ways to travel between cities.

The caravan had all the necessary amenities. It had been enhanced with spatial magic to make the interior much larger than the caravan's dimensions. Its anti-gravity array at the bottom made sure that the interior didn't experience jerks or bumps no matter how fast the caravan was being pulled.

The interior of the caravan resembled a luxurious suite. It was only when one looked through the curtained windows that one realized that they were traveling.

"Haaah! This thing is so comfortable."

Eren said to himself as he stretched his limbs on the bed. He rolled around and sank his face into the plush pillow before speaking further.

"I could get used to these expensive comforts. Traveling like this is so much better for my aching back. It's just that it costs a lot. I wonder if I could loot someone on my way to recover my money."

Eren spoke as if it was the past-old-man-him. He heard an eagle growl when he finished speaking. Argo was in his eagle form inside the caravan. He was made to sit on a wooden platform and given chunks of ranked beast's meat to munch on. TherHar Jahar's chopped hand was another object the beast was trying to devour.

"Yes, I could have used you. But your appetite grows every time I try to use you as a mode of transportation. You are not fuel-efficient, you fat bird."

Eren made fun of Argo a bit. He was just kidding and liked riding the demon beast. But he wouldn't be able to partake in his nightly training with Alephee while on the beast's back. The caravan provided him with the space needed for him to do so.

"Argo... no fat... Argo is strong. Argo will get bitches when he grows up."

Argo flapped his wings and said it aloud in his bird-like voice. He then morphed his head into a mini lion and roared a bit to highlight his determination. The demon beast then started devouring Har Jahar's hands with even greater zeal than before.

'Your influence is corrupting him.'

Eren heard Alephee's voice in his head. She was inside the pendant abode, trying to add more spells to her grimoire using her homunculus blood as ink.

Eren pursed his lips. He didn't think that wanting to have many "companions" was a negative influence anyway.

'Maybe I should teach this fat bird how to sugar-coat things from now on. Beauties instead of a derogatory word. Small changes to make his goals seem noble to outsiders.'

Eren knew that Argo's foul mouth wasn't something he could get rid of anymore. But he could at least try to make him seem sophisticated in certain settings.

Eren was about to say something to Argo when he suddenly felt that his caravan had stopped moving. He received a knock on his door from the driver's seat the next moment.

"Come in."

Eren said while sitting upright on his bed. He was only wearing his pants and nothing covered his torso. The butcher saw that one of the Ace rankers who was in charge of the caravan he had hired entered his room.

"My Lord, there's an Adept-ranked lady outside who is requesting to see you. Um... she is asking for a lift to the city of Ainari where we are going. What should I tell her?"

The teen bowed his head in front of Eren and asked him. The butcher raised his eyebrows before using his mana sense to check up on the new visitor who had come to ask for help from him.

Eren recognized the young woman right away when he sensed her mana signature. This was a mana signature he couldn't forget.

'Heh! The vultures have finally come.'

Eren smiled cheerfully before responding casually.

"Haha. I am all for helping travelers in need. I'll ensure that she reaches the destination she needs to reach personally.

Let her in."

[Chapter 859 Inviting Shalen Onboard](#)

"Thank you for letting me in, Adept Eren."

Shalon spoke with a vibrant smile on her face. She looked at Eren coyly and accepted his invitation to sit on the plush couch the caravan had as part of its lavish interior.

"My name is Shalen Craft. I was heading towards the city of Ainari but my carriage was destroyed by a wild D-Rank mana beast. Just when I thought I would have to go back to the city of New Beginnings, I saw your caravan approaching and thought of asking for help.

I hope I am not being too much of a bother."

Shalen stuck with her rehearsed lie that was mixed with a bit of truth. On paper, she was not associated with the Escalon guild. So she could give her real name. Plus, she wanted Eren to know her real name so he could associate it with the top-ranked holder in the Test of Bravery conducted inside Minerva's Utopia. With association and familiarity, one was known to let their guard down after all.

Shalen was confident about her deception skills. Her facial expressions were impeccable and the fluctuations in her mana signature were almost non-existent. One could say that her mentor Paladin of Pain Reva Rain had taught her well.

What she didn't realize was the fact that Eren knew Shalen personally from his past timeline. And he also knew about her mentor. He could never forget the coldness of an assassin hiding behind her pretty face.

