

## Vile 941

### [Chapter 941 Eren Vs Ivor 2.0 P1](#)

"Are you sure you want to do this?"

Eren asked casually while lighting his Sativa Stick. He and Ivor were standing a safe distance from each other. Layla was standing in the middle, trying to prevent them from dueling at such a crucial time.

Layla had lured Oliver and his forces to the Dark Daniera forest after she made sure everything was in order. She could not allow herself to be chased anymore if she wanted to progress further in the Lazarus Project.

Layla wanted to get rid of Arthur's hounds for good. She and Ivor had to clash with his force multiple times at this point. And every time they had to run away after taking a bunch of guys out.

Thus, she sent a message to Eren and decided to retaliate. She was given no other choice by Arthur and his lackeys after all.

But right when things had started to align for her, the two boys decided to duel with each other. There were so many things that could go wrong if they carried on with their activities. Especially when one of them gets injured.

Ivor ignored Layla's warnings as well. He looked straight at Eren before commenting.

"Yes. I want to see how much you've progressed. I wouldn't be content otherwise."

Ivor clenched his fists as he felt Eren's presence up close. He felt like a calm ocean to him. However, the undercurrents under that ocean's surface were telling him he was more than he let on.

Ivor thought that Eren would be shocked by his advancement into the liquid stage of Adept rank. Something he had achieved after fighting Oliver's forces for so long. However, the tables were turned and it was him that was bewildered by Eren's progress instead.

Ivor felt like all his accomplishments had become mundane events for the man in front of him. He wasn't angry or jealous of Eren for progressing ahead of him. But he was hungry— hungry for the same things Eren had achieved.

Ivor also knew that he might not win a fight against Eren despite all the Trump cards he had. Still, he wanted to know where he stood as a ranker in front of the anomaly in front of him.

One had to say that Ivor was very ambitious. Despite his image as an angry young man, he was a very calculative ranker. He didn't run away from the fact that Eren had proven himself better than him. He acknowledged the truth right away and wanted to overcome Eren and his achievements.

Eren could feel what was going on inside Ivor's head. He chuckled a bit before commenting.

"Sometimes not knowing things is not always a bad thing, my man. The unknown can be scary. But what if knowing about the unknown discourages you from taking action?"

Eren asked Ivor another question while enjoying his smoke. To onlookers who did not know about Eren, he would come across as someone arrogant with that statement. But Ivor knew better.

Ivor knew Eren wanted to test his resolve. He shook his head before speaking up.

"I am not one of those who can get demotivated after seeing the hardships that lie ahead, Eren. I want you to attack me with everything you got."

Ivor clenched his fists and made a few crackling noises. A set of two daggers appeared in his hands as he started channeling his mana through them. Several bolts of lightning started manifesting around him as he prepared himself to duel with Eren.

"It's not the same Ivor Osan you met in LA, Eren. And yet, the core that makes me Ivor Osan is still the same.

I have changed a lot. And yet, I'm still the same brash and arrogant Ivor I have always been. The only difference right now is that I am aware of my sin. And this very awareness makes me embrace the duality of my change and unchanged."

Lightning vines started blooming around Ivor as they started to grow on his limbs. He was no longer clad in lightning but instead wore it on him like his clothes.

Ivor looked at both Eren and Layla before stating his resolve as clearly as he could.

"I understand I'm asking for a favor from you by making you do this, Eren. I know the time and place are not right for us to do this. I may be killed in the duel if you go full-throttle on me. I already know all that.

AND YET, I WANT TO DO THIS. If I have to pay the price for my arrogance, so be it. If I get skewered by Lady Eliza for this, so be it. I am a man who lives in the moment. And right now, I want to live this moment to the fullest.

When I asked if you would fight me, it was not because I was certain that I would win or because I thought I was better than you. I don't think along those lines when it comes to you anymore.

I asked that because this duel might jeopardize Lady Eliza's plans. A duel such as this could be viewed as defying a Sage. So after presenting every aspect of this duel to you, I ask you once again.

Do you dare to duel with me?"

Eren listened to what Ivor had to say to him. He chuckled before his elemental manifestations appeared around him.

Eren's aura suddenly took a drastic turn as he decided to take Ivor up on his offer to fight using his full strength. This was Ivor's sincere wish and the butcher decided to honor it.

Ivor felt like the man in front of him had suddenly turned into someone he hadn't seen or met. There appeared a palpable bloodlust in the air as Eren's soul sense spread forth. The atmosphere started feeling charged and heavy as Eren decided to hold nothing back against Ivor.

Eren's eyes shone and his presence grew more dreadful. One would have to wonder if Eren had been replaced by someone completely different by the complete shift in his aura. They would also wonder how he was able to hide something like this under a carefully crafted veil.

Ivor felt goosebumps on his skin as Eren's soul sense washed over him. It took sheer willpower from his end to stick to the challenge he had issued to Eren. Gulping, he thought to himself.

'This.... This is the real deal... Osan Woods' Butcher!'

### [Chapter 942 Eren Vs Ivor 2.0 P2](#)

Ivor felt like he was duping people by carrying the title of Osan Woods' Butcher.

He could have never believed that the Eren he knew from his academy days would turn out to be such a fearsome personality. Only now did he realize why the mummified Sage could count on Eren so much. If anyone could do the almost impossible tasks that she had listed, it would have to be him.

Ivor was not alone in feeling surprised by Eren's altered presence. Layla too felt a threatening vibe coming from him. And she had the powers of a quasi-B-rank entity to boot.

She felt threatened not only by his presence but also by his growth potential. She felt like it was only yesterday that he had broken into the Adept rank. During the time he was separated from her, the butcher had been able to rise to the pinnacle of D-Rank. This kind of progress was beyond what could be labeled as monstrous.

Eren's mastery of various elements started creating miniature mana storms in the surroundings. The winds started howling and the night's darkness seemed to have darkened a bit more. The ground quaked with subtle vibrations with Eren as the epicenter of the waves.

If one was faint of heart, they would be overwhelmed by Eren's presence alone. If they let their soul get affected by his soul sense, they would have nightmares for weeks to come if not months.

