

## **Darkness 251**

### **Chapter 251 - The Disappointment**

TWO HOURS LATER

As soon as the next batch of battles was ready, the hundred or so betting booths were again open for the business and soon, the scoreboard as well as the betting odds were revealed for the audience.

90:10

Kahn's betting odds for his next round shocked thousands of people checking it. However, this time it was him at favorable odds instead of his opponent.

These odds were even bigger than his first match. And due to the previous commotion, many people had chosen to bet on him after the impeccable display of speed and skills in his previous match.

When Kahn entered the battle ring, in front of him, stood a four-meter tall intermediate master rank Botir warrior whose entire body was covered in a gray exoskeleton armor from head to toe. And in his hands, was a large warhammer.

He looked at Kahn with eyes full of scorn because based on betting odds.. He was considered very weak as the 9 out 10 people bet on Kahn instead of him.

For someone like him, it was a form of insult and he was thoroughly furious after being looked down upon by a few hundred thousand people sitting amongst the audience.

Six hundred other matches were happening but none of them had betting odds differing by this lot.

"You.. I will beat you into a mush and show everyone here that I'm not some weakling." spoke the botir warrior in a threatening tone. His deep and hoarse voice was filled with wrath and malice.

"Begin!" spoke the female foxkin referee.

**BOOM!**

The opponent released his aura and leaped in Kahn's direction.

**BANG!**

His huge arms hit the floor and sent shockwaves all around the battle ring and Kahn barely escaped it by hair's breadth.

At this moment, Kahn too had limited his strength and stats to Intermediate master rank in order to test his limits.

Since no external tools such as smoke bombs or any other equipment than your primary weapons were allowed, he appeared to be in pinch right from the start.

"Come here you insect! Let me crush your bones!" he shouted and charged after Kahn who was trying to create distance between them.

**SCHRRRR!!**

Kahn's daggers collided with the opponent's broad hands and sparks appeared at the point of friction.

Kahn was instantly flung backward and he tried to adjust his footing.

But the next second, his figure disappeared from the spot and suddenly, the botir warrior felt his body disoriented out of the blue.

Kahn appeared right above this four meter tall opponent's head and tried to pierce through his shoulder. But his attack was stopped by the stone-like armor that covered most parts of this botir's body.

Grab!

The botir warrior grabbed Kahn's right leg and swung him towards the other end of the arena after Kahn kicked his head and tried to injure his shoulder.

If not for his inborn armor-like body, he would have been gravely injured and then unable to fight furthermore. And if the rules allowed killing, he was certain that Kahn would've struck the dagger in his nape instead.

Kahn quickly cemented himself on the ground and then rushed towards the opponent at full speed.

Currently, all he could use were the B rank and below skills, as nobody below Grandmaster rank could A Rank or above skills so he had to fight while using the most basic ones. Otherwise, he would've won the match in the first ten seconds alone.

The spectators were glued to their seats because it hadn't even been a minute and both Kahn and the botir warrior has engaged in an intense battle.

Many people started cheering for Kahn because he was the one many of them had bet on. And a normal human fighting toe to toe with a botir was a rare sight to see as well.

The opponent readied himself and created an aura shield around himself, leaving no opening around his body.

[Templar! He's a Templar!.. So he was hiding his original class by not using a sword or a shield. What a cheeky bastard..] thought Kahn and smiled under his black mask.

Aura Shield was one of the signature skills of the Templar class fighters and hence Kahn quickly guessed the real class of the opponent.

For the next two minutes, Kahn made preemptive strikes and kept the opponent constantly moving and defending against his fast attacks.

Although the botir had a massive advantage over brute strength and defense.. He was completely lacking in speed and accuracy of attacks as his giant body itself restricted many of his movements.

"Argh!" groaned the opponent as Kahn successfully managed to cut off his tendons and pierced the gap under his right shoulder.

Even the audience was taken aback by how the situation turned around so quickly. The seemingly impenetrable botir warrior was already on his knees against this small and lean human assassin who had only a few set of attacking skills.

"Admit defeat or I will go for the shoulder.

Although it won't kill you, it will decommission you for a long time. And it will hurt even more." said Kahn loudly. His voice resounded through a part of the arena.

"Hah! I dare you to try." spoke the opponent.

Swoosh!

The next moment, Kahn disappeared and revealed himself behind the back of the botir warrior and stabbed his spine.

Crack!

But instead of injuring the opponent.. Kahn's dagger broke and it failed to penetrate the spine.