Eren smiled mildly before offering a glass of ranked wine to Shalen. He took the seat next to hers and reclined on his couch before responding.

"You are no bother at all, Miss Shalen. I was longing for company during this boring travel anyway. Your presence is only welcome here."

Eren said while looking Shalen in the eyes. His emerald green eyes shone with a subtle hint as he verbally marched forward.

"If I'm not mistaken, it appears you hold the first rank in the Test of Bravery. You have attracted so many rankers to my city because of your performance. So consider this as a gesture of thank you from the owner of that city. Haha.

Also, no need for formalities. I'd like it if you called me Eren."

Shalen mimicked the expression of relief perfectly. She tucked her blonde locks behind her ears and touched the wine glass to her lips. After almost touching the wine with her lips, she placed the glass on the small table in front of her before that happened and continued.

"I'm glad to hear that, Ad... Errr... Eren. To be honest, I didn't think about increasing the city's traffic with my performance, Eren.

I was only thinking about gaining the highest possible rewards from Minerva's Utopia at the time. And that's what I got. The mild attention I garnered, as a result, was only a byproduct of those efforts."

Shalen started looking around the caravan as she responded to Eren. She was looking for any of the hidden experts Eren was traveling with. The caravan was supposed to be enhanced by spatial magic. So the assassin assumed that Eren was traveling luxuriously because of that.

Eren didn't know what Shalen was looking for. He didn't know that the joint force had assumed that he was traveling in a group led by a summoner. But he could tell her inspective gaze was trying to probe everything and anything she could lay her eyes on.

However, it didn't take long for Eren to figure out what the joint force was up to. After all, he could faintly sense her thoughts and intentions with his soul sense.

'Hm? They think I'm traveling in a group?'

Eren chuckled in his head when he understood the reason behind that mistake. Only a selection of the crime scenes he had been part of had come to light. It included Rey Remus' murder scene where the Grim Pillar was erected. And after a thorough investigation by House Remus, they concluded that Eren was also involved in targeting its clients at the auction events.

Gilhouse Remus, who was part of Edinburgh's army, had also linked Sid's disappearance with Eren. Unfortunately, he could do nothing more against Eren by opening a case that had already been closed with vague clues. But these results did give impartial data about Eren for the joint forces to think about.

According to the joint force's obviously flawed conclusion, whenever Eren killed, he killed using his minions. His involvement in the actual killings was the bare minimum.

The organizations involved in the drafting of the joint force came to such a flawed conclusion because they found out that the spells that were used at the crime scene belonged to various elements. Eren had also switched between two classes for killing Rey Remus.

Eren would use the Potion of Innocence to cover his tracks at each of his crime scenes. As a result, historians employed by several forces could not figure out that it was Eren who had killed his victims. Yet they could tell from his crime scenes that various rankers of different origins were involved.

Plus, after Eren got out of the Oni dungeon, Kirin was with him most of the time. She served as his shadow and protection. The onlookers failed to recognize or know who she was but they could tell that Eren was being watched over by someone of Expert rank caliber.

Eren found it hilarious that his enemies would overestimate his supposedly hidden force and underestimate him at the same time. He was glad that he let Shalen inside the caravan. He could use these details against his enemies.

Eren and Shalen kept on talking while the former had those thoughts running in his head. Even though they had not-so-noble intentions for each other, both of them maintained calm.

Shalen played her part well. She had almost confirmed that there was no security detail traveling with Eren. She decided to make a move. To see if she could finish the guy with her own hands.

[Chapter 860 No-Mess Kill](#)

The assassin slowly started flirting with Eren.

She started adding obvious innuendoes. She laughed cheerfully at Eren's witty remarks.

The butcher knew that his puns could be funny. But not as good as the response he was getting to them from Shalen. She flirted with him so seamlessly that even he would have believed that it was natural if he did not know any better.

Shalen started adjusting her dress and hair quite frequently as she talked more with Eren. Her cleavage was made apparent by her as she touched her exposed neck with her hands from time to time.

"Eren, I heard that you lead a... let's say... very colorful lifestyle. What say we make this travel a pleasurable experience for both of us?"

