

Darkness 241

Chapter 241 - The Hiring

Inside the luxurious magic vehicle where four humanoid figures sat on comfortable seats, an orc had a gobsmacked expression on his face.

The driver started the vehicle and their entourage continued the journey towards the battle arena which was still dozens of miles away.

"What?! I.. I don't understand." spoke Sirius with a serious face.

"Well, first tell me if you're married & do you have any children?" asked Kahn out of the blue.

Sirius was already losing his mind over the events of the past 20 minutes and now this sudden question caught him off guard again. But he quickly calmed himself and replied softly..

"I.. Don't. I never had a chance to date anyone so far. So I don't have anyone else than my parents."

"Oh, may I ask why?" asked Kahn.

"Well, to be honest.. My family was very poor. My father and mother worked as laborers throughout their lives and mine was the same since childhood. Having one meal a day was already hard for us.

Even so, they sacrificed a lot for me and sent me to school when I was young. Because unlike others of my race, I'm very weak and can't do much physical work.

And after I finally managed to get a job, I had to spend a lot of time working hard so I could give money to my parents and make their lives better.

It has been only a couple of years since I was promoted as the senior accountant after years of painstaking work and sleepless nights.

But all of it is gone now.. My life was destroyed today.." explained Sirius as a teardrop formed in his left eye.

Just in 10 seconds, Sirius covered his face and started sobbing suddenly, completely unfitting his image of a grown-up individual.

He was holding it in for some time already but with Kahn inquiring about this small personal topic, the sadness and shock that was welled up inside him finally burst out.

After a few minutes, Sirius finally regained his composure and apologized for causing an uncomfortable situation.

But instead of showing any form of annoyance, Kahn consoled Sirius and had an empathic conversation with him.

"To be honest, not so long ago; I too was in a similar situation as yours. I also spent 4 years working for a company that worked me to the bone but said that we're a team and family.

I was never paid for the extra working hours and had to suck it up when my superiors berated me psychologically. One mistake and all of my hard work of years was thrown out of the window.

Because of it, I basically had no life outside my work and didn't have people who cared for me either." sighed Kahn.

To someone like him who had been in the same situation as Sirius, he understood the mental state of the person in front of him.

During Kahn's old life as Elric when he worked as an accountant in a multinational company for four years, he was a total workaholic man.

And he had no life outside of work because he had to work even when he got back home given the tasks and workload.

He had suffered from that corporate slave life so he decided to help and hire Sirius who was a victim of the crime called being weak & powerless.

The chat continued for the next few hours and Sirius finally felt like a huge burden on himself finally lifted after the talk, no longer dwelling in the happenings of the day.

He didn't even care to find out why he was framed or how things happened the way they did. To him, it seemed like a good idea to move on. Or else, it would drag him down emotionally for too long.

[Master.. You're so cruel. I like it!] spoke Ronin in Kahn's head.

[Just smile and wave, boys. Smile and wave.]

Replied Kahn after he put Sirius in an emotional state.

[So effective. At this rate, he will become very grateful to you my lord. Not only did you become his savior, but also someone who shared personal feelings with.] said Omega telepathically through Hive Mind skill.

Kahn quickly replied back to the subordinates in his head in a coy tone.

[That's how you brainwash people into becoming dependent on you.

He will remember this conversation for some time. And later, I will hit the final nail in the coffin.] replied Kahn.

He didn't bother telling the subordinates that he was talking about his previous life in reality.

"I'm not going to lie. I don't expect you to be loyal to me just because we saved you from today's incident. I hope that I become someone worth following in your eyes. Till then.. All you have to do is follow my orders.

For now, I will give a million gold coins as your monthly salary and a 1% share of the annual profits my company makes. So what do you say?" said Kahn as he placed the terms of employment with an exorbitant salary from the get-go.

"W.. W.. What?!" exclaimed Sirius in disbelief.

[Even the salary I was previously getting was only one thousand gold coins! This sir is offering me thousand times more salary!

I'm not dreaming right?!] thought Sirius.

"I accept! I will serve you for the rest of my life!" pledged Sirius vehemently.

This was a godsend opportunity for someone like him who was dealt with a bad hand since birth, let it being born in poverty or having a weak body since childhood.

Sirius, who feared for his future at the moment because of what happened today, felt like all the misfortunes he suffered through till now were finally going away.

As for why Kahn wanted to hire him? It was only because of the empathy for him but he had to set up backup plans for the future.

Whether Kahn liked it or not, his participation in this tournament would definitely create plenty of new enemies and then, Kahn couldn't afford to get the Bloodborne company getting implicated.

And in case he or the subordinates were not present, he needed someone to be his replacement.

And Sirius who was in turmoil was the best choice. Kahn had already planned to brainwash him into becoming completely loyal to him in the future.

He was willing to invest in this new ally to create a trustworthy substitute for himself as a backup plan.

"I hope you prove your worth during the competition." spoke Kahn as he folded his arms.

"Sir, you're participating in the competition? You don't look like a warrior, rather an heir of a conglomerate." said Sirius as he stared at Kahn with a gaze of surprise.

"Yes, I am. And I'm not some heir. But a businessman myself. I don't mean to brag but I can be counted in the top one thousand richest people in this empire." said Kahn with a coy tone.

"Then why?" asked Sirius curiously.

To his query.. Kahn replied with a benign smile.

"Because I'm a very greedy man."

Chapter 242 - Let The Fight Begin

After Kahn revealed his intentions, there was no other choice left for Sirius but to accept his new employer's commands and sign a blood-bind contract with him on the spot.

Kahn then revealed his plans about what to do when they entered the arena and his own matches started.

One of the main reasons Kahn decided to participate was also to earn billions through the competition. Because even now, their forces and influence such as Bloodborne company or the Seven Deadly Sins underworld organization were powerful only inside one district.

And even there, they were lacking manpower and funds in case a full-scale war broke out in the future with powerful opposition or some noble clan.

Raising and feeding an army of their own wouldn't happen overnight and the amount of money as well as resources they'd have to spend would be manyfold greater than they currently had.

So instead of waiting for years to build their wealth, one of his main objectives was to use this competition and take a huge leap that would possibly save him decades of time and hard work.

