

Darkness 21

Chapter 21: Meeting an Expert

Kahn walked inside the adventurer association hall to register as an Adventurer.

Why did he choose this profession? Because it was his current best choice.

Mainly it will allow him to enter regions such as forests and dungeons where he could hunt for monsters and increase his strength by absorbing their skills and eating their cores. Also, no one would be asking questions about what he was doing in such places if he was a registered adventurer and had an ID with him.

And this was also a quick way to make money on the side. As working as a bodyguards like Elanev had suggested would restrict Kahn in many ways. Plus his income would be limited and there would be times he'd have to be escorting people or acting as security which would be a total waste of Kahn's time.

Even though the Flavot city was the best place for Kahn to build his strength, he won't be staying here long and would eventually leave for bigger cities and places where he could gain more power and authority. This city was going to be his first step in his journey.

Coming back to reality, Kahn noticed that many people sitting in the hall were looking at him with surprised gazes as if he had something they desperately wanted.

Kahn paid no attention to the greedy gazes and walked towards the receptionist counter. Exactly towards the same counter he went to the previous day to sell the cores.

As the old man watched Kahn coming towards him, he instantly recognized the young man and adjusted his glasses. But then he was startled after noticing Kahn's attire.

[What the..? Did he rob a bank or something?] he old receptionist asked himself.

"What are you doing here again? Didn't I tell you to hide somewhere for few days? Those people from the Groundhog adventurer team might be still looking for you." said the old man in a worried tone.

"If they want trouble, I'll give them one. Besides, I'm not the type to hide in fear from anyone." Kahn said as he rested his right arm on the counter, leaning towards the old man.

"Anyway, I'm here for my adventurer's license. You mentioned I have to take some kind of test, right?" asked Kahn as he remembered yesterday's conversation vividly.

"Ah.. Young people.. Always thinking too highly of themselves." the old man sighed as he took out some documents and gave them to Kahn.

"Fill these up and deposit 20 Silver Dramus for the test." said the old man as he passed on the documents.

"Understood." said Kahn and went to a vacant table to fill in his information. He wrote made-up details which were essential for approval and returned to the counter.

"By the way, what's your name old man?" asked Kahn.

"It's Malcolm. And stop calling me old man. Or you'll never get your registration done." said the old receptionist with wrinkles on his forehead, as if he hated being called an old man.

"Okay, okay. I got it. So what kind of assessment do I have to go through?" asked Kahn curiously.

"Nothing much. You just have to fight and last for some time against one of our instructors. They will also decide whether you are qualified enough to do work as an Adventurer like hunting in the forests or dungeons and even work as a bodyguard for commission." explained Malcolm.

"I'm ready when you are." replied Kahn in a carefree manner.

"Follow me." said Malcolm and took Kahn to the inner side of the hall and then they entered towards a small training grounds within the association building.

Kahn saw more than a dozen of people doing weapon practice and magic chanting practices under the instructions of people wearing the association uniform. These were obviously the instructors.

As they neared towards an open arena made specifically for combat practice, Kahn saw many people queued up in a line.

"Where's Alvin?" Malcolm asked the nearby instructor.

"He called in sick today. Saying he won't be able to come to work for few days." replied the nearby instructor.

"Sick my ass! He's probably still in a brothel and drinking even more booze to get over his hangover. That bastard is never reliable." shouted Malcolm.

Just then, a solemn voice came from behind where they were standing.

"Since Alvin is out, what if I do the testing today?" said an old man who had completely long white hair and a short beard. He appeared to be in his fifties.

"Arkham.. You? Nevermind, just go easy on the kids." said Malcolm as he shrugged his hands helplessly.

The other people around Kahn who also came for the assessment started cursing under their breath. Kahn who had extremely accurate hearing even for a long-range thanks to one of the abilities he absorbed from a bat-like monster, clearly heard everything they said.

"We're so screwed! This guy never holds back in a test. We had chances to pass in front of Alvin, but Arkham never approves of anyone." said one of the men.

"Who's he exactly?" Kahn intervened in their conversation.

"Don't you know? That's Arkham Holland, the A-rank Adventurer who is also a Grandmaster Rank Magic Swordsman. He's one of the 3 strongest Adventurers in the entire city. To get him as the instructor for our assessment is like hitting a stone wall with a pebble. Only God knows if we'll be able to pass this time." replied the man as his back arched like an elderly man.

To this revelation, Kahn felt very different compared to the others. Because unlike them who were worried about failing the test, Kahn's eyes were full of joy and expectations. Because he would get a chance to fight a grandmaster level swordsman which will help him improve his Weapon Mastery.

Kahn understood just from what the other guy told him that grandmaster rank swordsmen were very rare even for a city as big as Flavot City that was no smaller than big metro cities from his previous world. So naturally, this encounter would be a very rare chance to learn from an expert.

Kahn queued up in line as Arkham took a wooden sword from the weapon stand and started the tests.

Kahn was standing last in the queue and tried to get a good look at the combat test.

The old man Arkham held the wooden sword with a benign smile on his face, looking like a completely harmless elderly person who would even struggle to cross the street.

But just as soon as he started, Kahn's eyes widened with surprise and his Survival Instinct started alarming inside his head. Unlike the other people standing in the line, Kahn could feel the aura coming out of Arkham.

This gave a sense of dread to Kahn as he understood that the man in front of him was no joke. Just the aura he gave was more than enough to suppress Kahn on the spot who was at the end of the queue.

Arkham who was waiting for the first examinee to attack him suddenly squinted his eyes and looked at Kahn without making it obvious to notice.

He could feel Kahn trying to gauge his strength.

As soon as the first examinee charged at Arkham holding his giant axe and swung it with full force, the old man simply took a step back and avoided with a hair's breadth.

SHOCK!

Kahn was completely shocked!

To someone without keen senses, this looked like Arkham barely managed to survive the attack and luckily dodged it, but to Kahn who had his reflexes and senses reached to a level beyond normal people, everything was as clear as water.

Arkham didn't move to dodge at all, rather he was allowing the giant axe to pass close to him. It wasn't that his reflexes were weak, rather he was holding back his original speed to make it look like the attacker barely missed the old man.

Kahn kept staring at Arkham with an ogling gaze.

This man was a true expert!

In the next second, the examinee swung his axe at Arkham's head, trying to land a fatal hit.

Just as the axe came close to Arkham's face, he quickly flicked his wooden sword and the entire direction of the swinging axe was changed in just a second.

The axe landed on the ground with full force, the wielder also losing his balance and stumbling on the ground. Just as he tried to lift the axe again and move to attack, the wooden sword already landed a hit on his neck.

"Fail." said Arkham with solemn eyes.

The examinee hung his neck in embarrassment and left the training ground.

"Next!" shouted Arkham and the test continued.

And just as Kahn had expected, not a single one of these examinees managed to last in the test for a minute let alone land a hit on Arkham.

Let it be a close combat class or a long-range attack class like Mages & Archer, none even came close to make Arkham move more than 10 steps before he took them out effortlessly.

Finally, Kahn's turn came and he entered the training ground.

He didn't stand on a ceremony and took out his new long sword which was no shorter than 5 feet or maybe even longer. He held it tightly in both his palms, settled his footing, pulled the sword hilt close to his chest and pointed the sword tip at Arkham as he took a defensive stance.

Kahn looked at the old man with determined eyes and said,

"After you."

Chapter 22: The Newcomer

Kahn looked at the old man Arkham, focusing his sight on any slight movements the old man might make. His Survival Instinct alert & then he activated his Hunter's Intent.

Kahn knew that no matter how accurate his perception or Survival Instinct blessing was, if he didn't have enough reaction speed or strength to defend himself against a truly strong enemy; his life would be forfeited right on the spot.

"You have some good senses, kid. Now let me see if you actually know how to fight." said Arkham as he took his first step towards Kahn.

WHOOSH!

Arkham's image flickered the next second and Kahn sensed an impending doom coming towards him.

Clang!

Just as the Arkham was about to hit Kahn, the young man quickly used the sword to block his left-hand side and finally, Arkham's figure appeared in front of him.

Author: Consider his sword similar to the one in the cover art of the Novel, with a black hilt and guard.

The surrounding people gasped with surprise!

Even the other instructors were amazed. Because until now, Arkham never used his speed to attack any of the examinees. He only parried and dodged them before landing a fatal hit with his wooden sword. But now he was taking the approach of the attacker against the young man.

And to add more surprise to this, the young man actually blocked the strike that everyone standing there failed to see.

"Nice sword." said Arkham and he swung his wooden sword again. Kahn was barely adjusting to the grandmaster rank swordsman's extremely quick speed and attacks.

Each strike looked very simple but only Kahn knew that Arkham was trying to either land a fatal blow or disarm him. Not a single movement from the old man was wasteful and as Kahn kept defending against these flawless strikes that followed a form of rhythm to them, leading his hand movements when he was defending against the strikes; Kahn realized that he was being too overconfident of himself when he asked the old man to attack him first.

"Is defending all you can do?" asked Arkham with contemptuous eyes as if he was disappointed with Kahn's skills.

Ding!

[Host has improved the Weapon Mastery for Swords.

Current progress : 35% at Master Rank.

The host has unlocked the Combat Techniques, Defensive Stance.

Current progress : 15% at Master Rank]

The system notification rang in his head but Kahn didn't lose his attention and kept focusing on the enemy in front.