"Ha.. Idiot. Our back is where we are sturdiest. " spoke the botir and quickly turned around, catching Kahn off guard.

Both of his giant arms caught Kahn in a deadlock before he even had a chance to retreat.

"You're lucky that people are watching. Otherwise, I'd crack your bones and bury you under the ground myself." whispered the opponent as swung his entire body and threw Kahn high up in the air.

Thud! Thud!

In front of a hundred thousand onlookers..

Kahn was thrown out of the battle ring.

Ding!

"The winner is no. 2,98,370!" declared the referee and with this, the botir warrior won the match.

Gobsmacked!

Many people among the audience were left speechless. Mainly because they had spent a lot of money when they bet on Kahn.

But the fan favorite lost the match over small error in judgement.

Thousands of people who had bet on him started cursing and hurling abuses at Kahn for losing the match as he returned to the resting area.

Kahn quickly changed his attire and left the resting area as a mage whilst avoiding the people who wanted to find him and cause trouble because they lost a lot of money.

After he exited the arena, Kahn contacted Ronin.

"So?"

[Master.. By the looks of it.. I can say one thing for sure.]

"What is that?"

To his question, Ronin replied coyly.

[That you're the best scam artist ever!]

### **Chapter 252 - True Winner**

After Ronin's remark, Kahn felt a sense of relief. Because from the words of the rogue subordinate, he could infer that their earnings were indeed big.

"So how much?" he asked.

[If we count the original investment along with the profits.. It's 50 Billion gold!

We've made a killing.] responded Ronin.

"Good. Get everyone to leave the arena one by one. Gather all the money and meet me at the mansion." ordered Kahn and hired a flying beast service to leave the Xaphar city.

Even with the Bloodborne company and Seven Deadly Sins together, their profits up to this point were only 15 Billion after all the costs and expenses were cut down.

But just in the second round alone, Kahn had tripled their profits and now achieved wealth comparable to a reputed noble clan on city level.

And all this happened because he had planned it since the very beginning.

In reality, it was his plan to raise the odds after the first match dramatically when he quickly won against the female archer.

After his win, Ronin, Omega and Oliver ordered thousands of their people from seven deadly sins who were mixed amongst the audience through the communication artifacts.

And soon, all of them started praising Kahn from different parts of the arena and vocally brought the attention of many people towards his match that was displayed on projection screens.

More than two hundred thousand people ended up getting fooled because of his sudden rise in popularity and impeccable display of skills.

And when his next match came, the already roused crowd that was systematically made to believe in his strength ended up betting most of their money and hence, Kahn's odds were raised to 90:10.

So what Kahn had the three subordinates do was order their people to bet all the money they received from the first match on his opponent.. The Templar botir warrior.

And after his defeat, those who bet on the opponent, let it be his own people or the normal audience, made a fortune.

So the five billion they bet on the opponent became forty-five billion after getting multiplied by 9 times.

And just in one day, Kahn changed the fate of a district-level organization to a moderately influential clan as far as wealth was concerned.

And since his face was hidden behind the mask, no one knew his real appearance. Only the registration number that was changed after the second match for him to appear for qualifiers if he wanted to progress to the third round.

And there, he would still have a chance to increase his wealth thanks to the betting system.

This way, Kahn has worked his way into people thinking that he is a nobody but in reality, his personal wealth was enough to make him one of the top one thousand richest people in the whole empire.

Although he wasn't comparable to the powerful noble clans or faction members, he was still working his way through by using this competition. Because one day, he wanted to have his own force that would ensure his safety and authority.

So that no noble clan or any would outright oppress him because he does not have a strong background or a powerful backer.

Behind the curtains... he was the true winner.

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Apart from Kahn and his subordinates, no one actually knew how much money they had amassed from these matches because their people only knew about the money they were given and what they won after the results. But no one could even fathom the collective numbers.

At midnight, Kahn returned to the mansion and received the daily reports from the subordinates about the company, the seven deadly sins organization and how Sirius was doing his work as a new recruit.

Ceril and Jugram had been in charge of managing and protecting the company and its assets while Armin was busy practicing his Alchemy skills and doing research as usual.

Blackwall and Rudra were hidden inside Kahn's shadow while Omega, Ronin and Oliver were in charge of managing their underworld empire as well as collecting the money.

This affirmed Kahn that his decisions in the past were right and he could focus on himself. The most important and also the hardest thing at this point was increasing his levels since he was still level 150.

Because even SS Rank the cores he was eating on a daily basis hadn't helped him level up in the past month at all.

If this continued, he wouldn't be able to become a saint until another year at this rate.