He desperately needed funds and resources to the extent that they could rival one of the top clans in the capital. Otherwise, there was no guarantee that what they had now would be taken by someone more powerful and influential than them.

"How much did you bring?" asked Kahn to Ronin.

"15." replied Ronin.

"Please don't mind me.. But do you mean 15 million by any chance?" asked Sirius.

SMIRK

All three men in front of the orc gave a light smirk.

Gasp!

Sirius gasped in surprise..

"Hundred and fifty million?.. You're so rich!" exclaimed Sirius wide his mouth wide open.

"Aisssh.. This guy really looks down on us." rebuked Omega.

Ronin rolled his eyes in irritation and responded quickly.

"I mean..."

PETRIFIED

Sirius.exe stopped working at that moment and the middle-aged orc fainted on the spot as soon as Ronin told him the exact amount.

"Arrr... Was it too much to handle for him?" questioned Omega.

"We should've stuck with 15 million.." sighed Kahn as they carried on their travel.

While Sirius was unconscious, Kahn explained why he chose Sirius to work for him.

Both the subordinates nodded in approval after hearing the reasoning from their master who always liked to plan two steps ahead.

As soon as they reached the 10 kilometer vicinity of the battle arena that was surrounded by thousands of soldiers and more than a million people heading towards it, Kahn and the company left their vehicle to a security station and gave money to keep their ride safe.

Sirius woke up by then and the four individuals mixed in the crowd as they headed towards the battle arena.

Just from what Kahn could see from afar, the battle arena itself was 2 kilometers wide and 3 kilometers long.

There were 5 levels of platforms, hosting over a million seats for the audiences. And many flying ships that were part of the security forces hovered in the sky. While troops of thousands of soldiers managed the crowd at various checkpoints throughout the path.

And this was just one side of the entrance to the battle arena. Kahn didn't dare imagine the crowd on the other three sides.

After an hour of standing in the line, the group finally entered through one of the doors they finally saw the vastness of this place.

In comparison, this battle arena seemed 10 times bigger than a football field and there were multiple projection screens all over the arena, showing different battlegrounds which were 20 meters in length and width.

And from their position, he could see more than 600 of such battle rings which were magically reinforced with artifacts and formations.

"Take your sides and you know what to do next." ordered Kahn and left the trio behind him as he headed towards the hall made for facilitating the warriors who were taking part in this competition.

Since anyone could take part in this competition as long as they were certified as someone of a Beginner rank individual, Kahn could already see thousands of people varying from different races and species swarming inside the halls made for participants.

Kahn entered the hall for fighters in this section of the arena and showed his registration token that he got over a week ago.

"You're number 3,39,470. Wait for a few hours till your turn. Read the rules first.

If you don't appear on time, you will be disqualified." informed the receptionist.

Kahn then sat on a vacant chair and turned his gaze towards the betting booths.

Setting your bets was allowed at hundreds of booths placed over in hundreds of sections that divide the audience coming from different exits.

The rules were simple. For each match, there was 5 minutes time limit given to both contestants and one had to bring down their opponent by either fighting them to the point they would either get thrown out of the arena or you land a decisive blow.

A participant could also forfeit a match in case they felt danger to their life and willingly gave up based on the strength of their opponent.

The contestants could also put the opponent in submission and win the match just like a proper duel.

Since these battles were done with real weapons and skills, there was a rule to not kill the opponent.

Even injuries done to the opponent shouldn't be fatal or you will be imprisoned for attempted murder.

From the history records, only the semifinals had matches that allowed killing the opponent. But this was just the first round so things needed to be done without bloodshed.

One by one, matches started and over 1 to 2 thousand people were fighting on hundreds of magically reinforced platforms at once and their matches finished quickly.

Even their second rounds were done swiftly and the winners were given new tokens and their names were displayed on the projection screens floating throughout the arena.

After 4 hours of wait, Kahn's turn finally came and he walked on a floating platform that was used to deliver the fighters to their assigned battlegrounds based on the registration number.

When Kahn entered his assigned battleground, he was donned in a unique black archer gear, waiting for his opponent to show.

At this moment, Kahn telepathically commanded the subordinates and used a transmission artifact to inform Sirius to begin their first move.

A referee appeared on their stage and so did Kahn's opponent.

The referee had no time to waste and spoke hurriedly as the two participants glared at each other, trying to gauge the enemy's strength.

"Let the fight begin!"

Chapter 243 - The First Round

Kahn who was dressed in a normal gear for archers gazed at his opponent. In front of him stood a four-handed mithrans warrior who wore gray armor.

The lower right hand had a sword, the left one had a glowing spear while both the upper hands held a battleaxe together. The warrior in front of Kahn was a beginner master rank individual based on the aura he gave off.

[Not bad for the first battle. I can limit my strength and physical attributes to his level and practice all the skills I recently gained from those dead bodies of grandmasters and the skills I ranked up in archery. He's a perfect target practice.] thought Kahn while concealing his aura of a semi-saint.

The opponent in front of him was far too weak to even sense his real aura but Kahn still chose to conceal his strength in the early stages for various reasons.

"Let the fight begin!" announced the referee.

Both the contestants took their battle stances, the mithrans warrior took a defensive stance while Kahn pulled an arrow out of the quiver as he aimed towards the opponent.

But instead of attacking each other right off the bat, both of them stood in a standoff.

"Hey, I can tell you're hesitant to fight against me since you already know that I'm stronger than you. So how about you forfeit the match?"

It will save both of us our time and energy. We still have another match to fight against others. So why not save our strength rather than tire each other out?" spoke the mithrans warrior in a stern tone.

[This bitch!.. Should I go against the plan & swat him in the ground already?] thought Kahn.

He looked at the projection screen in their air where their battle was displayed for the audience.

Since it was the first match, their odds were 50:50 on the scoreboard for their fight.

"Who says you're stronger than me? Let's find out by exchanging blows instead of using words." replied Kahn and shot the first arrow at the opponent.

Swoosh!

An arrow passed right through the position where the mithrans warrior stood.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

The four-legged warrior who seemed like one of the oddballs who preferred to use a different type of weapons to gain attention and display their skills ran swiftly towards Kahn after doing the arrow.