"The rules said I'd still win if I lasted for a while against the instructors. Don't try to goad me into attacking and give you an opening, old man." said Kahn as he firmed his defensive stance and kept focusing on Arkham's movements.

"If you think stalling for time will help you, then you're wrong. Let me show you the difference between our skills." said Arkham and finally released his aura to the full extent.

Boom!

The nearby surrounding and everyone present felt an unimaginable pressure as if a mountain was thrown on their shoulders as soon as Arkham revealed his killing intent.

Some of the other examinees fainted right on the spot while others slouched under this aura.

Kahn who was the original target of this domineering aura and killing intent was actually facing the pressure 3 times more than what others felt. His body having no strength to even move a muscle or even look the other way.

Kahn felt like he was nothing but a prey in front of a predator beast. A prey that didn't even have the right to fight back.

Kahn could feel his bones clattering under this pressure and his veins popping out. The old man with a benign smile on his face was a true powerhouse.

War Dominance!

Kahn activated his War Dominance blessing and felt the pressure on him disappearing.

Arkham on the other hand had a riddled expression on his face. He only felt some sort of slight aura from Kahn before but now however, not only his aura was waning in front of the young man but he too also sensed a form of threat from the young Swordsman.

"Interesting. Very interesting." said Arkham as contained his aura inside him.

Arkham again started attacking Kahn from various angles, pushing him backward with every hit. However, Kahn also tried his best to defend and maintain his footing against the heavy and quick attacks. His new sword possessing extreme durability and very easy to move with his current strength.

Even though he was barely holding his end against Arkham's swift attacks, Kahn had a joyful expression on his face. Because with every strike he was defending against, his weapon mastery and Combat techniques mastery was increasing by a lot as he was fighting against a true expert.

Arkham who noticed this smile on Kahn's face felt irritated as the new guy in front of him was successfully defending against a skilled veteran like him.

"I'll give you a chance to attack me. I will only defend. How about it?" asked Arkham in a playful tone.

"No lies, right? Because unlike me, you have a reputation to protect here." said Kahn as he gave a light smirk.

[System, show me the current progress.] Kahn commanded the system.

[Host has improved the Weapon Mastery for Swords.

Current progress : 49% at Master Rank.

Defensive Stance Combat Techniques,

Current progress : 40% at Master Rank]

Kahn heard the updates and decided to go along with Arkham's proposal. Because he won't be able to improve his weapon mastery & combat techniques mastery by defending alone. He had to attack as well to improve his skills. Otherwise, he'd be just swinging a sword like an idiot in a real battle. He had to use this opportunity to learn some true sword skills.

"I'm coming!" shouted Kahn and charged at Arkham.

He quickly swung his longsword vertically trying to land a lethal hit at the old man.

Thang!

The sound of metal and stone banging resounded in the training grounds.

By now, over a hundred or more people who were either practicing or giving their tests in the adjacent training grounds were immersed in looking at Kahn and Arkham's fight. The newbie managing to last for so long against the famous Arkham, one of the strongest adventurers in the entire city was a miracle to them.

There was a huge crack in the floor where Kahn's sword just landed. Arkham had parried Kahn's brute attack in the last second effortlessly.

During the attack, Kahn noticed that even though Arkham was using a wooden sword, there was a layer of protective aura or some kind of barrier that was covering the sword. And the source of it was none other than Arkham.

[Is this what they call a Magic Swordsman?] Kahn asked himself. Because no way his sword wouldn't be able to break open a wooden sword with a single hit. Not only was made of extremely good quality materials, but it was also very sharp and heavy at the same time. So Arkham using some sort of skill or magic that was enforcing the wooden sword was the only explanation he could think of.

Kahn didn't stop there. He adjusted his footing to not leave an opening and twisted his body in a circular motion, using the momentum of his body to pull the sword out of the ground and making a horizontal slash at the old man.

To this, Arkham only sidestepped and parried the attack again with a flick of his wrist.

Kahn started using his side hopper ability to dash and attack the old man from time to time, even forcing the old man to take a few steps back with his heavy yet quick attacks.

He aimed for Arkham's vital points as he kept running and attacking the old man from different angles again and again. The Kahn who was barely managing to hold against Arkham till now was suddenly pushing the old veteran from one side of the training ground to another. His attacks becoming more deadly and precise with time.

The audience watching this battle however was completely silent. Many not believing their eyes and some dismissing what they were seeing in front of them.

The well-renowned and greatly experienced veteran adventurer was being pushed back by a newcomer?

Even though it was only a test and Arkham was allowing the new guy to attack him.. Actually landing a hit on the old man and even pushing him few steps back was something none of them had ever heard of in all their time in the adventurer association.

Arkham who was at the receiving end was far more active this time. He was no longer just flicking his wrists and parrying the attacks, rather using both of his hands and taking a proper defensive stance while defending against Kahn's brutal yet very quick attacks.

To his surprise, the young man in front of him was getting better and better as time was passing; his movements were no longer that of an amateur but a skilled swordsman. He completely got rid of all the unnecessary movements and force behind his attacks and his hand coordination while swinging the long sword was improving as the fight went on.

When Arkham came out of his daze, he finally noticed a bright smile on Kahn's face as he kept defending.

This guy was enjoying the fight? Arkham was caught surprised.

Unbeknownst to all the bewildered gazes, Kahn was becoming more joyful as he heard the System notifications in his head.

[Host has improved the Weapon Mastery for Swords.

Current progress : 67% at Master Rank.

The host has unlocked the following Combat Techniques :

Pincer

Stab

Horizontal Slash

Vertical Slash

Streak]

Arkham was simply stunned.

He had seen many talented people when it came to swordsmanship but never before had he seen someone like Kahn who made so many drastic improvements just in a single match. It was as if the experience he was getting from their bout was unlocking some type of hidden talent inside the young man.

Genius! He found a true genius!

"Stop!" Arkham spoke with a slight smile and an approving expression on his face.

"You pass." said the old man.

The crowd was gobsmacked after the announcement.

This newcomer passed a test conducted by the legendary Arkham himself? Were their eyes deceiving them?

Kahn stopped his attacks and put the heavy longsword on his back. He clasped both his fists together and made a slight bow towards the old man Arkham like people did in Chinese Martial Arts novels and said,

"Thank you for your guidance."

Chapter 23: The Confrontation

As soon as the test ended, the crowd gathered around the training ground roared in cheers!

Everyone present there screamed their lungs out as Kahn had finally broken the record by passing Arkham's assessment test which didn't happen in the past 10 years.

"Congratulations on passing your test, kid." said Malcolm who came back a while ago after hearing the commotion. He had never imagined Kahn being able to fight against Arkham for so long and already thought that there would be no one passing today.

Kahn gave a gentle smile and nodded in response. Then he glanced at Arkham and said "It's because he wasn't even using half of his strength. If this was a real-life battle, I would've died in the first few seconds."

Arkham smiled after hearing Kahn's words. The young man wasn't a fool who'd let a little victory go inside his head.

"Still, I didn't hold back with my attacks and speed in the end. Even though I didn't even use half of my original strength, you being able to withstand it with your current level of strength and skills is indeed worthy of praise." said Arkham as he was very impressed with Kahn's demeanor and the way he addressed the matters of the bout with nothing but the truth than boasting about himself shamelessly.

"Of all the young swordsmen I've assessed till now, only you seem to have the ability to grasp the situation during the battle and quickly adapt your attacking strategy accordingly. That's very commendable. Tell me boy, have you received any formal training before? Who was your teacher? " asked Arkham with curiosity.

"My uncle Vasemir taught me some sword fighting skills since I was young. Saying that we mercenaries must have enough skills & strength to protect others and ourselves." said Kahn as he praised his non-existent uncle.

Why the name Vasemir? Because anyone who knew about Witcher franchise knew about mentor of the legendary Geralt of Rivia. Vasemir was the one who taught him everything he knew so Kahn found it reasonable to use that name and create a fake character for his fake background.

"Then it explains a lot. He must be a very experienced fighter." said Arkham as realization struck him. This explained why Kahn had such a solid foundation and talent for the Sword as he received training from a skilled fighter since his childhood.

Suddenly, Malcolm who was standing on the side spoke, "Arkham, remember what happened with Markus and his Diamond Adventurer team? It was him who showed up when they were close to losing their lives. He alone killed 8 of those Bandits one by one secretly and strategically. Markus said if not for this young man, all of them would've lost their lives.. including Sandra."

"So it was you! Thank you.. you did me a huge favor. I'm glad to finally meet the man who saved my niece's life." Arkham said as he ruggedly shook Kahn's hands.

"Who's Sandra?" asked Kahn as he scratched the back of his head.

Malcolm replied quickly, "The mage girl who survived the ambush thanks to you."

Kahn who had the eidetic memory quickly remembered the young mage girl who was fighting against the bandits that day. She was really good at long-range spells and aiding her allies during the fight.

"I see. Well, those bastards killed my clan members and my friends when we were out on a bodyguard mission. Just like Markus and his team, we too were ambushed and only I managed to survive. I was simply taking my revenge when I finally found them again." Kahn said as he clenched his fist tightly. His face was full of sadness and regret.

This took both Arkham & Malcolm by surprise. They didn't know anything about Kahn's past till now at all. Only that he saved the Diamond Adventurer team few days ago. This made them feel empathetic towards the young man.