His soul sense would also make people hallucinate into believing that they were being attacked by thousands of katars, shamshirs, and hammers. Some would feel that they were getting burned in the sea of flames while others would hallucinate that they were getting lethal shock treatment.

Ivor was affected by Eren's soul sense differently. He felt like he had been summoned to the land of flesh and gore. The land and trees of this world were only composed of flesh. The giant trees had giant flesh flowers with various organs in the human body serving as their pistils.

Ivor felt like it had been a while since he was summoned to the land of flesh and gore. He also felt like he was assigned a task inside it. To pluck any flowers that were about to bloom.

Whenever Ivor slashed at the trees, flowers, and the very ground he was standing on, he felt like he was injuring a living person. That's because the wounds he inflicted on those surroundings would bleed like a normal human body.

Thankfully, Ivor was still in control of his senses. His soul was intact and left alone. Thus, he knew that whatever he saw and felt in that brief moment was merely his imagination.

Ivor snapped back into reality from his hallucination by channeling his mana and sending his mana circuits into a hyperdrive. He charged his daggers with a peculiar form of lightning as he looked at Eren wearily.

Eren enjoyed the expressions of his onlookers as he expressed his individuality out in the open. He rarely let his presence run amok. Most of those who saw this side of him never lived long enough to tell the tale of how they fought with him.

Eren did not let his bloodlust or intentions show in most of his intense fights. Because those weaker than him would never try to fight him for the most part if he did. And those who were stronger than him would start taking him seriously from the moment they were engaged in battle with him.

After all, the butcher liked to take his opponents by surprise, no matter how strong he got. He preached efficient hunting.

But now that Eren expressed his bloodlust through his soul sense, he felt he had taken off the mask he had been wearing for so long. This was a low-key liberating experience for him as well.

Eren decided to match Ivor's style and took out his katars. He spun Dicer's Left and Right around him effortlessly with his light touches and hand gestures as if playing a levitating musical instrument. His seamless actions indicated his mastery of the dagger arts.

A bunch of mini slashes and piercing mana pointers started manifesting around Eren as he operated his weapons. Just by standing in his vicinity, lower-ranked entities would have their limbs hacked off.

Dhum!

Eren's malevolent presence suddenly vanished into thin air as he stopped using his dagger arts. An eerie silence suddenly dominated the surroundings.

Ivor started hearing white noise for some reason. His normal senses as well as his mana sense were affected by Eren's individuality. He felt like whatever he saw and felt just now in front of him was like a horrible dream that never happened.

Layla and Ivor thought that the butcher was more dangerous at this point than when his vile evil presence could not be felt by them. The scariest thing about him was his ability to make him seem insignificant compared to what he was.

All this took place in just a few seconds. And yet, Eren's onlookers felt like hours had passed under the effects of his soul sense.

Eren looked at Ivor's elemental manifestations with a tinge of greed in his eyes.

'He has a peculiar lightning attainment on him. Should I... devour him?'

Eren chuckled to himself before discarding that thought. At least for now.

Ivor was most affected by his predatory gaze. He felt like Eren was looking for reasons to dispose of him. He could only hope that the challenge he had initiated did not serve that purpose.

Ivor was spooked even further by it. Still, Ivor's pride wouldn't let him take back his words.

Layla felt that Eren wasn't playing around. He would attack Ivor at his peak" not even allowing her to intervene if and when things turned ugly. Standing between the two men was no longer enough. She decided to intervene more forcefully.

"Wait... Eren... Ivor. Listen to me for fuck's sake. This is no time to..."

Blink.

Zoom.

Swoosh. Clash. Dhoom.

Ivor suddenly found himself flying away from his previous position. The lightning manifestations around him dimmed as he felt something on his chest.

When he looked down, his torso was inflicted with dagger slashes and deep wounds. The blood was just beginning to come out and make itself known through his slashed clothes.

#### [Chapter 943 "Those Who Inflict Pain Must Have The Courage To Bear It As Well."](#)

Eren had appeared in Ivor's previous position like an apparition.

He had used his space-element spell to send himself to Ivor's position. If Ivor wanted him to go all out, he would do exactly that and show him the wide chasm that existed between them.

He attacked Ivor so fast that he couldn't even follow Eren's dagger arts with his eyes. The one-sided attack didn't even allow Ivor to think about a counter.

"Eren... no...."

Layla looked at Ivor's condition with a horrified expression. She was not concerned about Ivor's condition per se. But she was afraid that one of the players she required to get rid of Oliver's forces would be too damaged to operate in the upcoming mission.

She raised her hand and was about to cast a spell when Ivor and Eren both shouted at her in unison.

"Stay the fuck back!"

Eren went even further and affected her spell-casting with his soul sense. The homunculus suddenly felt like she was being submerged in a deep pool of water.

Ivor didn't stay quiet either. A dense amount of lightning vines sprouted from the ground around Layla. These vines felt like they had a consciousness of their own. And their only target was Layla. Ivor wasn't sure about hurting Layla. But he knew he could halt her if he gave it his all.

Layla felt like she was the only sane person among the three. She felt that the two men were too inflated by their egos to see their priorities.

She expected such a reaction from Eren. However, she couldn't believe that the one who was hurt because of Eren's attack would also try to prevent her from helping him.

Ivor gritted his teeth before casting his set of spells. A new batch of lightning vines appeared around his body. These new vines started to mend the deep and serious wounds he had received due to Eren's attacks and stabilized him in his forced flight.

Ivor landed 30 meters from his position. He had stopped bleeding but his wounds were still mending. Eren smiled at him and he realized the attack was just a warning. He still had the chance to back out if he wanted to.

Ivor tore down the tunic he was wearing and stripped off to take a close look at his wounds. The slash wounds that were on his chest had almost made his ribcage visible. The puncture wounds were threateningly close to his heart.

'He... he cut through my defensive layer like it was cheesecake.'

Ivor pressed his wounds with his fingers and felt the pain coursing through his veins. It took him another second to get rid of the butcher's foreign mana invasion.

This one exchange, if it could be called that, was enough to hint at Eren's growth. The Osan junior was starting to realize what Eren had meant by his previous statement. He was afraid to take action against Eren after seeing what he could do— butchering him like it was no big deal. It's like butchering a lamb to get its meat.