[He's quick!] thought Kahn after the swift and agile movement of the opponent who was fast despite all that heavy armor and weaponry on his person.

Kahn quickly distanced himself from the opponent and shot multiple mana-infused arrows at the opponent while running away.

Boom! Boom!

Multiple small explosions happened as soon as the mithrans used his weapons to block or parry the incoming arrow at him.

An archer's best advantage was the distance and height in a battle while a melee combatant needed to close distance with the target first to actually deal real damage.

Even with the long spear, there was a lot of distance to be covered so the warrior didn't bother to waste time and sped up while trying to dodge the arrows aimed at him.

Since there was only 5 minutes window, both sides did not waste time and started a heated battle.

Boom! Clang!

Swing! Bang!

Each time Kahn shot different mana-infused arrows that worked as his best line of offense, shaking the ground whenever they hit the nearby area or the opponent dodged them.

But given the speed of the master rank opponent and the small size of the battlefield, Kahn was struggling to maintain a distance with time while his opponent charged at him and swung his weapons to seriously injure him from time to time.

Quickshot! Mana burst!

Kahn used some of the basic C rank skills to keep the battle interesting.

The loud explosions on their battlefield garnered the attention of thousands of audiences who were watching hundreds of different battles on projected screens.

"Master rank! Both of them are master rank warriors!" shouted hundreds of people within the audience of millions. And soon, half of the audience present in the arena started paying attention to their battle.

For the normal population, a master rank warrior was someone who could easily fight 20 people at once even at beginning levels. So naturally, they paid more attention towards their battle.

But in reality, it was Kahn using these explosive attack skills to gather their attention.

4 minutes passed in a flash.

[Alright.. The fish has taken the bait. Time to finish this!] he thought.

By no means his opponent was an unskilled fighter given his levels and rank.. But to Kahn.. He was simply too weak.

At his current level, Kahn could kill this mithrans warrior by suffocating him under the pressure of his aura alone. But with everyone watching, he had been keeping a front.

"Prepare to lose!" shouted the warrior and charged at Kahn with all his strength.

Crack!

His battleaxe cracked the ground where Kahn stood as the opponent dodged the attack in the last second.

Kahn quickly appeared behind the opponent and charged two arrows to shoot.

"Got you!"

SWOOSH!

The spear in his lower hand swung horizontally and almost grazed Kahn's abdomen.

Kahn quickly sidestepped and reached at one of the corners of the battlefield.

CRACK!

The floor tile cracked after Kahn barely dodged a swing from the battleaxe in nick of time.

But rather than making some lame monolog like an idiot, the mithrans warrior closed Kahn's exit route with his battleaxe and spear while Kahn on the other end ran out of arrows suddenly.

"Arrgg!" shouted the opponent and jumped high in the air as he swung down his battleaxe vertically, ready to cut the opponent in two with a single blow.

But before the battleaxe could fully land the blow, a high-pitched announcement came from the opponent which suddenly baffled the mithrans warrior.

It was none of than Kahn who raised both his hands in the air and shouted before the axe touched him...

"I've lost!"

Chapter 244 - The Gains

After Kahn lost, thousands of people who were attracted to their fight suddenly felt disappointed. Mostly because they wanted to see some blood at the end of the finishing blow the mithrans warrior was about to land on the archer.

"Tch! What a good for nothing.. He's only good at making flashy moves despite being a master rank fighter." complained one of the audience.

"He's just a quack! He lost the fight as soon as the opponent closed off the distance between them. He didn't even bother to make a last attempt and gave up. Ah.. I should've focused on some other match instead." complained a demonkin among the crowd.

Hundreds of people amongst those who paid attention to their match also shared the same sentiment. Like they weren't fed enough with good food.

On the battlefield, the mithrans warrior scorned Kahn in contempt.

"I already told you that you're weaker. You successfully wasted both of our time." he said and left the battlefield.

Majority of those who watched him fight thought that he is good but at a disadvantage when fighting against anyone with agility. That he only has burst skills at best. As long as anyone could avoid his attacks, victory was theirs.

BOOO!! BOOOOOO!!

Many people booed at Kahn as he got off from the battle ring and waited for his next turn in the resting area for contestants.

In just fifteen minutes, his turn came again and his opponent was also someone who lost their first battle.

But instead of looking at the opponent, his gaze landed on the scoreboard first and the betting ratio for the next match.

"Just as planned.." spoke Kahn softly and chuckled.

On the scoreboard.. The betting ratio was 80:20 for Kahn's next fight.

The 20 in front of his name while the 80 in front of his opponent who also had disclosed that he was an intermediate master rank combatant, unlike Kahn who kept the rank disclosed.

[Do it now.] he ordered Omega & Ronin who were at different sections of the arena, far away from his location.

Kahn then gazed at his left and he could clearly see Sirius standing amongst hundreds of people who were placing their bets on the next round of fighters.

He was the least betted upon at this moment. The ratio indicated that his odds were 4:1 as of now.

Means if someone placed money on Kahn and he won, they'd get four times the money they used for the best.

But given the previous match and those who already saw the results and noticed that the new opponent was a minor rank higher than him, it was clear as day about who would win.

[Master, it is done.] replied Omega telepathically.

[I'm done as well.] said Ronin.

While Sirius gave him an understanding gaze from the crowd.

Kahn took a deep breath and walked on the battle ring. His opponent was already stronger than him in the public eye so everyone thought about making a quick buck.

His opponent was a 28 years old brown orc with the upper half body of his was full of golden stripes. His 3 meter tall figure with golden gauntlets stood firmly in front of Kahn as he released his aura to show his dominance over the opponent.

"Concede and I will let you go. Try to fight and I will break both of your hands and legs.

Don't say later that I didn't warn you. The choice is yours.." spoke the orc in a rustic voice.

As soon as the referee started the match, Kahn threw away his bow and walked towards the opponent freely, having no care about fighting the opponent without a weapon.

There was no aura of dominance or power around him. He appeared like a harmless man approaching this tyrannical warrior.

"Oh? You're approaching me?" spoke the orc brawler with both his hands shrugged.

"Instead of running away, you're coming right to me?"