"Well.. It still makes no difference. Even though you did it inadvertently, you still saved our people. If you need anything in the future, feel free to ask me." said Arkham as he patted Kahn's shoulder.

He now started liking this boy even more after knowing about his background and how he saved his only niece's life a few days back.

The crowd around them had dispersed at this point and everyone went on their ways, their blood pumped after watching the enthralling fight. Many grabbing their weapons and practicing with vigor.

After leaving the training grounds and waiting for some time. Malcolm bought Kahn's newly made ID card. Arkham had left already to report something to the management. Apparently, Arkham was actually the Vice-president of the Adventurer Association in Flavot City.

Just as things were going nice for Kahn after a long time, a group of more than 30 people entered the association hall. Their loud thuds of footsteps and weapons clanging against each other brought the attention of every single person present in the hall.

The group of people looked extremely proud, domineering and their hostile gazes landing towards the crowd as if they were looking for someone.

This group of 30 plus adventurers consisted of many humans, some elves, half a dozen females, and few demihumans. But unlike the majority of the adventurers Kahn had seen till now, all the members of this group had very decent equipment, their attire matching to each other and all of them had the same logo on their clothes...

The Groundhog Adventurer team!

Finally, someone from the new group pointed his finger towards Kahn who was talking with Malcolm before.

"That's him! That's the guy who beat young master yesterday!" said a Thief class adventurer.

The group of people parted and created a path towards Kahn's direction.

A giant man who was nearly 7 feet tall, had a muscular build with a long and braided yellow beard walked out of the group. His aura and demeanor were that of a tyrant exuding out with his every step.

Kahn looked towards the towering figure coming towards him. The man had a giant battleaxe on his back, full in brown armor and woolen fur on his armor here and there.

Kahn was instantly reminded of Vikings from his knowledge on Earth.

The hostile man stared at Kahn as he stood like a mighty warrior, ready to pounce at him any moment.

"Was it you who killed my little brother and my men?" said the man in his deep voice. His tone filled with rage but trying to hold his anger back.

"And who's your brother?" asked nonchalantly.

"Don't act like a fool. You had a fight with him yesterday in this very place." said the man.

Gasp!

People present in the hall gasped as they heard something they never thought was possible.

The young master Illya of the Groundhog Adventurer team was killed? How's that possible?

The blonde guy was infamous for bullying others and acting like he owned the world. All that because he had the backing of his almighty brother who held a lot of power in the Adventurer community and even the City Administration had a lot of people who owed him favors.

"Oh, that pretty guy? I didn't see him since yesterday. Thought that he brought you to beat me for yesterday's incident." Kahn feigned ignorance but he didn't avoid any eye contact.

"Besides, was he really your brother? You two don't look remotely related to each other." said Kahn.

"Impudence! Answer only what I ask you! Was it you who killed my brother?!" shouted the huge man.

He released his extremely violent aura and the pressure akin to what Kahn felt during his fight with Arkham. He quickly activated his War Dominance and replied in a stern tone.

"I don't know anything. I don't have anything to do with your brother's death. You're looking for the wrong guy." said Kahn as he faced the man without fear in his eyes.

Of course, the man in front of Kahn was many times stronger than the current Kahn. If they were to fight seriously, Kahn would definitely die without being able to fight at all.

But that didn't mean he would cower in fear just because the enemy in front was stronger. One day, he was going to fight the Demon God. Compared to that godly being, whatever he was facing now would not even be comparable to ants.

"Come with me to city law hall. We will decide whether you're lying or telling the truth." said the giant man.

"Do you have any proof that it was me? If you don't, then stop wasting my time." said Kahn in an annoyed tone.

This flamed the anger of the man even more as he fully released his killing intent and a yellow aura enshrouded his entire body.

"Come with me willingly or there will be consequences. If I wanted to, I could kill you right here on the spot and nobody here will be able to do anything!" said the giant man angrily.

Suddenly, a stern voice resounded in the hall from the stairs coming down in the hall.

"Oh really? I'd like to see how you do that, Stragabor."

A slim-looking middle aged Elf, covered in extremely high quality and well designed mage robes walked down the stairs as he intervened in the confrontation. And behind the elf, stood Arkham.

Malcolm who was standing beside Kahn at this moment shouted in surprise..

"President!"

Chapter 24: The Investigation

The hall was completely silent as soon as an overbearing and majestic voice of the President of adventurer association echoed inside the hall.

Suddenly, half of the people present in the hall bowed in respect towards the Mage who was descending from the stairs.

"Solomon, my brother & men were killed yesterday! We just found their bodies this morning outside of West city gates. I need to find the murderer and this man is a suspect!" shouted Stragabor, the giant man & the leader of the Groundhog Adventurer team.

"That's President Solomon for you." said Arkham who standing right behind the Mage as he did not like Stragabor addressing the middle-aged Elf without honorifics.

President Solomon raised his hand and stopped Arkham midway as he gazed at Kahn and then Stragabor.

"That's your personal matter. But it gives you no right to cause a commotion here. Besides, do you really think you can do whatever you want or kill anyone inside Adventurer Association while I'm here?" the Mage Elf said as he stared at Stragabor with no fear or any type of emotions in his eyes at all.

"Or are you trying to say that you no longer acknowledge my authority?" asked the President in a gentle tone, trying to see the reaction on the huge man's face.

"I don't give two shits about you & your authority, Solomon. This man is a suspect of killing my men so I'm here to take him in my custody and ask some questions." said Stragabor as he rebuked the President of Adventurer Association right in front of hundreds of people.

"How dare you insult the President?!" shouted Arkham as he put his hand on the sword that was hanging on his waist. His deadly killing aura erupting like a volcano and raising the temperature of the entire hall by few degrees.

"Then why isn't anyone from City Law Enforcement hall or someone from Law Enforcer Squad here? Why is it only you & your team?" asked the Elven Mage.

This question surprised everyone present in the hall as well. Why wasn't anyone from authority here to take Kahn into custody if Stragabor only wanted the culprit of his brother & men's murder found?

"Or could it be that you don't wish to investigate by the rules of the law & just beat a confession out of the man without having any proof?" asked the president as he revealed the other side of the coin.

This made sense to many because Adventurers didn't have any right to make any lawful arrests or take someone for custody under the name of investigation.

"Don't try to twist logic with me.. 'President'. I'm only here to see the criminal brought to justice. What's wrong with that?" asked Stragabor with contempt in his eyes.

Not only was he enraged, but he also wanted to kill the murderer with his hand. But Solomon's reasoning brought his intentions to light in front of so many people.

"Is that so? Then how about I & Arkham accompany you to law enforcement hall then? We too want to see justice being brought to your people's murderer." said Solomon with a benign smile on his face.

Kahn who was the main center of all the incidents shuddered in fear as he saw the kind-looking elf mage smiling.

Suddenly his Survival Instinct alarmed inside his mind, so much louder than when he faced Arkham or Stragabor today. His instincts telling him to run as far as he can.

Behind that kind & gentle smile, was an aura of absolute power.

[Is this man beyond the Grandmaster level?] Kahn asked himself in puzzlement.

Because Solomon wasn't even releasing or directing his killing intent towards Kahn at all. He was simply standing on the spot.

Of all the people present here, only Kahn, Stragabor & Arkham could notice and feel the pressure of this aura. Rest were simply too weak to even notice that Solomon was releasing his murderous intent at the moment with a righteous smile on his face.

Solomon noticed the gaze of Kahn and looked towards him with an approving smile.

"What does it have to do with you?! Why are you interfering?" asked Stragabor furiously.

"Well, the incident happened yesterday & your brother also had a fight inside this very place. So it does concern the association as we don't want people to say that we did not cooperate with the authorities during the investigation." said Solomon as he stood against Kahn.

"Young man, do you admit being guilty of any of his claims?" asked Solomon, however he no longer exuded any sort of aura as he stood in front of Kahn.

"No. I'm innocent. And I don't have any reason to kill his people either." said Kahn as he folded his hands.

"Then come with us. We will accompany you to the law enforcement hall. If you're innocent, I promise on my name that no one will harm you as long as I'm around." said Solomon with a benign expression as if he really cared about Kahn being wrongly accused.

"Alright. I'll follow you." said Kahn as half the crowd walked out of association hall. Many officials including Malcolm walked with them as they were the witnesses to yesterday's incident.

After getting on various carriages owned by the association, many of which had different types of lizard-ish, horse type monsters and steed pulling the carriages; all the involved parties left.

Half an hour later, they all reached the law enforcement hall which was 2 times bigger than the Adventurer Association building, guarded by a garrison of soldiers and weapons placed at the walls. After Stragabor and his team entered and filed the case about the deaths of their men, the case was officially under investigation.

Normally, it would take them a lot of time to even begin the investigation but as soon as the officer saw the 3 strongest adventurers in the entire city in front of him, the matter was sent to the top-rank authorities and judges in just an hour. Soon, some official investigators started questioning all the involved parties in different rooms including Kahn, Malcolm, the Groundhog Adventurer team and few witnesses.

Kahn blurted out his yesterday's routine except for the killing as if he really didn't know what happened yesterday.

To cross-check his story, law enforcement hall sent few top-ranking soldiers to all the places he mentioned including the City Library where Kahn spent his longest time. Kahn being the calculative guy he was, still kept the library pass as proof before he threw away his clothes after the murder.

He even mentioned the color of his clothes, just not the ones he was wearing before the massacre.

Elanev was brought for questioning as the only witness of Kahn's evening to nighttime.