Eren didn't say anything or try to approach him again. He let the Osan junior come to terms with the difference they had between them. When Layla realized that the exchange between the two men was over as soon as it started, she looked happy. She adjusted her dress and tucked the locks of hair behind her ears before she spoke in a cheerful tone.

"Alright, this is enough. Chop chop chop. Do not spoil this stage too much, you two. It's not your cue to act your part yet. Now, why don't we three..."

Ivor cut her off right away before she could continue.

"Layla, I suggest you do not get involved in this duel if you value this mission. Otherwise, I will not do anything you ask of me."

Layla was tongue-tied after hearing that. Ivor then looked at Eren and smiled wickedly before speaking up.

"You have also stayed the same and changed a lot at the same time, Eren. The previous Eren I knew would have gotten the job done by now. Hehe."

Ivor then looked at Eren seriously before asking him what he wanted to ask for a while.

"How... How did you progress so much?"

Eren felt that Ivor was trying to tell him how he could replicate his success. But his ego prevented him from asking for any more favors from him. So he asked the question in a roundabout way.

Eren remembered the chat he had with Ivor when he was inside Purgatory. He could see that Ivor had learned his lesson well from that incident and made huge changes to how he dealt with his problems. The butcher pursed his lips and thought for a moment before summarizing his thoughts.

"Those who inflict pain must have the courage to bear it as well. Those who wish to succeed must accept the hardships that come with it. As simple as that."

First, one must realize one's flaws. Accepting them and trying to make them work in your favor is the next step. But they are not enough if you want to keep on progressing as an individual."

Eren knew Ivor had great talent as a ranker. His advancement to the liquid stage of the Adept rank attested to that. And he was starting to have the mindset necessary to succeed tremendously as a ranker as well. However, the butcher knew talent alone wasn't enough to become a Sage and advance beyond that stage.

"Having great talent, a sharp mind, the right tools, the right connections, an impressive background, and loads of money doesn't mean anything if you don't know how to use them to your advantage. But if you know what to do with what you have, the game starts to change bit by bit.

Don't try to mimic my way. Don't try to find competition in me. Competing with one's past self and enhancing the contrast each day is a much better way to go about it.

And it's not like I'm telling you something I am not doing myself. I have found all the motivation I need from my past and the future I want for myself.

Working on ourselves is all we need. It's a slow process. Most would give up on their road to success. But stick with the suffering your path demands and the reward you seek shall be given to you."

#### [Chapter 944 Mark Of The Seven Sins: The Armor Of Pride](#)

Ivor listened to what Eren had to say with extreme focus. He looked down and started pondering every piece of advice he received from Eren.

"Those who inflict pain must have the courage to bear it as well."

Ivor mumbled Eren's statement a few more times before clenching his grip on his daggers. He felt as if Eren's words were the missing pieces he needed to fully utilize his Ability.

The Ability he had gained from Purgatory.

Just one move from Eren made Ivor realize something else too. He didn't want to hold anything back against Eren anymore. He didn't have the luxury of doing so.

Ivor closed his eyes and stabilized his breathing briefly. His eyes shone with newfound vigor when he opened them.

"I haven't said this to anyone in a long while but thanks for responding to my wishes, Eren. I realized that I was asking for too much when I requested you to go all out on me while trying to save my Aces.

I'll face you with all my strength as well."

Ivor said before stomping his right foot forward. It appeared to be a harmless action. But an otherworldly mana pulse was generated when he did that.

"Mark of the Seven Sins: The Armour of Pride!"

Ivor mumbled to himself before being enveloped in golden mana. This cloud of golden mana started molding into magnificent gold armor that fit its wearer perfectly.

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When Ivor appeared in front of the seven-headed snake statue, he was chosen by the sin of pride. This was his farewell gift to Eliza after surviving the first floor of Purgatory.

Eliza saw Ivor as a defective pawn. Something she could use if Eren decided not to play by her rules. She could use Ivor in such a way that everything Eren worked for would turn futile if she chose to.

Ivor served first and foremost as a deterrent against Eren. Plus, he could aid Layla in doing her tasks—acting as the third player in the Lazarus Project.

As such, strengthening Ivor also served Eliza's purpose. That's why he was also offered to receive a mark from the seven-headed snake statue

Eliza realized that Ivor had his own flaws. He was brash and too proud. Eren was far more cunning than he was. The guy was a straight shooter for the most part with his inflated ego. Still, enhancing his powers allowed Eliza to make him stick to the cause.

Ivor was easy to handle as long as he saw that the person handling him had the resources he needed. The man also had a one-track mind that always made him seek personal growth over making connections based on camaraderie.

The Osan junior acted the same way in LA as well. He linked himself with Jason because he thought he could be used by the royal bastard in exchange for better growth prospects. Ivor knew his acquaintance with Jason was never based on friendship. But he had expected Jason to not betray him because he had not given him any reason to do so.

Unfortunately for Ivor, things didn't turn out as well as he had hoped. Jason lured him into Purgatory only to be served as a sacrifice. To please Eliza, Jason's father Arthur had caught Ivor to be the scapegoat for his son.

And yet, Ivor couldn't say that everything that happened to him after entering purgatory was a disaster per se. It eventually paid off for him when he earned himself the Sin series mark.

Ivor's Ability was very straightforward. He would manifest an armor made of pride mana that would protect him from head to toe. It was as strong as the pride he felt deep in his heart. The Ability was bound to him and could be activated by stomping his right foot forward.

There were no limitations to the armor's protection itself. It could even allow him to tank the spells of a higher-ranked entity, provided his emotions of pride were intense enough. If his pride was put in the right place and channeled the right way, the armor would render all physical and magical attacks null and void.

Ivor's Ability made him near invincible among those who were in the same rank as him. However, there was a catch.

Ivor would feel the pain of the attacks that would land on his pride armor even if he didn't take the damage that comes with it. The pain and suffering he would feel would be greater than those he would receive if he just received those attacks on his bare body.