After receiving all the reports, Kahn ordered the generals to bring more people to the matches because soon, the number of strong people who qualified for the 3rd round will be revealed.

And then the money spent on bets and the benefits one would receive was many times bigger than what he currently had.

Three days later, when Kahn had to fight again in the qualifiers for the third round, he had no choice but to win the two matches he was having.

Because of which, the profits he made were only 20 billion gold coins and he officially became part of the 30 million combatants throughout the Rakos Empire who qualified for this round.

But what surprised him was the sudden turn of events that was done by the government out of the blue.

From the third round.. The matches would be facilitated in the top 10 most economically rich districts in the capital.

Kahn understood that these were the districts with the biggest influx of commerce in the whole empire so naturally, the wealth invested during the matches in these places would be enormous.

From a financial aspect, this was indeed a smart move by the government. And for a match-fixer like Kahn.. This was a golden opportunity.

Kahn then revealed his intentions to the subordinates in their usual meeting room.

He spoke with a sinister expression and the greedy side of him visible on his face..

"Time to play in the big leagues."

### **Chapter 253 - Third Round**

In the following week, the third round for the competition was about to happen and millions of contestants who successfully qualified for this round flocked towards the top 10 districts of the capital Rathna.

Kahn's matches were allotted at the district named Erantel, one of the top 10 districts of the capital that was known for food and spice markets. It was also the 4th most economically successful district throughout Rathna since it was the central hub for the majority of the provisions and material supply exchange points.

As a result, the lifestyle of this district was costlier as well as more high profile compared to the majority of the districts in the capital.

The architecture and lifestyle of the residents in this district differed by a lot and the more advanced modes of transportation and utilities were used by the general population. Let it be flying ships or magic trains of the highest quality, everything was accessible.

For the battle arena that would host the third round, it was situated in the city named Marley. But for some reason, the citizens of this city were addressed as the Marleans by the common folk.

When Kahn traveled to the battle arena in this city, he had no choice but to enter as a swordsman for two major reasons.

One being that many contestants from this round were mostly above intermediate rank fighters and some were even peak master rank warriors.

Whilst there was a group of popular combatants as they were backed up by some major forces and corporations while the elite group amongst them were the heirs of prestigious clans and conglomerates.

The second reason being the top powers throughout the empire would start paying attention from this round as this was the stage where the fine crop of the empire was separated from the posers.

Someone like a beginner master rank individual would not be considered a big deal here and about 40% of the participants were to be eliminated based on the format.

But if Kahn were to be noticed by them, he won't be able to switch fighting styles from now on. Or else, his secret will be open to people as these matches were bound to garner more attention of the audience and someone switching weapons and fighting style would definitely be noticed by many.

Those who could use different weapons and combat techniques were never the master of any. So it would be questionable when he fought in the final rounds with the full extent of his abilities. Thus going back to fighting with a sword was his only viable option.

So Kahn decided to use a rare rank sword for these matches for now instead of taking Lucifer out. Hence, he would fight the remaining matches of the competition as a swordsman, the weapon he had the highest-ranked skills and abilities in.

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Ronin and Omega had spent millions for getting around fifty thousand people from their organization to travel and enter the battle arena as audience and the fifty billion gold coins had been distributed between them.

A chain of command was formed to inform their people on whom to bet and what to bet for. So that they would reap the maximum returns based on the result of Kahn's matches.

To most of them, Kahn was just a chosen representative who fit the qualifications to partake in the competition, a trojan horse whose sole purpose was to make them money by winning and losing matches.

Little did they know that he was actually Zeus, their main boss who they had pledged loyalty to and have been working for ever since the Sins took over Hydra.

After hours of waiting, Kahn's turn came and odds for the first match were 70:30 for him because of his previous match history.

While the opponent he was facing had won all previous matches and hence, the odds were in their favor. But this was also what Kahn wanted as well.

[Go all the way in.] commanded Kahn and the generals and Omega relayed his commands to their people.

As for the opponent, it was another mithrans warrior whose upper body was covered in heavy metallic armor but the lower half had legs and the stinger of a scorpion. A halfbreed between two different types of species Kahn's assumption was correct.

In his hands, were two big cleavers that were enough to cut a man in two with a single swing. And his 3 meter tall figure was as scary as it could be if someone hated scorpions.

The intermediate master rank opponent entered the battlefield while Kahn only released the aura of a beginner rank master for the sake of making his opponent look down on him.

"Begin!" spoke the Wolfkin referee and the match started with a loud declaration.