Since Kahn never looked like he had a fight or had any bruises or blood on him when he met Elanev in Black Griffin Merchant Enterprise, he too believed that Kahn was innocent and answered everything he knew truthfully.

Arkham & other people's testimony about Kahn's performance as an excellent swordsman during the assessment test also came in Kahn's favor as the only weapon he was known to be excellent at using was a sword.

Besides, one man killing dozen of experienced men by himself and not even receiving a scratch on his body was found laughable by many witnesses as well.

The investigators also mentioned in their reports about injuries on the dead bodies indicating that they were done by a monster with sharp teeth and incredibly strong claws as some of the hard armor worn by the dead people was torn and had markings of the claws.

As the sunset was finally on its way, the investigation was done efficiently.

The verdict being nothing else than Kahn being innocent of the crime since the murder site and mutilated bodies hinted a group of wild monsters doing the killing than someone who was a human.

As soon as the verdict came and Kahn was found not guilty of any of the charges, the people from Adventurer Association celebrated in cheers.

Because after their President backed up Kahn and this incident happened on their grounds, the association also had a lot of its reputation at stake during the investigation.

While the people of the Groundhog adventurer team stormed out of the hall in rage. Completely unhappy with the verdict.

Kahn finally let out a sigh of relief after being recused of all the charges.

He thanked everyone from the association and also Elanev.

The young merchant was shedding tears after the investigation was over. Kahn thought that Elanev was a very sensitive person who was simply happy for Kahn.

Little did he know that Elanev was crying after looking at Kahn's costly equipment and weapons he bought from the letter Elanev gave him this morning.

[How the hell am I going to explain this to Father? He'll kill me if this got leaked to him.] thought Elanev as he kept sobbing.

"Kid, if you have time then come with us. The President wants to talk with you in his private quarters." said Arkham as they were going to depart.

Kahn bid farewell to Elanev and traveled with the crowd back to association building.

After some time, Arkham took Kahn to the president's private quarters.

He entered after Arkham and saw the middle-aged elven mage staring outside the window, looking that the dark blanket which sky covered the entire city with as the night had approached.

"Sit." he said. Kahn simply sat down on a comfortable sofa with Arkham standing on the opposite one.

"I believe you understand why I asked you to meet me here, right?" asked Solomon as he gazed at Kahn.

Kahn however, had no bewildered expression on his face. He looked calm and composed without any worry.

He simply poured himself some wine in a glass that was on the table, took a small sip and tasted the wine as he rested his back against the soft cushions.

Kahn gave a big smirk to both the old men in front of him and said,

"Yes. It was me."

Chapter 25: The Contract

Old man Arkham stared at Kahn with a bewildered expression. He did not believe that Kahn was the actual culprit all along when they went to law enforcement hall.

He knew that Kahn had a great talent for swordsmanship but he was still far from being able to take out a dozen experienced adventurers by himself. And that too without even using a sword.

"May I ask why?" asked the Elven mage Solomon.

"How do you treat someone who picks up a fight with you for no reason and sets up an ambush to kill you with dozens of people?" Kahn replied in a laid-back manner.

"I see. Then aren't you worried that we will tell this to anyone?" asked Solomon.

"If you wanted to. You already would've done it during the investigation. But I'm sure you didn't support me and took this matter to law enforcements just to protect the Adventurer association's reputation. You want something in return, don't you?" responded Kahn.

He knew very well that a person of Solomon's position and authority wouldn't just interfere in a small matter between a newbie adventurer. He already sensed that there was a hidden motive behind the actions of the middle-aged mage.

"Quite smart for someone of your age." replied Solomon as he sat down on his throne-like chair.

"But first, show me how you managed to kill off so many people just by yourself." commended Solomon.

Kahn heaved a sigh as he spoke gently..

"Omega, come out!" Kahn said and suddenly a giant black Dire Wolf leaped out of his shadow and stood in the center of the room.

Arkham was caught off guard again.

"A contracted familiar?!" asked Solomon with surprised eyes.

"Yes. I bet you sensed him when we were in the main hall. That's how you figured that it was me who killed those people, right?" asked Kahn curiously.

"Hahaha. Yes, I did sense an external presence coming from you. We Elves have a very high affinity to magic & natural energy after all." Solomon nodded.

"But I didn't expect it to be a Contracted Familiar. That's very rare you know." said Solomon.

This proved that Kahn's hypothesis right. He had perfectly covered his tracks. Not even his footmarks were left at the crime scene. So the only way someone as strong as Solomon still having their doubts about it would be sensing the aura of his allies that were hiding in his shadow.

"So exactly why am I here?" asked Kahn as he wanted to get to the point quickly.

"It's very pleasing to talk with smart people. You don't have to beat around the bush at all." laughed Solomon.

But then his expression turned serious.

"It's because of Stragabor. He's trying to become the next president of the adventurer association." he replied.

Arkham who also sat on the sofa placed on the opposite side decided to speak in.

"If it was through a proper election, we wouldn't be worried at all. But Stragabor doesn't want the position, but the power that comes with this position." said Arkham.

"And what is that power you speak of?" asked Kahn.

"The power to control the city itself." replied Solomon solemnly.

"How? Isn't this just an organization made for mandating adventurers? How can it make one have control over the city?" Kahn asked curiously.

"Let me tell you how." Solomon said and took a small breath.

"Flavot City is surrounded by plenty of dungeons and borders the biggest forest in the world. Our city despite being at the end of the Rakos Empire actually holds vast resources. Let it be ingredients or raw materials you get from dungeons by hunting monsters or by hunting for monster cores in the forest. There is no shortage of resources and jobs that come because of them.

The most sought-after profession in the city is being an adventurer. But thanks to our management for past 2 decades, anyone who isn't worthy won't get to become one. Because people die in this profession all the time and we don't want idiots to lose their lives in search of fame and glory." said Solomon.

From there, Arkham continued..

"Dungeons periodically spawn magical monsters and beasts. The Adventurers go there to hunt for resources and make money which also keeps the number of monsters in check. But sometimes, there is a surge in their numbers. So many that even the military can't contain them all the time. If they break out of their dungeons, there will be a chaos enough to wipe out the entire city.

And hence, they seek help from adventurer association. And because of that, the association also holds a lot of importance and authority within the city itself." Arkham finished his piece.

"Stragabor sees this as nothing but an opportunity to make wealth and gain power. He has bribed many of our people, many influential military officials and nobles in the past few years. And if he is elected as the next president.. He'll simply use the association for his own gains, make illegal dealings with the black market and also have plenty of support in the city council. So you can imagine the power he'll hold over the city if that happens." Solomon said and finished the explanation.

Kahn was a grown-up man who had tons of experience in doing business and managing money in his previous life. He naturally understood what this entailed.

Being the undeclared ruler of the city would grant you so much authority that even the officially elected people in charge of the city will have to bow to you. And let's not even mention the money & resources one will have at their disposal.

Kahn understood that Solomon & Arkham had the best intentions for the city but he wasn't an idiot to blindly believe them either.

"And what do you want me to do then?" asked Kahn.

Solomon & Arkham looked towards each other before nodding in unison.

"Kill Stragabor's people one by one. Assassinate his connections in both association and the city council." said Solomon.

"What?!" Kahn asked in disbelief. These old men wanted to hire him as a contracted killer?

First, it was God of Darkness & Kravel who wanted him to kill the Demon God and now it was Solomon & Arkham who wanted him to kill Stragabor's people.

Did he give some sort of Agent 47 from Hitman or John Wick type of impression that everyone who deals with him wanted to have Kahn kill somebody?

"Don't play the fool, kid. We did some research on you. You're extremely talented and experienced at killing people and have great combat capabilities even without using a weapon. Plus you have this Familiar as well. Rather than trusting someone who could be a spy planted by Stragabor in our circle, we'd have you do it. Besides, weren't you a mercenary before? Killing for money shouldn't be a new thing for you." said Solomon.

"Why not do it yourself then? Besides, both of you are many times powerful and stronger than me. Wouldn't that save you a lot of trouble than trusting an outsider?" asked Kahn as he shrugged his hands.

To this, Arkham replied quickly.

"Too many eyes on both of us. If any of us goes unrecorded and suddenly Stragabor's people go missing; all the suspicion will fall on us since the election is about to happen in just 1 month. If I hadn't personally seen your capabilities myself, we wouldn't even resort to this method. It was only a plan in the hatching before you showed up. All because you can take out so many people by yourself and have a monster that could divert the cause of the murders in a different direction." he replied in a stern tone.

Arkham no longer looked like the kind man who praised him this morning and even came to law enforcement hall to give his testimony to protect Kahn. Now, he looked like a man who had his fair share of killings to reach the position he was at.

"Let's say that I accept your proposal.. What's in it for me? And how do I know that you two won't bury me under the ground if I managed to finish the job? After all, a dead witness is no longer a liability." said Kahn as he folded both his arms together and gazed at both the men in front of him.

"I believe even if we wanted to do that, we won't be able to. After all, the 2nd presence I feel from you is no less weaker than me." smirked Solomon as he pointed his finger at Kahn.

CLATTER! CLATTER! CLATTER!

The pottery and tables in the entire room started clattering as an extremely deathly and murderous aura was released from Kahn's body. It filled the entire room with black smoke and a sharp hiss full of dread echoed in the room. This aura and pressure were no lesser than what Kahn had previously felt from Solomon.