Ivor had quite a high tolerance for pain to begin with. The man was practically laughing like a maniac when he first fought with Eren and kept on receiving grievous wounds from him.

Yet, Ivor would hesitate in using the pride armor because it amplified the pain to such an extent that he felt overwhelmed. He was hesitant to pay the price for using a seemingly invincible Ability.

If and when he uses his pride armor in the right way, Ivor would be okay physically. But mentally, he would suffer more than usual to the extent that even a tough guy like him would be afraid to feel the pain.

One could say that Ivor had to pay the price for cultivating his pride. The more proud he became, the more his ability would be enhanced. And he would be forced to face even greater amounts of pain and suffering because of it.

Being proud was a positive attribute for Ivor. But he needed to back that pride with the right convictions. Otherwise, his pride would do him more harm than good.

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Golden armor manifested around Ivor when he activated his Sin Series Ability. It covered his limbs and torso like metallic armor that was also malleable and flexible like leather armor.

Ivor gave off the aura of someone proud and dominant. As pride mana spread throughout the vicinity, an otherworldly presence was felt.

"Hmm? She allowed him to receive the mark too, huh? This... this will be interesting."

Eren had never fought someone who could use the Sin series Abilities like him. The butcher licked his lips and smiled wolfishly as he finally started developing an interest in this fight.

#### [Chapter 945 Pride, Pleasure, And Pain P1](#)

'Damn. He still looks like some rich kid with that gaudy armor.'

Ivor seemed like he was just being Ivor when Eren looked at him- someone with old family money. It looked like he was wearing expensive armor for himself that Isen must have bought for him. It was extremely shiny to look at.

The butcher also recognized the origins of the pride mana Ivor was using to manifest this gaudy armor. This was the same intent-based magic he had been exposed to.

The armor did not only protect Ivor from threats. It also enhanced his body stats and response time depending on his feelings. It made him muscular and sharp while increasing his stature a bit. Ivor was as fit as a fiddle even before wearing armor. He looked buffier without compromising his agility with pride armor.

Various elemental and non-elemental runes and symbols would reflect on the golden armor's surface from time to time. It also had the added effect of intimidating the wearer's opponents if they were weak of heart.

Part of the pride mana coated his daggers and strengthened them. The ranks of his daggers remained the same. But they received a lethal upgrade with pride mana covering a portion of their blades.

Eren knew that the Sin Series Abilities would manifest differently even among the bearers of the same Sin mark. He predicted that the Sin Series Ability he would receive corresponding to the Sin of Pride would be different from Ivor's.

Ivor's Ability was based on his fighting style and his nature. It didn't grant him crowd control or mind control powers. He was able to simultaneously improve his offense and defense with his Ability.

Layla scrunched her nose when she looked at Ivor. She knew that he had received this Ability from his stay in Purgatory. The guy, however, had never used it on Oliver's forces, saying he wasn't prepared to sustain the side effects of using it.

However, Ivor decided to don the armor just to fight Eren. This was enough to tell Layla that Ivor was losing his value as a pawn. She sighed and gave up on stopping the two from dueling.

Now that she couldn't stop the two, Layla summoned her flying broom named Hexen Bee and sat on it before flying away from the potential battlefield. She stopped at a safe distance in the air and decided to watch the battle and entertain herself.

"I know you have received two Sin series Abilities as well, Eren. I don't know how you got two of them. But let's keep that aside. Why don't you show me what you have?"

The pride armor changed the tone of Ivor's voice as he spoke. His voice sounded deep and full of pride. His facial expression changed as well— turning his frown into a confident countenance.

Eren chuckled as he understood the intentions behind Ivor's suggestion. His prideful attitude told him to beat Eren when he was at his peak. He believed that Eren had to rely on his Sin series abilities to reach his supposed peak.

"I have indeed received two Sin series Abilities, Ivor. But I can't show one of them here because there's no female ranker present here."

Eren said and looked at Layla in the distance. The latter felt offended by his comment.

"You wretched man, what do you mean by that? What do you think I am?"

The butcher didn't want to argue with Layla who still looked like she needed her parents to take her places. Thus, he presented a clarification.

"I mean there's no non-homunculus female ranker present here. And the Sin of Lust can't be used during battles. At least not the ones you aspire to have with me."

Ivor was too stunned to speak after Eren's words. He raised his hands to speak but no words came from his mouth. Eventually, he dropped his shoulders and gave up, hinting at Eren to continue.

"As for the sin of Wrath..."

Eren paused and looked at Layla once again. She had firsthand experience of how his Ability worked. Thus, she chimed in.

"Ivor, we don't want Eren using his Sin of Wrath here. It's a domain spell for the most part. We'll need to sanctify this whole place with the Potion of Innocence if he uses it."

Eren shrugged his shoulders looking at Ivor when Layla spoke of his Ability. He didn't mind fighting with Ivor. But not at the cost of driving Oliver's forces away, which would happen if they got a whiff of his wrath mana.

Ivor wanted to say something to Eren after hearing that. However, Eren beat him to it.

"Meh. Don't sweat it. It will not come to that. Keep your armor on. I'm coming."

Eren said before using Blink. This time, Ivor was well equipped to receive him. Purple, red, and green lightning streaks bloomed as the two rankers clashed once again.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

No further talk was necessary. The fake and real butchers fought each other using their dagger arts and sparks flew around them. Eren didn't show any mercy on Ivor after he saw his vitals were covered in pride armor. He launched his attacks as if he was fighting real opponents.

Every action that Eren performed was precise and designed to deal maximum damage to Ivor. He seamlessly connected his parries and counters to serve as the most effective defense for himself and the most lethal offense for his opponent.

And yet, he couldn't land a critical hit on Ivor due to his armor that blocked his physical as well as mana-based attacks. Eren used his fire-element attacks next to see if they had any effect on armor. He quickly found out that his flames were ineffective against armor.

'He has become a close combat tank with armor on. I'll need to try some different combos.'

Eren thought to himself as he created a distance from Ivor. They weren't using their spells against each other for now. The fight would only become more serious with time.

#### [Chapter 946 Pride, Pleasure, And Pain P2](#)

It's been half an hour since Eren and Ivor started their duel.