Shalen concluded the time was ripe for her to invade Eren's personal space. She needed extreme proximity to him to attempt an up-close and personal assassination.

Shalen and the rest of the members of the joint forces had done their homework regarding Eren. They tried to know everything and anything remotely related to him before carrying out the mission. As such, Shalen concluded that a guy like Eren wouldn't say no to her invitation.

Shalen was looking forward to the moment that she would be able to pull off the kill all by herself. The act was akin to killing a legendary tier mana beast by oneself.

The joint force would not have to move at all if she succeeded. She alone would take credit for killing Eren and taking all his belongings. As the owner of such a prosperous city, the guy had access to a lot of precious resources. She could access his personal storage after his death and claim everything for herself.

'I'm sorry it has come to this, Eren. You seem like a fun guy to hang out with. Sadly, your death is imminent today.

The most I can do is give you a swift death. So that others won't be able to torture you. Consider this as a thank you from me for being my beneficiary in the past, present, and future.'

Shalen said to herself as she looked at Eren with playfulness in her eyes. She pressed her legs against each other before spreading them. She was displaying how eager she was to be with him. As another gesture of invitation, she licked her lips and bit them lightly.

Eren smiled wickedly when he witnessed Shalen's gestures. Unknown to her, he also had the same cruel intentions toward her. His murderous vibe was masked effortlessly by his ready-to-go body language.

"Run bitch, run!"

Shalen's inviting gestures froze in their places when she heard a guttural voice that was directed at her. She looked in the direction of that voice and found it to be coming from an eagle who was busy eating chunks of meat.

Shalen was aware of Eren's demon beast. But she assumed that the beast wouldn't react to anything until it was too late. She stared at the beast and tried to open her mouth to say something to him. But no words came out.

"What you looking at? Master's gon take you to the chop-chop shop, bitch."

Argo started drooling from his beak as he laid his eyes on Shalen. He wasn't as skilled at hiding his emotions as his master.

"Aaah! Forgive me, Shalen. This damn bird doesn't understand what he is talking about half the time."

Eren apologized to Shalen and recalled Argo back into his beast space. He was very angry at the beast for ratting him out. The wretched thing was eager to have the taste of live flesh.

The assassin was temporarily thrown off balance by Argo's intervention. She cursed the beast in her head for calling her a bitch.

However, she needed to get back into her role to reap the most rewards from the job. As such, she could only smile and let things slide off before responding.

"I guess the rumors were true. He indeed has a foul mouth. Never mind that, Eren. Now we have this place to ourselves."

Shalen walked towards the plush king-sized bed as she said. She lay on her left side and looked at Eren. She gestured for Eren to come close to her with her free hand before speaking up.

"Come, Eren. I'd have to pay my benefactor somehow."

Shalen's voice became seductive as she called out to Eren. The latter's eyes had a hint of lust in them as he accepted her invitation.

Lightning struck and Eren got on the bed beside Shalen. He placed his hand over her right cheek and started caressing it.

"I accept your payment, Shalen Craft."

Eren said before getting on top of the assassin. He started bringing his lips closer to hers while maintaining eye contact with her.

'Sweet dreams, Eren Elijah Idril.'

Shalen said to herself as she wrapped her arms around Eren. She started caressing Eren's back with one hand. A runic dagger had appeared in her other hand. But somehow her body froze just when the tip of the dagger was about to touch the butcher's back.

Shalen saw Eren's emerald eyes turn white. She was too stunned to say or do anything because she was subjected to his Ability.

Sedating Gaze!

Eren turned his arm unnaturally like a whip and took hold of Shalen's dagger. He smiled before driving the dagger deep into her heart with almost no resistance from her. The butcher twisted the dagger inside before destroying the organ completely. He sealed the wound using his mana and prevented blood from escaping. He then pulled out the dagger before sitting upright on Shalen's crotch.

A no-mess kill just like Shalen wanted. Except for the fact that it was her that got killed.

Shalen could do nothing to prevent herself from getting killed. She could say nothing. The only thing she could do was stare at Eren in shock and disbelief. She couldn't believe that the butcher had managed to see through her act.

The butcher sighed before responding to her thoughts in a sad tone.

"Haah! Your act was flawless, Shali. It's just that I had the unfair advantage of seeing the trap from miles away because it was initiated by you."