Kahn knew what it was. Because he had seen this black smoke and felt this deadly aura before. Belonging to none other than his subordinate.

It was Rudra!

Chapter 26: The Arrangement

The gigantic Basilisk was releasing his killing intent at Solomon like trying to challenge him for a deathmatch. He was a Mythical rank creature and finally found a good opponent to fight.

"See, That's why. I don't know what creature is hiding inside your shadow as your Familiar but I'm certain it is able to fight on even terms with me. Even Stragabor won't be able to kill you if you used that creature in a fight against him.

That's why I decided to hire you for this job in the first place.

I have no intentions of killing you or discarding you after the job is done. Why make Enemies when you can make Friends?" said Solomon in a sadistic & evil tone.

Kahn thanked his previous life experiences at the moment. Because both the men sitting in front of him weren't some saints and upright people who cared about Law & Justice like their previous demeanor made them look like throughout the entire day.

These were the real faces of both these elderly men. The Elven mage looked no different than someone who'd kill anyone to hold his power and authority intact and the elder man looked like someone who had bathed in a river of blood and grew numb to killings.

If this was the gullible Elric of his past life, he would've believed that these men had a right cause and would've agreed to help them like some idiot main character of some munchkin Manga & Novel made for the teen audience where every elderly figure who helped the protagonist was a trustworthy & kind old man for some reason.

This was the reason why they helped to get his name cleared of the murder accusation. They just wanted to have Kahn owe them a favor and reel him in their plan.

"Fine. But I have my conditions." said Kahn, the businessman inside of him waking from a long slumber.

"I want all the resources you can provide me for the job. Your people will bring me the intel on the targets and I'll finish the job in any way I see fit. As for the remunerations.. I want lots of high-grade monster cores, a lot of money and a small share in the bodies of rare monsters that have been hunted by adventurers & brought to the association for selling & salvaging. If there are five, then I want one." said Kahn as he put out the terms of their arrangement.

"Fine. We can manage that. But know that our deal is strictly based on what you deliver. If you fail in your tasks, then the deal is off." said Solomon with a calculative expression on his face.

Kahn responded in hurry again, "And one more thing."

"Now what? Aren't we already giving you a lot?" Arkham asked furiously.

To his loud voice, Kahn replied gently.

"I want your strongest fighters in every job, let it be a swordsman, a mage or an assassin to train me."

"What?! Why do you want to do that? Aren't you a swordsman?" asked Arkham.

"Obviously.. It's to understand all my targets. Stragabor's people & the government officials you mentioned won't be some nobodies, right? I'll need to understand and know their weaknesses before I make a plan. Otherwise, not only would I fail the job, but I'll also lose my life. Then you can go and search around for another killer in whatever time you'll have by then." Kahn said sarcastically.

"Sounds reasonable. But we don't have time to waste. I can only give you one week for your study of possible targets. And getting our top-ranked people in every job to train you will have to be done in secret as well. Otherwise, it'll raise unnecessary questions on why a newbie adventurer is receiving such favor." said Solomon as he found Kahn's method reliable.

He figured that he wasn't dealing with an amateur here. Kahn asking to study his targets by increasing his own experience in their classes meant that the young man knew how to plan his assassinations. Just like how he didn't leave a single trace after killing Stragabor's brother & men who came with him.

"One week is more than enough. But I need some advance first. I also need to know who will be providing me with intel and blueprints for these targets." Kahn said in a serious tone.

What followed for the next hour was an elaborated plan for how to take down Stragabor's men & his connections in the government strategically without raising suspicion towards them.

"Here, there are 10,000 Gold Dramus and 200 B rank monster cores. This should be enough for advance and some of the monster cores are of very high quality. I don't know why you even need these other

than just money. This is just 20%, you'll get the rest as you start your job after a week. You kill, we pay accordingly." said Solomon as he summoned a big pouch filled with gold coins and another with monster cores out of nowhere. There wasn't a spacial ring on him either.

It was Space magic!

The Elven mage was proficient in the rare Space magic. This surprised Kahn as another plan hatched in his mind.

"Deal. Let's shake on it." said Kahn as he shook both Solomon & Arkham's hands as a form of agreeing to the deal.

As the night fell, Kahn finally left the Adventurer Association and went back the Black Griffin merchant enterprise again. He felt that it was the best place for him to stay and deepen his relationship with one of the most prominent merchants in the entire city.

As he reached the enterprise building gates, he stopped his steps and spoke,

"You can let the president know that I won't betray or sell him out. So you lot better stop following me from now on. Or there won't be a head left on your shoulders." Kahn said as he released his War Dominance aura and suddenly 3 assassins fell out of dark shadows from the nearby buildings under this immense pressure.

Why did Kahn accept the contract to kill these people? Obviously, it was to create connections with people who actually held authority in the city. And gain access to resources in large amount and establish himself as a prominent figure so that many doors could be opened for him just because of the fame he would gain later. There was no point in playing the underdog as long as his secrets regarding being the chosen hero of God of Darkness was kept under the rug.

He needed everything he can get and as soon as he could. And he had to do it all by himself.

Kahn continued and greeted Elanev in his office. After watching his sullen face, Kahn got the gist of why the young merchant was unhappy.

Kahn threw the big pouch of coins in Elanev's desk.

"I know I went a bit overboard so this should be enough to minimize your losses, right? Consider the rest as repayment for saving your life." said Kahn as he laid back on the sofa placed in the middle of the room.

"Wait! How did you get so much money?" asked Elanev in a suspicious voice.

"Nothing much. Sold some of the top grade monster cores I had on me and took some advance for a big job I was offered." said Kahn as he relaxed on the comfortable sofa. He kept the sword on the side and said, "When are we eating? I'm hungry."

Elanev suddenly went from his dejected expression to overjoyed as soon as he received the pouch and started counting the coins. His experience told him it was at least 8 to 10 thousand gold coins.

"Don't misunderstand me, Kahn. It's just that the price was too big for me to cover up." said Elanev as he explained.

"Yeah yeah.. No worries. There shouldn't be any secrets between friends, right?" Kahn said as he gave a slight grin.

Kahn had already planned to deepen his relationship with the father & son duo as they could turn out useful in the future so he had to start with the gullible son first.

As he had dinner, Kahn kept chatting about life experiences with Elanev. As Kahn was once 25 years old too, he knew enough topics that could get Elanev's interests during their conversation.

When Kahn finally returned to his room again, he changed into nightclothes and jumped into the bed.

Kahn rested on the cushion and commanded the system.

[System. Give me Solomon & Arkahm's stats.]

Kahn had shaken hands with both Solomon & Arkham for that very purpose. The system he had with him could only scan the body & their strength after making physical contact with the target.

[Following are the Statistics for the individual named Arkham.

Name : Arkham Holland

Species : Human

Job : Magic Swordsman

Rank : Peak Grandmaster Rank

Level : 82

Strength : 1370

Agility : 930

Dexterity : 1130

Defense : 860

Mana : 440

Following are the Statistics on individual named Solomon

Name : Solomon Elfenheim

Species : Elf

Job : Magician

Rank : Semi-Saint Rank

Level : 85

Strength : 320

Agility : 670

Dexterity : 1080

Defense : 540

Mana : 1850]

Kahn let out a surprised gasp. Semi-Saint Rank? Means Solomon was close to break through beyond the Grandmaster rank? The middle-aged Elf was much stronger than he thought.

Kahn realized that he was treading in murky waters today. He was pretty sure Stragabor was no weaker than Arkham either. If these people wanted to kill him, he'd be dead before he could even react. If not for Rudra being present inside his shadow, he would not even walk out alive from association building had he chosen to refuse the contract from Solomon & Arkham.

Kahn took out the top-grade Monster cores and chomped down on them one by one as he was in dire need to raise his strength levels if he wanted to protect himself.

Rudra was his hidden card but he couldn't reveal him to anyone. Plus there would be very few places where he could release the Basilisk out of his shadow without causing massive destruction to the surrounding.

"From tomorrow, I'll perfect all of my Combat skills and Rank as much as I can. I can't be dependent on luck or some plot armor to always save me.. Compared to these people, I'm still an ant." said Kahn as he continued to eat up the cores.

"Power.. I need more Power!"

Chapter 27: Power Boost

Morning arose and Kahn woke up from his fulfilling slumber. Unlike his previous life, he didn't get any dreams about how his life would be different & what kind of love life he wanted. Rather, he would dream about how he rose in strength and sit atop this entire world; beneath no one, not even the Gods.

[System, tell me my current Stats.]

Kahn commanded the system since he ate around 50 monster cores before falling asleep. Thanks to his Ability Absorption divine ability he chose before, all the cores he ate would be directly absorbed in his body without any wastage or adversely affecting his physique.

As per the knowledge he gained from reading books in the city library, people in this world couldn't directly just swallow Mana Ores or Monster Cores to increase their physical or magical strength & capacity. Even the most sensitive beings to magic such as Elves and Angels had to dilute the cores and magical elements in them first and then absorb them over a long time. Even absorbing a high-grade core would take them 2 to 3 weeks; that too if they barely took any breaks.

And that is why, very few people had incredibly stronger physiques or magical abilities as gaining strength in this world needed a lot of resources as well as time. Elves lived around 500 years if they didn't get killed or died because of some disease and Angels lived up to 2 thousand years. Even the most Ancient Dragons couldn't live past 4 to 5 thousand years.