Eren had a superior understanding of his dagger arts to support his precise, lethal, and well-calibrated moves. While Ivor had his armor to count on. Ivor's armor seemed to become more durable as he held on to his position.

Even so, Osan Junior was not having a walk in the park. He had a grim face as he fought with Eren.

Osan Jr. had pressed his lips against each other to prevent himself from yelling in pain. He knew from the intensity of pain he experienced through his armor. If Eren's attack had landed on his bare body without the armor protecting him, he would have been turned into an upright meat rotisserie long ago.

"Aaaaaaaaaaaaaa!"

Ivor channeled his pain into attacking Eren when he found the right opportunity to do so. His pride was put on the line as he launched his counterattack on Eren. He charged his daggers with lightning and

pride mana. Plus, his enhanced body stats helped him to break the defensive line Eren had set for himself.

The butcher's katars were parried at the right time before the partially golden dagger barged in and attacked his torso. Ivor became very quick with his daggers all of a sudden when he found the right opportunity to attack Eren.

Zoom. Swoosh. Slash.

Eren found out that one of the golden daggers had lodged itself in his right shoulder. The other one had managed to pierce the area right under his left rib cage. There were also various slash wounds inflicted across the front of his torso in quick succession.

Eren didn't flinch at the pain as he kept on exchanging moves with Ivor despite the latter's huge success. He let his wounds get worse by attacking Ivor without even trying to create a safe distance from him. It was as if the butcher was not worried about his wounds at all.

'Those who inflict pain must have the courage to bear it as well.'

Ivor thought to himself as he watched how Eren fought against him. He started repeating that line in his head again and again as a way to deal with his share of pain.

This was exactly like the last time when he fought with Eren in the ranking wars. It was just that the stakes were higher and he had been blessed with pride armor to stand his ground against Eren.

Ivor started enjoying his pain as he fought with Eren. As his pride armor kept getting sturdier, the sense of pain was amplified even further. And these senses were not confined to the pain receptors in his body.

Due to the Sin Series Ability's peculiarity, he could feel the pain on a deeper level, as if his soul was suffering along with his body. And this soul-related pain was many times more painful than any of his bodily pains.

Ivor felt like he was immersed in a pool of agony the water of which was made of tangible extracts of human suffering. And yet, that did not deter Ivor from having a smile on his face. That smile only grew wider as he received blow after blow from Eren's consistent and precise attacks.

"Hahaha. This... I cannot help but enjoy dueling with you, Eren. I don't care what happens to you or me or this mission. I just want to live in this moment."

Layla was amazed that Ivor, who always looked like he had lost everything in a gamble, could laugh like that. She was even more amazed by Eren's performance in the duel. The guy had upped his game in every possible way.

'He is getting more and more dangerous by the day. I need to fill my master in on this. This strange bloodline is stronger than we initially thought. If it could even be called that.'

Layla thought to herself as she narrowed her eyes at Eren. She also cursed the two men for dueling with each other so seriously. Nobody would be able to tell that they were on the same side against Oliver's forces if they saw the two fight at this point.

Ivor decided to use the spell first as he thought he couldn't take the amplified pain anymore. A pool of lightning water appeared out of thin air and the lightning vines inside it started to climb over Eren's body as they fought.

Some of the vines started hindering his movement. These vines also had a stunning effect attached to them that prevented Eren from reacting to the vines like he was used to.

Since Ivor had been defeated in the dagger arts by Eren, his pride was hurt. As a result, his body stats had been lowered and his armor also lost some of its defensive properties.

Still, Ivor knew there was no better way to get one up on Eren. After all, his pride was not above his interests. He readily prepared himself to compromise his armor's defensive properties to create a window of opportunity.

Ivor delivered a tornado kick to Eren's injured shoulder and sent him flying for the first time. He did not allow Eren to cast his spells. As a result, his pride was hurt when he saw Eren flying away from him. His armor crumbled a bit before Eren landed a few meters away from him.

The butcher looked like he had a bloodbath. The various injuries on his body started oozing loads of blood all of a sudden as he took a long breath and relaxed his muscles.

Layla shook her head in disappointment when she saw Eren getting seriously injured. She wanted to criticize him for his brash behavior. But she stopped herself from saying anything when she saw him raise his hand in front of him.

Snap!

A mass of sparkling water appeared around Eren from thin air before surrounding him whole. When the mana-infused water was dispersed, the butcher was seen standing casually with his exposed torso. All the blood was washed away and all the wounds he had received were healed.

"This... When did you get this Ability?"

#### [Chapter 947 Elemental Fusion Between Lightning And Water](#)

"This... When did you get this Ability?"

Layla had her mouth open in surprise when she saw an unharmed Eren standing on the battlefield. He was riddled with puncture and slash wounds a moment ago and now he looked like he was flexing his bare body.

Ivor was also shocked by Eren's Ability that healed him in the blink of an eye. He wondered how many Trump cards the butcher had and if he could ever compete with him on the same level.

Eren looked at the hand with which he had snapped his fingers. He smiled to himself before thinking about a certain someone.

'I owe you one, Aunt Nina.'

Eren had to say the Ability he had acquired from aunt Nina was simply awesome. It did not only heal him but also made him feel rejuvenated. One could say that it was a complete package. The only downside

of using the Ability was its moderately high mana consumption. This is in addition to the fact that it would get less effective if he kept on using it in quick succession.

The butcher wanted to try out this Ability with Oliver's guards. After all, he had only used this Ability to cure himself of post-coitus fatigue when he was with Nina. That wasn't really what could be called a litmus test for Instant Reset.

But since the opportunity presented itself in the form of Ivor, he went ahead and performed the field test. And he was very happy with the results.

"Are you..."

Ivor was about to say something to Eren but the latter gestured for him to take a break. He stretched his arms and legs and did a few jumps in his position to feel the change in his body. He then started stretching while thinking about a way to break past Ivor's golden armor.

Eren looked at the cracks in Ivor's golden armor, which developed right after the latter kicked him and sent him away. They were in the process of repairing themselves, giving Eren a general idea of how his Sin Series Ability worked.