"I can't beat the shit out of you without getting closer." said Kahn in a grim tone as he

Tap! Tap! Tap!

"Then come! I'll show you who's.."

SLAP!

Before the tall orc warrior could even complete his sentence, a crisp slap resounded in the battle ring.

THUD!!

The giant body of the tall and ripped orc dropped outside of the ring. The referee and everyone who was watching this match had their eyes wide open in disbelief.

In just 20 seconds, the intermediate master rank orc who was fan favorite to win this match was lying unconscious outside of the ring.

All everyone saw was just a black flash and the next second, the orc opponent was thrown out of the ring.

"Yare yare..

I didn't even have to use my Stand for this guy." said Kahn as he tipped his imaginary hat.

Baffled! Gobsmacked!

Everyone watching this match lost their minds.

Kahn didn't bother paying attention to the audience's response and left the ring after he was declared as the winner.

After he returned to the resting area, an employee of the management told him about his next match that was scheduled 3 days later.

It was for all those who won only one match and had to appear for qualifier matches if they wanted to progress to the next round.

Kahn received his new registration number and information about the schedule of the match and silently left the battle arena.

He achieved what he came for, so he had no interest in wasting time here and watching weaklings fight among themselves.

At the time of midnight, the 3 allies returned to their vehicle and met Kahn who was waiting inside.

"How much?" he asked.

"1.2 Billion." replied Sirius, his body shaking in excitement. This amount was completely unfathomable to him.

"Well, this is just the beginning round and a city-level arena. So I only had you three bet hundred million each.

Not many would even have the gall to bet such a big amount for a first round unless they're from some big noble clan or a faction.

Let's say our first hunt was acceptable." explained Kahn.

He had the 3 of them bet on him and with the odds against him, they quadrupled the money gained.

This was exactly the reason why Kahn chose to lose the first fight and raise the betting odds against him in the first place.

"What's next, my lord?" asked Omega.

To his query, Kahn chuckled and said..

"We rig the fights."

Chapter 245 - The Scam

The first of the five rounds ended that night and the combatants who won both matches were registered for the second round that would happen next week.

And this was just the first day, the following two days would also host matches for the remaining participants.

After those matches, people who won only one match had chances to contend for qualifiers that followed the same format as per the rules and then they would move forward to the next round as well.

This rule was applied till the semifinals so as per his predictions, he could have a total of 12 tries and 24 matches if he played his cards right. Because after that, the top 10 thousand candidates would fight in Battle Royale matches and he won't have to hold back in betting as well as his strength.

And as the levels and ranks of opponents rose, more money would be involved that he would use to bet and earn three to four times his investment.

Kahn had already read and memorized all the rules so he planned the whole thing about losing the first match and then multiplying his money in the second match.

This way, Kahn would have more chances to bet on himself and he will win only the matches he must win to get in the next round and lose the other matches while having his people bet on the opponent.

In simple words, he was already rigging the fights.

The 1.2 Billion that he gained from the first round alone was actually pocket change compared to the wealth that he intended to gain through this competition and they will be earning billions through each of the matches.

Kahn already had a gist of what was happening behind the scenes.. Although the matches appeared fair and based on predictions and your luck.. There was bound to be someone like the government itself or the influential people running it pulling the strings from the shadows.

Because no way would anyone miss a chance to make a fortune that would make them filthy rich for generations to come. And he intended to do the same.

Since he couldn't get involved in these match fixings with the already established powers.. He would use himself as the bait instead.

Because he could choose whether to win or lose by his choice since there were literally only 5 other semi-saint rank people who had the strength to fight him on even terms in this competition.

The following day, Kahn had ordered his people to help Sirius and his parents move to their new house near his mansion and officially introduced him in the company as someone who would be 3rd in command after him and the subordinates.

Although Sirius wasn't the most experienced or the most talented one compared to his other employees... Kahn was already nurturing him with kindness and a sense of obligation.

Because a competent ally who was not loyal to you was a bigger threat than an incompetent one with utmost loyalty to you.

In many cases, the latter would even risk their lives to save you and support you when things have gone wrong.

And naturally, he knew that Sirius would work hard and sharpen his skills with time as he hadn't managed a company of this scale.

To Sirius, he felt like coming out of marshlands and now living inside a castle made for royalty.

In just a day, his entire life changed dramatically and a different world was opened to him.

Finally seeing his parents who sacrificed so many things for him and did their best to raise him despite being dirt poor get a comfortable life made him even more grateful to Kahn.

Because his family meant everything to him and Kahn had pulled them out of the gutter.

[I will repay his kindness in every way I can!] pledged Sirius to himself with watery eyes.

Inside his manor, Kahn gathered all of his subordinates who had unlocked a human form and took a meeting inside a room on the highest floor of the mansion.

"So do you all understand? We have to be untraceable and it shouldn't look obvious either.

If only a few people bet such a huge bet on me, it will be easy for the authorities to find that I'm fixing my own matches. And as I progress to later rounds, our bets will have to be bigger and the source of the money you will be betting on me might get questioned.

Because the people who already rig these matches wouldn't want someone else to do it either. So instead of getting noticed, we will do things this way. Any questions?" elaborated and asked Kahn to Omega and the generals.

"Why aren't we participating though, master? Wouldn't we also provide a better way to multiply our money if we had our people from Seven Deadly Sins bet on our matches as well?" asked Oliver who was sipping a glass full of wine.

"Too risky. Plus none of you have your identification and neither are any of you a human or some species. You're not hybrids either and variants like you have a different aura and world energy about them.

If I can sense it, then so can other powerful people such as Saints who will eventually come to watch the matches.

So it's better for me to be the spearhead than implicating any of you." explained Kahn.

Although Oliver indeed had a good idea, it was risky because their existence was already odd enough. And powerful people would indeed be able to sense them in case the subordinates failed to conceal their aura and presence.

It was even riskier when millions of people were watching them battle in the competition. So Kahn chose to not get any of them involved in the first place.

"We will do as you command. We will send more than ten thousand of our people and use them to bet on your matches.

Majority in small and hundreds of them in big amounts. So not one gets suspicious and it looks like a natural transaction." said Ronin with a nod.