The longer you lived and the more resources you had, the stronger you'll become. That's how the natural law of gaining strength worked here. Even amongst the chosen Heroes, if nobody else picked the Ability Absorption divine ability as Kahn did, then his ability to absorb these monster cores would be the highest among all the living creatures in this world. Naturally, many beings currently surpassed Kahn by a huge margin, but Kahn had far more potential than all of them.

[Host Attributes and Skills are as follows :

Name : Kahn (Host)

Species : Human

Level : 42

Strength : 164

Agility : 126

Dexterity : 122

Defense : 94

Mana : 252

Divine Abilities : Ability Absorption, Dimensional Law, Synthesis

Blessings :

War Dominance (Stage 1)

Weapon Mastery (Master Rank)

Combat Techniques Mastery (Master Rank)

Survival Intent (Stage 1)

Berserk God Mode (5 times the physical strength)

War Deity Body (Stage 2)

Gifts : All Languages Knowledge known to the War Deity.

Physical Abilities :

Ripper Claws (Combination of Alpha Wolf's claws and Blue Lion's claws)

Alpha Wolf's Howl

Side Hopper (Combination of Sprinter and Long stride)

Hunter's Intent

Venom Acid

Poison Immunity (Grandmaster Rank)

Somir Scale body

Executioner's Gaze

Magical Skills :

Fireball

Stealth

Note : Some low-grade abilities and skills have been merged under high-grade ones the Host currently possesses & some have been discarded as they no longer have any use to the Host.]

7 Levels! Kahn remembered being level 35 just yesterday. Eating 50 high-grade B Rank Cores raised his level by 7 levels. Even his strength had become nearly twice than before.

Kahn realized that as your Levels rose, the attributes would raise by a big margin, more with each level. Like if his stats had 20 points, after his level rose; the increase would be by 30-40 points instead of 20. As his level increases, so will the extra points he'd get.

"Good. This will make the training & my survival a bit easier." said Kahn and went to take a bath.

Kahn left in a hurry in the early morning. Instead of going to adventurer association, Kahn went towards the North gate of the city. This part of the city was mainly known for its Entertainment area like how Earth had Red-light areas in the city known for Pubs, Bars & Strip Clubs.

Kahn went to one of the most crowded restaurants in this area called the Golden Crow. He waited on a table that was unoccupied as he drank some herbal tea. Unlike Earth, there was no such thing as coffee in Rakos Empire as per his current knowledge. But the majority of the population preferred Herbal tea instead. Kahn could feel the Asian aesthetics in the building architecture & cuisine.

[I wonder if any one of chosen heroes was an Asian from Earth who introduced his or her culture and now residents of this world created a different one based on it? No complaints though.. This is perfect for the morning.] Kahn said as he sipped the aromatic tea bit by bit in a black clay cup.

Just then, a slim figure under black cloak came towards Kahn's table and sat next to him.

"You're earlier than expected." said Kahn as he glanced at the hooded figure.

"I'm a professional. We don't delay our tasks. If you're done, let's leave quickly. I have a perfect place to train you." said the cloaked figure and finally took out his hood.

Kahn was a little bit surprised to see the person but didn't show it on his face.

The person next to him was a Snakekin. His body was completely similar to a snake and his hands and legs were covered in reptile-like skin. The greenish hue in the skin color gave this person an appearance similar to a forest snake. The person even had a tongue of a snake which came out of his mouth every 5th second.

"Fine. Let's go. I'm in a hurry as well. We'll only get today to learn as much as I can." said Kahn and followed after the Snakekin.

After half an hour, they reached a desolate area where the houses were basically empty & near to falling in the ground.

"This is one of the oldest parts of the entire city. It used to be one of the most important areas of the city a few decades ago before the war between different powers & gangs destroyed it as collateral damage. And nobody tried to rebuild it as well. So it became the best area for people in our line of work to practice our skills." explained the Snakekin as he introduced Kahn to their training grounds.

"I want you to train me in 2 ways. One where you attack me with your assassin's skills and techniques as I try to defend against them and other where I make attempts on you using the skills you'll teach me. I want to understand both sides of the battle." said Kahn.

"Already spoken like a true Assassin. Our job needs the understanding of the surrounding, our target and their weaknesses. We don't do much damage even with high-grade weapons, but rather our hiding skills and the that one final hit when we show ourselves takes all the work." said the snakekin.

The snakekin was a professional Assassin and somehow Solomon had managed to have him train Kahn after their yesterday's planning & agreement. Throughout their entire time during the training, the snakekin taught Kahn how to adjust himself in the surrounding so well that not just the target but also anyone present around them wouldn't notice Kahn or his presence at all.

Since Kahn had already acquired the Stealth ability after killing one of the people that came with Illya to kill him, he was already a step ahead compared to an amateur.

By the end of the day, Kahn who already had the weapon mastery & combat techniques mastery blessings, had already raised his efficiency and also learned the ability called Concealment.

The Snakekin was left awestruck after he saw Kahn executing this ability to a level that exceeded normal level Assassins who were in the profession for some time. Compared to them, Kahn not only learned it in just 4 to 5 hours but also improved in it at a drastic pace.

Unlike Stealth ability which lets the Assassins become invisible for a short time, concealment ability helped one to merge in the surrounding area as if you were always a part of it.

The snakekin's expression was no different than Arkham's when he fought Kahn during the assessment test and found his talent in swordsmanship.

[A prodigy! I found a prodigy! Why is this guy wasting his talent on swords? He can easily become one of the best Assassins in the entire city with enough training and experience!]

Thought the snakekin as he regretted watching Kahn go after their training.

Kahn was satisfied to see his weapon mastery for Daggers reaching 45% at Master Rank and his Stealth & Concealment skills reaching 70% and 53% of Master Rank respectively.

This was just one-day training but he already reaped the benefits of an entire month's training because he learned from one of the top experts.

Just like the fight with Arkham, Kahn kept learning and perfecting his assassination skills by making critical attacks whenever he found the perfect chance and his patience to wait for a perfect opportunity was very commendable as well.

Now all he needed was to kill some assassins in real battle and absorb their abilities to create his new skills and raise the proficiency in the ones he already had.

The upcoming week would be nothing but a golden fruit of knowledge he'd get to eat and raise his skills and knowledge in all the fighting-related jobs and professions.

Kahn knew if not for the excuse he made for learning his targets & their weaknesses, Kahn would never get to learn from true professionals like the Snakekin he met today. It was Solomon & Arkham pulling their connections and a huge amount of money to get these people to train him. All for the sake of keeping their current power & authority to themselves.

Kahn was sure that the snakekin would straight away go to report about today's training to Solomon & Arkham as a way to keep an eye on him and his part in their deal. And so will the other trainers he'll meet in the upcoming days.

But at the end of the day, it was Kahn who was getting a big haul and benefited the most.

"Let's see who's using who." spoke Kahn to himself and smirked as he looked forward towards the upcoming days.

Chapter 28: First Target

For the following days, Kahn received training and combat experience from one of the most elite fighters in all different professions.

Let it be Archers or Magicians, Kahn not only learned a few of their core techniques and spells; he also excelled at them by a huge margin compared to others who would usually take months to reach that level.

All his trainers left with their jaws dropping on the ground, every single one of them not believing the talent this young man had in their respective fields.

And after one week of repeated training sessions, Kahn was finally done in being proficient in them and reaching more than 50% mastery in these skills, spells & combat techniques. The current Kahn would be able to use any weapon belonging to any class and different spells and combat techniques unique to these classes without any problem.

This left a sour taste in all his trainers who thought he was wasting his god-gifted talent by focusing on swordsmanship instead. Few of them even offering him to become their disciple. But Kahn refused all of them.

The agreed date of the first week was over and the days of his hunting began from today.

Kahn was sipping some morning herbal tea inside the Golden Crow restaurant as by now, he too was addicted to this aromatic & soul soothing tea.

Today, he was going to receive a detailed report on all his targets, their routines and the best locations to carry out the assassinations as agreed during their initial planning.

Kahn was to get familiar with different professions and their weaknesses and Solomon & Arkham's people were to gather more detailed and sure-shot intel on all of their potential targets.

As Kahn was basking in the delicious taste of the tea, a slim elven archer sat across the opposite side of the table. He didn't make any greetings and ordered some breakfast.

Both he and Kahn didn't speak a word to each other either. If anyone looked at them, they'd think that these two were nothing but strangers to each other.

As the Elven archer finished his breakfast, he suddenly took out a small book and passed it to Kahn from under the table, completely hidden from everyone's eyes.

The Elf gave a slight nod and left the place in a hurry. Kahn took the small book and placed it in his Space Ring. Soon, Kahn left for the adventurer association and after he finally reached there, he registered himself for the dungeon exploration list and paid a small fee for buying a dungeon pass.

Unlike many Novels & Mangas he read in his previous life; the dungeons in Rakos Empire were monitored by both the adventurer association & the military platoons stationed close to these dungeons in case of a monster tide occurred. They will be the first line of defense. The dungeon passes were used as permission to explore and also to keep a record of all the people entering the dungeons in case they went missing or needed reinforcement during life and death situations.

It was also to stop the unregulated & unrecorded flow of resources adventurers gained from these dungeons.

Kahn had 3 objectives for his dungeon visit today.