'If I understand intent-based magic well, then making Ivor less proud of himself should make my job easier. I don't know how much control he has over his emotions or if the armor has any special powers. But whatever happened just now pretty much solidifies my conjecture.

But do I want to take the easy way? This guy is just like Renita in this aspect. He'll keep coming for me until he manages to beat me. That is if I don't beat him when he is at his peak, something he wanted to do to me.'

Eren made cracking sounds while rotating his neck clockwise and counterclockwise as he thought. Instead of hurting Osan Junior's pride, he focused on defeating his Ability entirely. That way, Ivor would have no reason to challenge him again anytime soon.

'Hmm. First of all, I'll also need elevated body stats.'

Eren also had a way to temporarily increase his body stats. He communicated with Argo in his demon beast space and activated the transcendent spell he would rarely use.

Demon Beast Transformation.

Eren's body also started changing when he activated his beastly transformation spell. His eyes turned beastly and his fingers turned into Argo's vice-like claws. His limbs became buff as they sported more prominent muscle definitions.

The butcher also had large eagle wings sprouting from his back that gave him flying capabilities. The beast-like wings were a bit more difficult to control than the spell-generated Wind-Fire Wings. But the beast wings were more durable and practical to use for an extended period in battle.

'Next, I need to change my weapon. Daggers are not very useful when fighting an armored rich boy.'

In Eren's hands, the Diceros Left and Right vanished. Harjahir's Hammer was summoned in their stead, indicating the butcher's intentions to cause blunt-force trauma to his opponent.

Eren smiled wickedly at Ivor before commenting.

"Let's see how proud you feel when I'm done with you. Heads up."

Eren disappeared from his position and appeared right above Ivor before striking his hammer right over Ivor's head. The hammerhead suddenly grew larger, and now boasted a surface diameter of 6 meters. The force it generated was enough to make meat patties out of a lower-ranked entity with a single swing.

Swoosh. Zoom. Boom.

Ivor had just raised his arms subconsciously when he felt like a mountain had collapsed on him. The ground beneath his feet cracked and depressed. And he was almost brought to his knees with a single attack.

The Osan Junior gritted his teeth when he felt like his backbone was crying for some kind of divine intervention. The armor had reduced the physical damage output of Eren's attack by almost half. And still, Ivor felt like this would have been enough to make him give up if it wasn't for his determination.

"Aaaaaaa!"

Ivor pushed against Eren's enlarged hammer with all he had and made the depression on the ground worse in the process. However, he was able to alleviate the force he felt in his body for a brief time. And this brief time was enough for him to use his movement spell.

Ivor appeared a few meters away from his previous position only to be met with the next hammer swing Eren had launched on him using the Blink spell. The fake OWB was forced to use the next Trump card he had.

Beast Contract Spell!

Lightning Wave!

Ivor had changed his contracted beast after getting out of Purgatory. He specifically hunted it down after learning about the beast's peculiarities.

The surrounding area was flooded with lightning water. A partially visible, green lightning-clad eel appeared out of thin air that protected Ivor from Eren's blow. The summoner of the contract beast was now protected inside the beast's belly.

Eren felt the effects of the enhanced shock he was subjected to by Ivor's contract beast. He couldn't control his mana properly and his muscles felt like they were not willing to listen to his orders anymore if he didn't do something about the shock.

Ivor used Eren's condition to get away from him once again. The butcher also flew to a higher altitude to save himself from the green lightning vines. They were now abundant inside the 5 feet deep mass of water spread across the battlefield.

[Chapter 948 Lightning Seed And Lightning Tree](#)

"A fusion spell derived from lightning and water..."

This... This is something alright."

Eren commented as he made an "I'm impressed" face looking at Ivor's self-created spell. He knew that Ivor had created this spell on his own inside Purgatory because the guy just told him proudly about his achievements a moment ago.

"Hahaha. Impressive, isn't it?"

Ivor laughed as he traveled through the contracted beast's belly as if it was a freeway. The contracted beast was almost 20 meters long, allowing Ivor to cover the entire battlefield while being protected inside its belly.

Layla spoke first before Eren had a chance to reply.

"Don't tempt him into devouring you. Just get this fight over with already."

Eren smiled mirthlessly when Layla read his state of mind like an open book. Ivor was making it difficult for Eren not to think of killing him and devouring his spells for himself.

Eren had to say that the fusion between lightning and water looked harmonious and powerful. Ivor's elemental attainment had allowed him to alter the aspect of his lightning first. Afterward, he could pursue water element attainment individually until he could perform elemental fusion.

This was one of the biggest advantages of creating one's spells. The growth potential of such spells was unimaginable by normal standards. Plus, it allowed the caster to explore more avenues in terms of the spell's effects and uses.

Ivor wasn't aware of what Layla was talking about. But he decided to follow her suggestion all the same.

Lightning vines sprouted from the green water and tried to catch Eren off guard. The latter flew even higher and in the opposite direction while locking his gaze on Ivor. He felt that the guy was waiting for him to come close to him.

Ivor had basically stopped being an expert in close combat at this point. The spells he had unlocked for himself allowed him to take different roles, allowing him to get rid of his mid and long-range weaknesses.

For a short period of time, Eren could dive into elemental water without experiencing any damage over time. His body enhanced by the beastly transformation could handle such exposure. But the real problem was the guy's contract beast which was also staring at him.

This green eel was also in the D-Rank, thanks to the peculiarity of the beast contract spell. It seemed to have lightning scales on its body which made it difficult for Eren to penetrate them. Eren guessed it would also have its inmate spells.

After water, and the contract beast, Eren had to deal with Ivor's golden armor too. Only after passing through such hurdles could he hope to hurt Osan Junior in the end.

Eren would have relied on Blink if it wasn't for the lightning water. With Ivor summoning such a dense form of mana in the surroundings, Eren could not use Blink effectively since its accuracy had been compromised. After all, he was not an assassin.

'This... this is more difficult than I thought.'

Eren had stress lines on his forehead as he kept on dodging the lightning vines that would come for him from time to time. He was extending the battle by trying to think of a breakthrough.

Eren thought of using his summoning spells at first. His earth element summons would allow him to trample Ivor. The woodland creatures also had an inborn resistance to lightning, which they could use against Ivor.