"If I'm not wrong, we will be able to earn at least a couple of trillion gold coins throughout the competition. So let's set up a way for communication between our henchmen and you. During the fights, all you have to do is follow my commands properly."

spoke Kahn.

After he returned to his room and took out his new registration token, he spoke to himself with an evil grin.

"Dread it, run from it, Destiny still arrives the same."

Chapter 246 - The Qualifiers

On the day when Kahn's qualifiers matches were scheduled, he returned to Xaphar city but this time, his weapon of choice was different and so was his attire.

The arena matching system only registered the token given to the fighters and not their classes, appearances or levels.

More accurately... nobody cared for the first five rounds. If you're the person registered with proper identification, you can fight in any way you want. This was one of the rules since ancient times.

For today, Kahn had to win both matches to qualify for the second round. And today was the day he would practice his spearmanship skills while limiting his ranks and level to improve his weapon mastery and combat techniques that he had been rigorously training in from the past two months inside the training facility.

He wasn't ignorant anymore to rely on only one fighting style or just use swords for fighting. He had the blessings from the War Deity himself so it'd be a waste to not use them to become a warrior who was well versed in all weapons and combat techniques.

Improving his efficiency through practicing was one thing while actually using them to fight in a real-life battle was another. And hence this was also one of the three main reasons why Kahn chose to register for the competition.

After hours of wait, his turn finally came and he faced his next opponent.

In front of Kahn who dressed in gray armor and a long spear in his hand, stood a woman who used a whip made of metal chains and bones.

Three red horns on her head and a long tail coming out of her back identified her as a demonkin female whose long and violet hair fluttered in the air.

And just like her fiery red skin, her eyes also gave a hint of fierceness.

Since no one remembered him from 3 days ago and he was previously an archer, no dots were connected when his name appeared on the scoreboard.

This time, the odds were 2:1. One was for Kahn while 2 for the female Demonkin.

So in other words, if anyone bet on Kahn to win, they'd double their money.

When the referee signaled the match to start, Kahn quickly adjusted his strength to a beginner master rank just like the opponent and dashed in the direction of the opponent while avoiding the past and extremely lethal whip that could rip a big chunk of flesh with a single strike.

Swoosh!

Kahn jumped high in the air while maintaining a proper stance as he avoided a horizontal strike from the opponent.

But before he could close the distance, the red demonkin woman pulled back her whip and jumped backward, instantly creating a long distance while threatening her opponent by hinting an attack coming from his back.

Clang!

Kahn quickly parried a strike as soon as he landed. The whip suddenly changed its direction midair and almost got him.

[She's good. Infusing her mana with her weapon at the last moment when the opponent has left an opening while thinking that they dodged the first attack from the whip.

Anyone would think that they have a wide opening and chance to land a fatal blow but in reality, she has the best opening available.. The back of the opponent which is wide open. Just one strike to the head and she can knock them out.] thought Kahn as he carefully approached the opponent while taking a defensive stance.

For the next 3 minutes, all Kahn did was get himself familiar with her attack pattern and look for an opening.

He used a few skills to attack and defend while trying to create an opening using brute force.

[Gotcha!] he thought and what he did next was something that caught the female demonkin and the thousands of audiences who were watching their match on the projection screen.

Swoosh!

Instead of trying to close the gap, Kahn quickly threw his spear like a javelin with full speed towards the female opponent and aimed at her head.

Clang!

The opponent used her mana to reinforce the whip and created a protective shield around herself to defend against this attack.

BOOM!!

The mana shield broke up and Kahn's spear broke the mana shield easily. Showing how lethal his strike was.

"Argh!" groaned the woman as her wrist felt a shock after the impact.

Her body felt disoriented from the aftershock and her grip on the weapon loosened the next second.

Only 2 seconds passed since Kahn's attack and all her defenses were broken in a flash.

But before she could even turn her head towards the approaching enemy..

THWACK!

A strike landed on the female warrior's neck as Kahn knocked her out with a simple but effective strike with his bare hands.

During the three minutes he was attacking and defending, he notices a key flaw in the red demonkin woman's attack pattern.

That whenever she attacked, there was a 4 second window where she had no choice but to either pull back her weapon for another strike or use her mana to control the weapon and change its direction to land a proper attack against the enemy.

And that's why Kahn threw his spear towards her head and forced her to use the whip to either defend herself or deflect the spear midair.

And when she used it to defend her, the impact forced her to lose control and there was a lot of time delay before she could regain her composure and make another attack.

That is how Kahn quickly closed off the distance and a simple strike to her neck did the job.

"Winner is candidate number 1,03,762!" declared the referee and Kahn won the first match.

Although he didn't get to use many skills during the fight, him quickly adapting in such a short time and creating an opening was something worth counting for him.

It was the little things that helped you gain experience and become a good warrior.

So Kahn welcomed this small gain and gazed towards the scoreboard again.

But the next second, he felt a killing intent directed at him from one of the battle rings in the arena.

Instead of worrying, Kahn kept his calm demeanor and spoke in a mischievous tone..

"Looks like someone wants to pick a fight with me."

Chapter 247 - Know Your Place

Before Kahn could track down the source of the killing intent, it suddenly disappeared as if nothing happened.

But instead of dwelling on it, Kahn returned to the resting hall and waited for his next match. If some ignorant dumbass wanted to pick a bone with him, he'd entertain them.

After another hour, his turn came and for the second match, his enemy was a human mage whose face was covered behind a metallic mask.

And as soon as Kahn entered the ring, this mage released his aura of a beginner master rank magician which contained killing intent towards the opponent.

"So it was you.. Mind if I ask about why did you release a killing intent towards me back then?" asked Kahn as he recognized this aura.

It was the same killing intent he felt after defeating his previous opponent.

"Because you fight in a cowardly way. You threw away your weapon just to create an opening and then beat your opponent by knocking them out with a simple attack. It's as if you're toying disrespecting your enemy." spoke the mage in a righteous tone.

"And most importantly.. How dare you hit a woman on her nape? Don't you know they're very weak there?!" shouted the mage.

On the projection screens, this garnered the attention of many people again.

The previous fight was nothing out of the ordinary but this one seemed to have the drama involved in it.. So naturally many felt more inclined towards a spiced-up battle.