The first was obviously to hunt monsters & absorb their abilities. 2nd was to use this opportunity to increase his combat experience & improve his combat mastery using the different techniques he had learned in the past week. 3rd was to deliver upon his first target mentioned inside the small book.

On his way to the closest dungeon which was barely 5 kilometers away from the city, Kahn went to a merchant shop and bought some smoke bombs and tear gas bombs.

Normally, adventurers used it to hunt down groups of low-level monsters that traveled in groups. But Kahn was going to use them for some other purpose.

He also bought a black cloak to hide in the crowd and to avoid the eyes of fellow adventurers.

When Kahn finally reached the closest dungeon towards the city named the Bromnir dungeon, he entered after showing his pass. Surprisingly, he wasn't the only one entering while wearing a black cloak. There were many individuals who did the same. Out of 10, at least 2 would be wearing black cloaks as far as Kahn could see. Many trying to hide their identities.

[Good for me. This way, no one would be able to link me to the incident either.] Thought Kahn as he entered the gigantic cave-like door to the dungeon that was filled with plenty of adventurers going in and out like ants gathering around sugar.

Kahn had placed his longsword inside the space ring and currently had a normal-looking bow on his back with a quiver full of arrows. He was entering the dungeon as an archer this time.

After entering the first floor, Kahn didn't waste time wandering around and asked a nearby adventurer about the directions towards the 9th floor.

The first 2 floors were flooded with people and only from the 3rd floor, did the real battles began.

Kahn kept descending the downstairs and walked nearly a few miles down the ground to finally reach the 9th-floor door. As the floor level increased, the stronger monsters & creatures would one face. After the 7th floor, no one would dare venture further without a team of allies.

So watching a lone archer going below the 7th floor surprised many but it was still acceptable for them as there were always risk-takers. Here, you were responsible for your own life. And nobody would care if you lived or died in this place.

Each floor in these dungeons covered the area of a big town having perimeters of around 6 to 8 kilometers on average. Here, many different monster species lived and hunted for resources. And so did the adventurers.

To the residents of these dungeons, any outsider would be no different than food so they attacked these adventurers at the first sight.

The 9th floor was an area of crevices and withered trees. This floor was a hunting ground for many big adventurer teams & the residents of this floor being none other than Kobolds.

These monsters had very sensitive noses and hearing. So they were very hard to hunt in a group unless you had a bigger group of your own.

"Finally. I'm here. Now, where are those bastards?" spoke Kahn to himself. He started looking around for groups of people.

After walking for more than ten minutes, Kahn finally found a group of more than 20 adventurers full of mixed-race people and humans trying to fight off against a pack of kobolds. All these people had an emblem on their chest; the emblem indicating the adventurer team he had seen before.

This was his first target as the book had provided him intel on...

The Groundhog adventurer team.

From the intel he received, The Groundhog adventurer team had more than 400 members.

Stragabor being their leader and his family who had a rich background funding the whole team.

There were dozens of groups like the one before Kahn, sent to dungeons to hunt for monsters, raw materials & monster cores and later be sold in the market.

In other words, this group was no different than workers farming for resources and later give it all to their bosses.

Kahn maintained a kilometer distance from this group and activated his Hunter Intent skill which let him gauge the strength of his targets about whether they were stronger than him or not. This ability also had a very long reach and was no different than a filter system for Kahn.

[The Strongest among them seems like between level 32 to 35. But the numbers are too big for me to hunt alone. Also bringing all of their attention towards a single target won't be easy. If I want to kill them

efficiently without any fail, I need to give them a big target.] Kahn thought to himself as a plan hatched in his mind.

Kahn ran amongst the withered trees and went far away from the Groundhog adventurer team members.

Since he lacked numbers, he would use outside help.

Not only was he planning to overcome his disadvantage with numbers.. He was going to use the oldest and yet most efficient battle strategy in the book.

Kahn let out an evil grin as he finalized his plan..

"Killing two birds with one stone."

Chapter 29: Let them fight!

Continuous battles kept happening over different parts of the 9th dungeon floor. There was no sun or source of light inside the dungeon but somehow, Kahn could see a bright sky above his head.

Naturally, this had something to do with the natural construction or magic formation that had formed the dungeon in the first place. The light outside of the dungeon was brought to each floor & the intensity was no different than normal sunlight outside of the dungeon.

Kahn kept running without causing too many noticeable noises through the withered tree lines.

He had seen some group of kobolds but they were either too big or too small than what he needed.

Finally, he found a group of 18 kobolds who had just finished off killing an adventure team & were looting out the remains, while some from the group started ripping off the flesh out of the dead bodies and chomping on the juicy & bloody meat of these adventurers.

Unlike Werewolves, kobolds not only hunted with their claws & jaws; they also used weapons like wooden spears/poles, swords and bows. The majority even wore clothes that covered their private parts.

Only a group of experienced adventurers with the same number as the kobolds could take them head-on. From what Kahn saw, the group of adventurers that laid dead on the ground wasn't one of such teams. Not only did they lack numbers but also their team composition was out of the norm. Too many physical class & damage dealer class people, only 2 mages & 1 archer in the group.

This was nothing but a ragtag bunch of hotheaded morons who came to the dungeons thinking they could conquer the floor with their measly strength.

[Idiots.. There are other ways to make money without dying. Why come here if you're not strong enough to protect yourself?] Kahn spoke to himself.

Kahn was already used to hunting wild monsters & beasts in the Forest he was thrown into by God of Darkness. So this wasn't his first rodeo.

Kahn silently kept walking towards the group of kobolds while hiding himself behind the tree branches & bushes. The group was salvaging the gears & meat from the dead adventurers.

He nocked an arrow on his normal bow which he bought for cheap from a shop. He was around 300 meters from the group & just in his bow's attack range.

Aiming at one of the kobolds who was in a group of three and quickly shot an arrow.

SWISH!

The arrow pierced the kobold's head, killing it instantly on the spot. His current weapon mastery for bows was only 59% at master rank but it was still enough for him to make accurate & precise attacks.

As soon as the kobold fell on the ground, the remaining kobolds were alerted.

HOWL!

The kobolds howled and alerted their subordinates. The whole group quickly getting their guard up and looking for the attacker.

"Time for the second arrow." said Kahn and shot another arrow in the middle of the group. The first was to get their attention and the second was to let them know about his location.

As soon as the kobolds sensed the direction of the incoming arrows, they charged towards Kahn's location with all their weapons in their hands.

Kahn waited till the group could see him and started running in the direction he came from.

For the next twenty minutes, the group of kobolds kept running after Kahn as if all they wanted was his death. Kahn occasionally shot out arrows and killed a couple of their subordinates to fume their anger even more.

Running away from this group without getting caught was no big deal for Kahn who had both sprinter & lunge ability which would always keep him one step ahead of the group. He also made sure that the group followed him without coming across any other group of kobolds or another adventurer team. Otherwise, it would foil his plans.

Finally when he reached around a kilometer away from the place where the group of twenty plus Groundhog adventurer team members were fighting, he raised his speed to the fullest and disappeared from the sight of these kobolds using Side Hopper ability.

Kahn saw the people of the Groundhog adventurer team were still at the same place, their battle seemed to be over a long ago and now they were just harvesting the kobolds for their cores, claws and skin. Many of them simply resting while few keeping a lookout. Their losses seemed negligible while the kobold group was completely wiped out.

Kahn quickly ran back to the group of kobolds he brought along and shot arrows at them again, luring them in his direction as he ran towards the adventurer team.

As soon as he reached 200 meters from the group, Kahn used Side Hopper and disappeared again from their sight.

From the dense bushes, he shouted very loudly.

"There are kobolds! Everyone get ready to fight!!", Kahn quickly ran away from the place and hid among the tree branches.

"Enemy attack!" shouted some of the team members of the adventurer team and everyone was quickly alerted. They were all experienced people so they quickly got into a formation ready to defend against an ambush.

"Who was the guy that just shouted? Didn't feel like I heard that voice before." someone of the group softly asked.

But just then, the group of kobolds finally reached close to the adventurers and by instinct, they charged at the defending side.

Kahn who was now standing on a thick tree branch far away and watching the show sighed in relief.

"Finally, all the efforts are paying off. Nothing personal guys... It's just business." said Kahn as he relaxed his back against the tree trunk.

What followed was another gory battle between the adventurers and kobolds, even far bloodier than the previous group these kobolds had killed.

Thanks to their experience in working together, the adventurers defended themselves against this sudden attack. Only suffering two casualties at the beginning of the battle.

But the kobolds were no different than these adventurers. They hunted in packs & their disposition was made to hunt in a group. Their understanding & teamwork far exceeded the opposition. Besides, they were far more vicious with their attacks and many were stronger than the adventurer team members.

Skulls and bones were broken, cut down & blood was sprayed on the ground as both sides ferociously fighting to kill their enemies.

Kahn who was the cause of this all was simply studying the battle & strategies both sides were implying as time went on. His understanding of battle tactics increasing little by little.

There was a reason why Kahn chose to use the kobold group to pit against the Groundhog adventurer team members.

The primary reason being that he was simply lacking in numbers. And even though he was strong, he couldn't take down all these people even with Omega on his side. Releasing Rudra here was also not a good idea either. These weren't some mindless monsters but a group of experienced people who also knew how to quickly respond to sudden ambushes and adapt to the situation very quickly. Some could manage to run away to tell the tale so that's wasn't the best choice.