But Eren thought of something different and changed his mind. He decided to try a different way of attacking. Something that would let him target Ivor precisely from a distance and chip into his defenses.

Eren took out a runic crossbow after placing Harjaha's hammer back in his storage. He flew even higher while closing his eyes to concentrate.

Eren got out of the forest zone, getting a bird's eye view of the battlefield. He was safe here with Ivor glued to the ground. But he could also not attack using any of his spells.

Or so Ivor thought.

Streaks of red lightning clouds were summoned around Eren as he activated the runes on the crossbow. He had hunted for wrath flames while he was inside the Oni dungeon.

Sharog, Lasha, and Luna had helped him hunt various monsters ranging from Monster Leaders to Monster Lords. He had experience using crossbows from that expedition.

After getting out of the Oni dungeon, Eren obtained ranger-like spells he could use to cultivate his newly digested experiences. He would fine-tune their castings during his practice sessions.

The only problem with using these experiences was the fact that he had to face the synchronicity issue if Eren was not in his monster form. He had practiced a lot to resolve the issue and had seen tremendous progress over the months. Still, this would be his first time using a crossbow in a real fight.

Layla was metaphorically smacked in the face once again when she saw Eren holding a crossbow. She flew higher and matched his altitude on her Hexen Bee, wanting to see what he could do while handling a completely different weapon.

Eren's eagle eyes granted him enhanced vision even from a long distance. He narrowed those eyes to Ivor before aiming.

Ivor was helpless when he saw Eren out of his spell's range. He could only tackle whatever Eren was throwing his way. Thankfully, he could see it coming for him in advance.

The first batch of projectiles Eren was about to shoot at Ivor were miniature Blitz Bolts. He had used them with the crossbow instead of using them for his free throws.

The crossbow was one of Alephee's creations using the Andrium Eren had extracted from Minerva's Utopia. This artifact allowed him to increase the spell's mana density, which in turn made the spell more lethal. It also made casting spells easier while allowing Eren to hit the target more precisely.

Plus, the Blitz Bolt launch was streamlined in such a way that it increased their speed by a huge margin. If Eren's opponents couldn't see the Blitz Bolts thrown by him before, it was made more difficult now.

The bolts were made from red lightning which gave them an added edge.

However, the Blitz Bolts were not the only projectiles Eren had shot at Ivor. Two seemingly new spells were set to make their on-field debut soon.

Lightning Seed!

Lightning Tree!

Charge. Swoosh. Boom.

### [Chapter 949 Shattering Pride](#)

The green lightning water was displaced by an explosion.

The condensed green lightning was dispersed by streaks of red lightning that knew only one thing—destroying everything in their vicinity. Blitz Bolts were fired in quick succession, turning this attack into chain destruction.

The Blitz Bolts finally managed to reach the contract beast who was trying to weasel his way out of the projectiles' path. Ivor had shrunk the contract beast's size to not make him an easy target for Eren's attacks. But there was only so much he could do when he was inside the beast's belly.

Zimm!

The beast couldn't make any noise but one could tell that it was suffering by the amount of water it dispersed after being hit with the barrage of red lightning bolts. The projectiles were aimed at its fins. No matter how much the beast or Ivor tried to hide that part from Eren, the latter's projectiles would always find their way to hitting the beast's fins, tail, or eyes.

Eren kept firing Blitz Bolts after Blitz Bolts into the green lightning pond Ivor had created for himself. The attack stopped after about two minutes. Eren got a bit exhausted after maintaining such a mana-consuming attack for so long.

'This should be enough.'

Eren thought to himself before raising his hand. He decided to execute his chain spell next.

Lightning Seed and Lightning Tree were chain spells that complement each other. As their name suggests, it would allow their caster to summon a seed made of pure lightning mana. This seed would then germinate upon the caster's orders and turn into a sapling before assuming the form of a lightning tree in quick succession.

The lightning tree would diffuse a dense amount of lightning in the surroundings through its active vines, leaves, roots, and the streaks of lightning surrounding it.

The most impressive thing about this spell was that it was low in mana consumption. The Lightning Seed germinates using the caster's mana as a base. As a result, the Lightning Tree would consume mana from the surroundings while allowing the caster to have control over them.

Lightning Seed and Lightning Tree combine two or more schools of spells to make their effects feasible. It grants them crowd control powers depending on how their caster uses them in their battles.

The multi-school origins of the spells also made them more complex. As a result, these spells were a bit difficult to cast. Another drawback of using the spells was the fact that the Lightning Seeds needed to be planted in advance or had to be shot at the enemy manually.

This was why Eren had shot Blitz Bolts into the green lightning pond at first. The red lightning rods became carriers for lightning seeds which were then scheduled to turn into lightning trees.

Ivor felt a dangerous sensation all around him inside his pond when the lightning seeds started germinating. When the shells of these red seeds cracked, red saplings emerged and grew at an astonishing rate.

The contract beast started to suffer when lightning trees grew all around it all of a sudden and started to asphyxiate it using their vines. Green vines covered its body in lightning water in an attempt to defend it. But the sheer amount of red lightning vines made it nearly impossible for Ivor to keep his contract beast safe from them anymore.

The green eel was damaged by the destructive cluster of red lightning elements. It tried to heal itself and attack the red lightning trees using its innate spells as well. But it was to no avail. The germinated crimson trees had created a mini forest in the green pond, dispersing a huge amount of condensed green mana with each passing second.

Eren smiled as he saw the effects of using the crossbow and his ranger-specific spells. He felt that he couldn't use the spells to their full potential yet. He compensated for that by increasing the quantity.

Still, he was satisfied with the way things had turned out. Using a crossbow and long-range spells did not suit his style. But he would not say no to using them if the situation demanded it. The butcher was flexible with his approach if he could get the desired results.

'Time to end this charade.'

Eren thought to himself as he narrowed his eyes at the grim-looking Ivor. With a mere thought, he detonated the lightning trees and used their leaves as lightning shards. The destructive nature of red lightning mana allowed him to amplify the damage caused by lightning shards. This led to a series of explosions on the battlefield with Ivor and his contract beast in the middle of them.