[Eh? Where the hell did this nut job come from?]

"Oye fuckface!.. Don't go around throwing your delusional thoughts and preferences on people about how they should fight.

There are no rules about how you fight and win against an opponent, let it be a man or a woman.

This is a competition where people put their lives on the line. And I don't care who you are trying to impress or putting up a pretense for.

Either fight me fair and square or go suck on your momma's titties!

And if you can't do that.. Then just shut the fuck up!!" berated Kahn in an irritated tone.

"Pfft!!"

"Hahaha!!"

"Huehuehue!!"

Thousands of people among a million spectators who paid attention to their match laughed off collectively and their burst of laughs resounded in the entire arena after Kahn's reply to his enemy which they heard on the screen.

"You.. What did you say?!" fumed the mage in rage.

Just in 10 seconds, Kahn embarrassed the upstuck and pretentious mage in front of everyone.

At this moment, there was a certain group of people amongst the east end of the 4th platform that was throwing deathly glares at Kahn after he publicly humiliated this mage.

"That bastard.. How dare he insult our magic association's youngest prodigy in front of so many people?!" scorned a female elf donned in mage robes.

Inside the battlefield, the mage was completely enraged and asked..

"You.. What's your name?" he asked in a contemptuous tone.

"Ask your mom. She screamed it all night." replied Kahn with a charming smile.

Another burst of the crowd laughing echoed in the whole arena as many of them could barely contain their laughter.

"Start!!" signaled the referee.

As soon as the fight began, the mage started casting his spells instantly and launched them at Kahn furiously.

He frantically attacked the opponent after the insults he endured.

As for Kahn himself.. He had zero fucks to give to some moron with protagonist syndrome.

And even after the first minute, not a single spell landed on Kahn as he was simply too agile despite limiting his rank and stats.

During the fight, Kahn was finally able to harvest the benefits of breaking through to the intermediate rank mage a month ago.

Because as he was facing this mage who was trying to hurt him with various spells like a rabid dog, Kahn was sensing what kind of spell the opponent was going to cast because of the rise in rank as a magician.

His perception of magical elements and spells based on their structure was already leagues above compared to others of his ranks thanks to the blessings from War Deity and all the hard work he put through over 2 months just for setting a solid foundation as a mage during his training period.

All that study and practice about mana manipulation and elemental structures was finally proving useful.

In simple words, he was able to sense what kind of elemental spell or attacks let it be fire or ice spells this mage was casting before they even formed completely.

And then he would choose to dodge or counteract and fight accordingly.

Meanwhile, Omega, Ronin and Oliver were sitting amongst the audience and ordering their people through transmission artifacts to bet on Kahn's registration number.

With an explanation that he was one of their chosen fighters for the competition and they had to bet all the money that was given to them on this young man.

During the last minute of the allotted time, Kahn decided to stop playing and charged at the mage with full speed.

Boom!!

Kahn used his spear to land a fatal blow on the ground and shook the battle ring. The shockwaves disoriented the mage and before he could even regain his posture, a swift and hard kick landed on his chest as he was kicked out of the battle ring.

"Know your place, trash!"

Know

The mage was frothing through the mouth and was barely conscious at this point.

Gasp!

Hundreds of gasps were heard among the crowd as they saw how quickly Kahn finished the fight and many could see that he was holding back till this point.

After the fight ended and he received his new registration token for the next round that was scheduled for the next week, Kahn silently left the battle arena.

Even the people from the mage's side failed to track him as they wanted to avenge their comrade.

At midnight, Ronin came back after collecting and tallying all the numbers.

"How much?" as Kahn

Ronin gave a light smile and reported..

"Today's haul is 8 billion gold coins, my lord."

As soon as Kahn heard the count, he took a deep breath and gazed at the bright midnight moon as he spoke with a content voice.

"Subarashi..."

Chapter 248 - The Descendant

Inside the western area of the innermost parts of the capital Rathna, a flourishing city full of mansions, luxurious hotels and well maintained market was situated. To normal citizens, it would appear like a high-class society residential area where the top 1% lived.

But in reality, it was just the main headquarters one of the strongest clans of the empire.. The Mikealson Clan of the Neutral Faction.

The amount of influence, power, authority, money and manpower this clan held was no lesser than the Vandereich Clan of the Pureblood Faction.

Although this clan didn't have a seventh stage saint or led the faction as a figurehead, it was one of the strongest clans of the faction and the clan leader himself was a 6th stage saint despite being nearly 70 years old and that too while belonging to the human race which had least life expectancy and potential to grow and breakthrough to saint rank.

In the northern region of this city, was a pearl white castle that felt like it touched the sky if anyone saw it from below and this towering castle itself felt like it was part of some fairy tale.

A lake surrounded this beautiful castle and waterfalls at the other end of this piece of great architecture gave it a majestic yet soul-soothing appearance if one looked from afar.

This was the castle where the clan leader and his closest family members and relatives lived together.

Flocks of blue crane-like birds passed by and the vast greenery around this 5 kilometers long ginormous castle looked simply heavenly.

In one of the towers of this grandiose castle, a young woman around the same age as Kahn, woke up and got out of her silky and king-size bed.

Yawn!

She yawned and stretched her body as she got out of the bed.

Her long black and silky nightwear gave her a mysterious and exotic appearance as she walked towards the door leading to the balcony.

As soon as she got out on the balcony, the gentle breeze fluttered her shiny black hair as she gazed at the morning with her charming blue eyes that were as deep as an ocean.

"Ah.. Such a lovely morning." said the beautiful woman as she embraced the beauty of nature around the castle, her melodious voice complimenting her appearance.

Her mind was refreshed as he breathed the air full of natural scent.

Her appearance was no different than an unparalleled beauty or a princess of some kingdom.

But what differentiated her from the so-called kingdom toppling beauties of the cliché cultivation stories was not her beauty or the alluring figure that would make any man fall for her at first glance...

Instead, it was the mild aura this graceful woman emitted out of her body. And this aura was something only a few people in the entire Rakos had to them.

This was the aura of a Semi-Saint rank person!

The young woman was one of the five known semi-saints under the age of 30 in the whole Rakos empire.