The secondary reason is to avoid causing suspicion of an assassination attempt. Plenty of people died in the hands of kobolds on this floor so it wouldn't be a surprise to see another group fallen to these monsters.

Soon, the battle came to an impasse. Both sides left with barely 6 to 7 members, rest going to eternal sleep while lying on the ground in their own blood and intestines. Both sides were constantly looking for an opportunity to attack while defending themselves.

Kahn who saw this from the tree he was standing on, finally decided to interfere. He knew this would eventually happen so he wasn't surprised at all.

"Omega, come out." said Kahn and the Dire Wolf jumped out of his shadow. Kahn took out the smoke & tear gas bombs he bought with him and silently approached the battlefield.

Since everyone was fighting for their lives, neither side noticed or sensed his presence.

"The usual plan. Attack from the other side as soon as I throw the bombs." said Kahn and Omega nodded in response. Their teamwork was already on an expert level.

Kahn activated stealth and turned invisible. He silently walked behind the adventurer team and threw the smoke bombs and tear gas bombs in between the battlefield where the majority of the fighters were in a neck-to-neck battle.

"What the fuck?! Who's that?!" shouted a woman among the group as the smoke filled the battlefield.

Kahn activated his War Dominance & Ripper claws and started the bloodbath. This time, he was hunting both people and monsters together. His pressure filled the entire place, making it hard to even breathe for everyone present on the scene.

What followed was a one-sided massacre. Kahn used Side Hopper from time to time and each time he appeared, a body would fall on the ground as his Ripper claws chopped their heads and torso in two.

Kahn had thrown the smoke bomb on the adventurer side while the tear gas bomb on kobold side to use it the most effectively on both opponents.

Both sides were already weaker than him and after putting them into a disarray, Kahn & Omega did not have any problems taking out all the enemies.

With no chance to fight back, in just a few minutes, only a hooded man with a bow on his back and a giant black Dire Wolf, both of whom were completely drenched in blood remained on the battlefield.

"Well.. time to rob the dead."

Chapter 30: New Teammates

As the battle ended, a dreary scene of the blood & flesh torn and splattered on the ground was revealed. The Bowman and the Dire Wolf started to pillage the bodies of the dead without showing any hints of regret as if they were completely numb to killing.

Kahn was no longer a man from Earth who would be disturbed by killing someone or try to use the pretense of moral code or right cause to not kill people when it suited him & when it didn't. He wasn't a hypocrite who would try to justify his acts or look for reasoning before he had to kill someone.

He had killed so many dangerous and vicious monsters in the forest that he was practically comparable to a veteran hunter who had experienced so much that the sight & smell of the blood no longer bothered him.

And after he absorbed the mother Somir's core and also inherited its will, his disposition was no longer that of a normal human. He simply accepted that given different circumstances, both the people he just

killed and the kobold monster he lured here to slaughter would not even bat an eye if they had a chance to kill him. Some would even torture him to death if the roles were switched.

So there was no need to feel sorry for someone who wouldn't think too much about the value of life in the first place.

Kahn absorbed the abilities of all the dead bodies lying in front of him one by one and cut out cores from the monsters. As for the Groundhog adventurers team members who were part of his contract, he simply took out their badges and put them in his space ring. He needed the proof of the kills to receive his pay.

"System, show me the list of abilities and skills I just gained just now." said Kahn and the system notified him with the list.

[The host has acquired the following new abilities & skills.

Water spear

Knight's Taunt

Shield Bash

Wind slash

Wind blade

Headshot

Charged Arrow

Arrow volley

Archer's sight

Heal (Rank C)

Protection Barrier

Debuff Dispell

Magic Sense

Templar's charge

Templar's Will

Defense Fortitude

Shadow strike

Lacerate

Backstab

Lockpick

Kobold's howl

Pack sense

Pack hunting buff]

The system finally stopped after giving a list of abilities Kahn had just acquired using his Ability Absorption Divine Ability. This cheered up Kahn as he was indeed lacking many abilities & magical skills in his holster. Majority till now being related to hunting monsters in the forest only. And out of them, only 2 to 3 were useful to the current Kahn.

So this was a pleasant surprise for him in a way.

"System, show me the list of useful abilities & skills I can create using Synthesis Divine Ability." said Kahn and waited for the system to reply.

[Host can create the following Abilities & Skills with the ones currently the host possesses...]

The system then started giving him multiple and variety of skills he could create using the abilities he already had and gained just now. Filling his head with all the information about the abilities with their effects and uses.

Kahn started processing all the information and decided to judge the usefulness of all the new merged abilities & skills. He wasn't an idiot to combine them all for no reason. He wasn't even sure if there was a limit to the number of abilities & skills he was allowed to merge together.

And there was no point in creating the ones he won't be needing in the majority of scenarios as they would simply rust inside the inventory (metaphorically). Also, these abilities would need time in practicing and maybe require him to absorb abilities and resources to upgrade & improve them. That would be a waste of time as well. So the most sensible choice was to create abilities & skills that could be extremely useful & had the potential to become one of his hidden cards.

Among the list, he found 2 merged abilities that were also high rank & could be upgraded in the future.

[Mind Link (Rank B) (Upgradable)

Allows the host to create a soul connection to multiple subordinates and see their surrounding via a shared vision.

The host can also command them telepathically to perform a task or an action.

The current range of this ability is a 5-kilometer radius from the host's location.]

This ability was truly useful for Kahn if he wanted to hunt, gather Intel or keep a lookout. His subordinates could warn him about an incoming enemy or an ambush.

He could also send them to do some reconnaissance on the people or monsters he wanted to kill & even send them to places he couldn't reach or tell them to do something when he was under the public eye.

Kahn then moved to the 2nd merged ability

[Mind Transfer (Rank C) (Upgradable)

Allows the host to have full control of one subordinate and its body for 1 hour.

However, the original body of the host will be put in stasis when the ability is activated]

The first ability was simply too convenient for Kahn as he would be needing a lot of subordinates sooner or later. And in that case, having a deepened mind connection with them would allow him to carry a group battle more efficiently.

The 2nd merged ability was similar to the first but unlike the former, it allowed him to completely control a subordinate for an hour. This too was useful if he wanted to not take any risks while doing something where he could die and just use a subordinate as a suicide bomber in case there was a chance to get caught.

Kahn was certain that he gained this ability from the group of kobolds as they were indeed the type of monsters who spent their lives hunting in groups. So maybe this was some rare passive ability he accidentally gained.

The Adventurers also gave him plenty of useful abilities & occupation exclusive skills. But Kahn decided to experiment on them later when he had the time.

"Merge the skills." Kahn commanded the system and soon a familiar feeling of learning new abilities flew in this body as if he had spent years on creating it. He quickly got familiarized with it in a minute.

But because of these two 2 newly merged abilities, another door was opened for Kahn which made him rethink his choices.

Kahn then thought of a plan. He had to spend almost an hour and half just to plan and kill these people using a group of kobolds to tire them out in a battle and whittle down their numbers.

What if he had a similar task in the future and had to kill a group just like this one? Where will he find extra help when having a disadvantage in numbers? Things won't go in his favor at all.

So there was no other option than to create a small army of his own.

He didn't feel like leaving the dead bodies to let others know that these people died in a battle against kobolds anymore. Simply because there wasn't a need to leave them as proof. Missing people also counted as dead too.

All the adventurers were above level 30 and some of the kobolds were even level 37. He won't find such a favorable situation again where everything went according to his plan and he successfully completed the kill list.

Kahn weighed the pros and cons in his mind and decided that it was a better choice to use the dead bodies that were lying in front of him to create new subordinates and even experiment on a few to create some different or even higher version of their species.

He ordered Omega to not eat out the remains and started using Synthesis Divine Ability on all different types of adventurers.

To gain the maximum results, he used the high-grade monster cores during the synthesis process which were given to him by Solomon as an advance for the job. There were more coming into his pockets so Kahn found this as a worthy investment.

And he wasn't a fool to randomly merge the bodies together. Kahn chose the specimens based on their profession & their class such as Knights & Templars under physical melee class and Mages & Conjurers in long-range magical class.

In half an hour, Kahn was done merging all the dead bodies together and gained 6 new subordinates.

Six figures who were wearing completely black clothes, Armors and robes that were once part of the original bodies and now turned black, holding weapons of their respective classes and with some very noticeable changes happened to them.

On top of that, since Kahn used 2 to 3 high-grade Monster Cores during synthesis, all of these new subordinates had unlocked the Evolution skill just like Omega & Rudra had when they were created.

A Guardian Knight, a Rogue, an Enchanter, a Priest, a Ranger & finally a Berserker.

All of these were the combination of two different job classes and had merged under the Synthesis divine ability so they also inherited the core abilities of both the classes with the unique abilities of their newly created class.

Kahn named these 6 as Six Generals. Already having plans to make them incredibly stronger in the future if he had the opportunity.

"From now on your names are Blackwall, Ronin, Ceril, Armin, Oliver & Jugram." said Kahn as he named his new subordinates with creative names which fitted their classes and appearance respectively. Instantly raising their loyalty towards him by 50%.

And all of them were Level 40 as both the original bodies were at least level 30.

Kahn then saw Omega looking at him with indignation as if he felt left out and forgotten.

Kahn gently patted the Dire Wolf's head and smiled.

"Don't worry, I still have different plans for you." said Kahn as he gazed at the bodies of the kobolds lying next to him. He let out a devilish smirk and spoke..

"Let's see who we get next."