When the dust settled on the battlefield, green lightning water and green lightning vines were nowhere to be found. On the battlefield, red lightning tongues continued to manifest periodically.

Ivor was standing in the middle of the battlefield with his golden armor still on. However, it had been severely damaged, even more than before. The contract beast had been pulled into his tattoo because it had been injured by Eren's chain attack. Only the beast's husk remained, and it looked like a snake had shed its skin.

Blink.

Eren appeared in front of Ivor and threw a cross punch at his exposed left shoulder which wasn't covered by golden armor. The butcher had coated his fists with wrath mana to increase damage output. Even if he couldn't use his Ability to its fullest, Eren decided to give Ivor a hint of wrath mana.

Ivor tried to defend himself from Eren's attacks. But Eren's speed and elevated body stats made it difficult for Osan Jr. to handle him. Especially when his pride armor wasn't working to its fullest anymore.

Ivor was surprised to see that his pride mana was not very effective against Eren's wrath mana. There was something about the butcher that made him extremely compatible with wielding the Sin series' intent-based magic. Had he used Wrath Mana from the beginning, the duel would have been over a lot quicker.

"I... I admit defeat."

Ivor finally gave up after suffering enough from Eren's bare hands. His pride armor was shattered completely and dispersed into thin air when he announced his defeat.

### [Chapter 950 Waiting In Ambush](#)

'I hope you won't kill and devour him anytime soon. At least until the Lazarus Project ends.'

Layla said to Eren in private through voice communication in a worried tone. One of the reasons she was uncomfortable letting Ivor parade his powers in front of Eren was because she assumed Eren would aim for the kill straight away. She had spent enough time with him to predict his behavior. Or so she thought.

The three-person team was waiting in ambush for Oliver's forces. Eren had healed Ivor using Instant Reset. The Ability allowed him to heal his allies as well with the efficiency of a healer. At this point, Ivor and Layla had both stopped being surprised by the butcher's class-defying talents.

The trio cleaned the battlefield hastily using one of Layla's potions. They couldn't fix the damage done to the surroundings because of the duel between Eren and Ivor. But the butcher did the next best thing by covering the battlefield with his wood-element spell Woodland Wonderland.

Eren had turned invisible after drinking the potion given by Layla. Even his presence couldn't be felt using normal means. The potion was so effective that he wouldn't have been able to feel Layla and Ivor's positions either if it wasn't for the voice communication channels active among them.

This was the same potion that Layla created in her cauldron a few hours ago. It had almost no shell life but it did a fantastic job turning normal rankers into assassin-like entities.

He chuckled when Layla's suggestion sounded a little bit like a threat. He looked around to see if there was a sign of Oliver's forces approaching Ground Zero. Upon assessing that he still had some time, he casually stated his position.

'It's true that I have an interest in acquiring Ivor's accomplishments for myself. However, I think the same way about every ranker I meet who has some talent.

My desire to devour a ranker and the actual deed are two separate things. Believe it or not, I don't generally act on my impulses. I wouldn't be working on the Lazarus Project if I was like that.

As for Ivor's attainments... I think his attainments have too much of his individuality seeped into them. Even if I got them, I wouldn't be able to develop them to their intended peak because I am not Ivor. I guess that's true for every target I have devoured so far. But Ivor's case stands out the most among them.'

Eren sighed before continuing.

'It's better to have a goose that keeps on laying golden eggs than to kill it and taste its meat once. I still have other uses for Ivor. So I don't think you'll have to worry about me devouring him. That is until he gives me any reason to.'

Layla felt a tinge of cold in Eren's voice as she listened to him. She knew what he was talking about. She wanted to say something else to change the topic, but the butcher did it for her.

It's not like I can't achieve my goals on my own. Talent or no talent, I know I have what it takes to take my lightning attainments to even greater heights than him.'

Eren said confidently. He felt this confidence because it was the element of lightning he was talking about. From his two lives, the butcher was most familiar with this element.

Even now, he was on the right track regarding honing his lightning element as much as his current rank allowed him. Lightning seemed to lag behind the tremendous progress he had made in his other elements.

He would be lying if he said that he wasn't envious of Ivor's lightning attainments or didn't think of looting them. But he also knew that he would get something much better eventually. Something he could truly call his own and not stolen goods.

'Somehow... I don't doubt that.'

Layla murmured after hearing Eren's words. She knew Eren was the most hardworking ranker she had a chance to meet in this era.

Eren was just about to say something to Layla when he received another voice communication. This time from Ivor.

'Eren, what are you planning to do about the Lazarus Project? Are you planning to let that old hag out?'

Ivor didn't fail to notice the extraordinary nature of Eren's wrath mana at the end. He felt like his pride mana was ineffective against someone with a Sin series Ability because it was Eren who was his opponent.

Ivor also felt that Eren had hidden more than he wanted to show him. From his academy days, he had observed Eren. Whenever he was sure of victory, he often used his opponents as live dummies. Ivor felt like he had played that part for Eren when he recalled the duel.

Ivor had also kept his pride aside in asking for help from Eren after he saw the difference between them in the duel. It was like he managed to separate the feelings of pride and shame apart because the chasm of power between them was so wide apart.

He had stopped competing with Eren in his head after Eren defeated him so thoroughly. Instead, he was looking for something deep within himself. Something he could work on to achieve even more than he already did.

Ivor was also having doubts about serving Eliza after seeing Eren's progress. The Sage and the butcher were not necessarily against each other. But they also didn't seem to be on the same page.

Ivor knew about the Lazarus Project and Eren's involvement in it. As far as he could tell, Eren had not accepted the project's responsibilities willingly. Ivor and Layla were both unsure if Eren would show up here to kill Arthur's guards until the last minute.

Killing Oliver and his people was akin to issuing a challenge to a duke and Edinburgh's entire royalty by proxy. And unlike them, he had a lot to lose if the mission failed.

The more he learned about Eren, the more Ivor thought that maybe he shouldn't place his bets on Eliza in the Lazarus Project. Thus, he tried to interact with Eren more to get a glimpse of what he was thinking about.