A true and talented genius of the younger generation of the Neutral Faction who was also the daughter of the clan leader of the Mikealson Clan.

"Today is my first round of matches. But it feels like it'd be a waste of time. How cruel of my father to not even give me the Recommendation Token..

Now I have to fight from the bottom and waste my time on useless stuff." spoke the woman.

Knock! Knock!

The door of his grand bedroom was knocked from the outside and a young man's voice was heard.

"Lady Cassandra, lord clan leader has summoned you for morning breakfast. Please be ready in 5 minutes." spoke a young blonde guy in his teenage years who clad in white and red knight armor.

"Coming!" replied Cassandra and her voice chimed in the room.

Creak!

Kassandra opened the door, dressed in a black robe for noblewomen and greeted the knight who was waiting on the other side.

"Oye Isaac.. Why are you suddenly calling me 'Lady Cassandra' and not 'big sister Cassandra' out of the sudden?" asked the young woman.

Cough!

"I'm no longer just your cousin who grew up together with you.. Now, I am a knight of the Mikealson clan who shall serve and protect it!" replied Isaac, the blonde-haired young knight as he looked upwards and closed his eyes with a prideful expression.

The joy was visible on his countenance.

"This punk!.. Do you want me to beat you again, you little twat?!" shouted Cassandra and pinched Isaac's ear.

"Aigoo! Stop! I'm only following orders.

You're no longer the young mistress of the clan but also the representative of the Neutral Faction in the competition. How can I still call you big sister?" spoke Isaac.

"Ouch! Let my ear go already!" he pleaded.

"Arrhh.. So irritating. Now I have to put up with these pretentious titles as well.." sighed Cassandra.

"Let's go." said Isaac and their duo headed down from the stairs.

When Cassandra was seated on the table for having breakfast, in front of her sat two figures. A man and a woman donned in epic rank mage clothes and gears, who appeared to be in their mid-40s despite their age being more than 70 years.

The man was none other than Cassandra's father, Damon Mikealson. Who was a 6th stage saint magician and also the clan leader of the Mikealson Clan.

The woman was her mother, Rainina Mikealson who herself was a 3rd stage saint enchantress.

"Greetings, father. Greetings, mother." spoke Cassandra in a hushed tone, not making direct eye contact with either of them. Her head was already down for some reason as if she was on a trial for a crime.

"Today's your first match. Don't slack off just because you had training experience with the saints of our faction." spoke her father in an authoritative tone.

"Remember Cassandra... you're not just representing our clan but also the neutral faction in the Emperor's Chosen competition.." said her mother.

None of them had any caring or favorable tone towards their own daughter.

"Do not disgrace our family name. And most importantly..." spoke her father.

But the next second, her mother spoke and continued what he was about to say in a commanding tone.

"You have to live up to the reputation of being the descendant of the First Sage."

Chapter 249 - The Determination

Inside the main castle of the Mikealson Clan, the clan leader and his wife reprimanded their daughter and commanded her to win the Emperor's Chosen competition no matter what.

This was more of an order than parents motivating their children to do better in an exam.

Kassandra had a solemn and obedient expression on her face, contrasting her cheerful and energetic attitude from before.

"Listen to me, Cassandra. You already know about the first sage, right? How much influence that name carries and how big responsibility lies on your shoulders if you represent us in that competition?" asked Damon Mikealson.

"Yes, lord father. I know." spoke Cassandra.

According to the history of the Rakos Empire and how it was founded by the first emperor, Rathnaar The Conqueror.. The sage was one of the most frequent names that came up in the ancient archives and historical books.

Lerzon Mikealson was a 9th stage saint magician, titled as the First Sage of Rakos Empire and also the right-hand man of the emperor who accompanied him during his conquest.

He was one of the founding members of the Rakos Empire and naturally, the Mikealson Clan became one of the founding pillars of the empire itself when it was formed a millennium ago.

If Kahn were to be here, he would've been gobsmacked after knowing that it was indeed the very first sage whose remnant will he met in the final floor of the Bromnir dungeon from Flavot city.

Lerzon Mikealson's remnant will or the last part of his soul was left within the Emperor's core that Kahn found after defeating the Magma Drake dungeon boss. It was him who turned the ownership of the Peak Saint rank Emperor's core to Kahn and chose him as his successor, making him the rightful heir to the throne.

But since the imperial family was rooted out and everyone related to it was killed in the Great War over a century ago, Kahn had no intentions to reveal anything about the peak saint's core that would spell his doom.

The First Emperor was close to becoming a Demigod back then before dying after 400 years of his age but even now, his name was still renowned in the annals of history.

He was someone so powerful that even the chosen heroes of the gods did not dare to mess with him in the past and hence, Rakos Empire was secured and allowed to flourish to the point that even after his death, no one succeeded to rule over it and no religious organization had taken the hold of this empire.

And Cassandra was the direct descendant of that very bloodline of the first sage.

Because of his history and deeds, the clan had survived even after the great war.

In fact, the Mikealson Clan betrayed and defeated the imperial family in the great war.

From the books Kahn read, he already knew about the history behind the Great War.

The 7th Emperor, ruler of that time and the imperial rule under him was very cruel for the common people and the Emperor himself had punished and killed many of his vassals out of jealousy or fear of them becoming a threat to his rule.

When things became intolerable, even the Mikealson clan that served the imperial family for more than nine hundred years, chose to join arms against the dictators.

Kassandra's grandfather made the decision to betray them for the sake of the future of the empire and its people. And even so, the Mikealson clan still managed to thrive under the rule of her grandfather who was the strongest mage of that time. And after his death, her father successfully took command and maintained their power & authority.

Currently, her father himself was the 2nd strongest mage of the empire, dwarfed only by an elven mage from the Pureblood faction despite being on the same rank as him.

So there was a rich history behind her family lineage. And Cassandra had to bear the burden of that name herself.

After Cassandra returned to her room, Isaac came to meet her again.

"How did it go? You're not gonna cry again, are you?" asked Isaac in a mischievous tone.

"You imbecile! Don't bother me." cursed Cassandra in an irritated tone, back to her usual self.

"Honestly.. Sometimes I wonder if they're even my real parents. No matter what I do or how many great things I achieve.. It's never enough for them." spoke Cassandra with a dejected and pained expression.

"I have worked hard since my childhood to make them feel proud of me. But even if after I became the first one of the youngest generation to become a semi-saint.. You know what they said?.."

"Not just them... but everyone said it's expected of the daughter of the clan leader.

And no one ever praised me for all the hard work I did by training myself for the past two decades tirelessly." she said and rested her head on the armrest of the chair.

"Well.. Big sister Cassandra.. That is the curse of being the clan leader's daughter. And on top of that.. Both of them are in the top 10 magicians in the empire.

No matter what you do.. You will always be compared to your parents one way or another." said Isaac with a stern tone as he rested his back against a wall.

Kassandra took a deep breath, trying to calm herself and regain her composure.

"Whatever it may be.. I'm going to win this competition." she said with a resolute tone.

"Why? I thought you hated the fact that they chose you as one of the representatives.." queried Isaac.

"Because this is an opportunity." replied Kassandra and walked towards the balcony again.

Her gaze landed on the heavenly scenery of nature in front of her as she slowly moved her fluttering hair in the wind.

"I don't want to win the competition for some prestige, popularity or some authority. I could care less about these faction wars.

But I have my own pride as well." spoke Kassandra and the next second, her countenance turned serious.

"Not just my parents or my clan. Not just other geniuses or the factions..

I want to win it to prove myself." she said and gave a smile towards Isaac who was nodding in support.

Her eyes were filled with determination and her heart filled with battle intent.

"And show everyone why they call me the number one prodigy of this empire."

Chapter 250 - Round Two

The next week, when the day for the allotted matches for round two finally came, Kahn returned to the Xaphar city's battle arena while being dressed as an assassin warrior.

After profiting over 9 billion gold coins that his people received, the first thing Kahn did was invest it in hundreds of real estate and agricultural land using the Bloodborne company's name under the pretense of expanding their business network.

While the remaining went into bribing government officials under the table to gain their favor in order to create a favorable impression and strong connections with people in high places using the name of the Seven Deadly Sins.

If both of his official & unofficial organizations had to flourish.. Kahn had to make sure that they were always ways to funnel the cash flow and in case they were in need of money.

And there was no better investment than the land and housing market where the prices would keep fluctuating upward with time and bring stable passive income on the side.

And he could also use these lands to build hotels, restaurants, houses and keep the money coming in a large amount.

"Have all our people gotten mixed in the crowd? And do they have enough money? We have to raise the stakes here." said Kahn.

"All has been taken care of, master." replied Omega obediently.

"Good. You three know what to do." said Kahn and ordered Omega, Ronin & Oliver to mix in between the audience.

Today, Kahn was going all the way in again. Because for the second round, more money and higher bets were going to be made as many strong warriors emerged after the first round separated them from the common weed.

When his turn finally came, Kahn's people placed a huge amount on his match where the odds were 50:50. Means you get the same amount of money you used in the bet.

And his opponent was a female archer who was dressed in black hunting gear. The only visible things on her face were the eyes. Everything else was covered under the hood and mask.

As soon as the battle started, Kahn quickly used invisibility skill and disappeared from the spot without leaving a single trace.

Since there were no shadows present on the battle ring, he could not use Shadow Walk skill here and to make matters worse, the opponent was an archer who had tracking skills such as footprint tracking and body heat sensory skills.

This time, Kahn had no choice but to quickly finish the match before his activation time ended and he was exposed.

So before the opponent could even track his movements down, he used his real strength and appeared right behind the female archer without even making a sound as he used the Shadow Strike after so many months.

This was a skill that allowed you to teleport to the target's shadow directly and you could make a lethal attack from behind.

It was also one of the skills he used during the fight with Solomon and killed the semi-saint mage.

As soon as he teleported behind her, Kahn waited for the invisibility skill to end as his opponent was still trying to figure out his location.

Clack!

As soon the skill time ended, Kahn's dagger appeared right on the neck of the female archer and for a second, he released his aura on her.

"Admit defeat." spoke Kahn in a deathly tone as his opponent was petrified from the intense pressure, unable to move in the slightest.

As soon as his aura waned, the female archer dropped on the ground and declared her loss. Her legs still shaking from fear of Kahn's murderous aura.

The Hive Mind skill allowed him to communicate with his subordinate within 5 kilometers radius so the three subordinates easily heard his command.

In dozens of seconds, a loud cheer resounded from the different corners of the crowd of a million audiences.

All the 5 levels of platforms made for the audience, each of which was as large and wide as an entire football stadium encircling the six hundred battle rings were filled with loud cheers.

"Look at that guy! He's so skilled that he defeated his opponent in just 20 seconds and she didn't even sense him till the very end." spoke an elf.

"That guy is good. I didn't even see him coming behind her." spoke a bearkin on the other end of the arena on the 3rd floor.

Soon, hundreds and then thousands of people pointed out towards Kahn's match and the projection screen also displayed how quickly he defeated his opponent with sheer speed and accuracy to the point that his opponent didn't even see him coming until a dagger was placed on her neck.

After causing this small rouse, now half of the audience had been informed and many paid attention towards his match. This instantly made him popular amongst the audience and the masked assassin in black garnered the attention of a few hundred thousand people in just a few minutes.

Kahn left the battle ring after he was declared as the winner and headed to the resting area to wait for his next match.

In competitions like this.. Popular opinion swayed the audience many times than true skills and combat prowess. And that's exactly what Kahn had planned for the first match.

In other words, Kahn was hyping himself as a contestant who was said to be very strong and with better chances to win. Not every participant could get that much attention so just one guy getting praised and acknowledged by thousands of people at once seemed like he truly had the ability.

[How much did we earn?] asked Kahn to his subordinates while sitting inside the resting area as he waited for his next match that would happen in a few hours.

After ten minutes, Ronin finally tallied the numbers received from their people hidden in the audience.

[Master, we have gathered 5 billion from the match. What do you want us to do now?] asked Ronin who was sitting in the crowd.

"Do you even need to ask me? Let the odds become clear first. After that.." spoke Kahn softly and continued..

"We will be swimming in gold."