Kahn dashed towards the opponent without waiting another second. His opponent on the other end used his aura and covered both his cleavers under a dense layer of mana that granted it the wind attribute and he made a slashing move in Kahn's direction.

Windcutter!

Kahn activated the windcutter skill and attacked back with his own highly compressed wind element blades.

Flutter! Flutter!

His clothes fluttered as both the attacks canceled each other out after clashing. The opponent sped up his crawling movements and quickly closed the distance between them.

Cling!

His swinging attack aimed for Kahn's head but it was parried in the last second by the sword of the opponent.

But without giving any room to retreat, his other cleaver slashed horizontally towards Kahn's torso, trying to fatally injure him.

Minutes passed as both of them tried to make a decisive hit but both he and the opponent were equally matching in attacking prowess and agility. And the mithrans had a poisonous stinger that he would use time to time whenever he had the chance.

"Admit defeat or we both will be disqualified." spoke the mithrans opponent.

"Let me ask you something.. Would your legs grow back with healing potions?" asked Kahn after parrying another swing from the opponent.

"What?! I guess.. Yes?" spoke the opponent in a confused tone.

"Good. I apologize for the pain." said Kahn and the next moment, he raised his aura and used the Executioner's Gaze skills after a long time.

Paralyzed! The opponent was paralyzed on the spot.

Swing! Swing! Cut!

One by one, Kahn quickly swung his sword like a seasoned veteran and cut off the opponent's legs swiftly as the mithrans couldn't even move a muscle.

Despite the pain, the mithrans opponent couldn't scream in agony and Kahn quickly decommissioned the enemy by cutting 6 of his legs.

He then quickly placed the sword on the opponent's neck.



"Winner is candidate 5,67,930!" declared the referee as Kahn had successfully subdued his opponent and as per the rules, he was the victor of this match.

As soon as the match was over, Kahn quickly took a high-grade recovery potion out of his space ring and put it in the opponent's mouth.

The potion started working in a minute and the bleeding stopped. The mithrans warrior finally regained control over his body and looked at Kahn with a hateful expression.

Kahn smiled back instead and spoke in a mischievous tone.

"Consider this as your insurance covering the hospital bills."

### **Chapter 254 - Public Enemy**

After he won the match, Kahn waited for the next few hours for the second match. By his estimations, the profits from his previous match should've doubled the money easily.

[Omega, have our people collected all the money?] asked Kahn telepathically.

[Yes my lord, we haven't tallied yet but the numbers are above 100 billion.] responded Omega who was mixed within the crowd.

[Good. Wait for my orders till the odds for my next match are out.] he ordered.

Another hour went by and Kahn's turn finally came. But as soon as the scoreboard and his odds were revealed.. His jaw hit the floor.

Kahn's odds were... 90:10.

[What the fuck?! I already won a match. Why are my odds so low?] he thought.

Then he sees the scoreboard and his enemy. And he came to understand the situation with a face full of disbelief.

His opponent was a girl dressed in a pink frock with white stockings that revealed her slender legs, even the sword in her hand appeared pristine.

Although she was a peak master rank fighter, despite being 2 to 3 years older than him, her physical appearance was on the cute and bubbly side. Making anyone from the opposite gender embrace and protect her at all cost.

But this wasn't enough to drastically affect their betting odds. When Kahn looked around the arena.. He realized the exact reason why he was not anyone's favorite for betting.

Because among the crowd, he saw hundreds of banners and people varying from different ages, species and sizes wearing the same type of clothing that fit them. And the words written on these clothes declared the name of the group of nearly 20 thousand people among the audience.

Historia Weiss Fan Club!

[Damn it! Even this world has those fucking weeb?!] thought Kahn with a flabbergasted expression.

"Step on me, miss Historia!!" shouted a fat and ugly young guy among the audience as he waved a cutout of Historia above him.

[Master.. What should we do? I just found out about her background.

Historia Weiss is an heiress of one of the native noble clans. Not only is it popular and influential in the Erantel district. This is Marley city is actually her home ground.

If you win against her.. We're definitely going to attract a lot of hatred and will be eventually targeted one way or another.

But on the other hand.. The odds are too high for her. If you win.. We will multiply our earnings many times.

So what do you say?] reported and asked Ronin.

[Damn it!! I was going to lose this match to fight in the qualifiers again, but now.. There won't be a better chance of getting odds in our favor by this much.

Go all the way in!

As for the aftermath... prepare an escape route for me in the meantime. I only need to be alone out of everyone's eyes for a few minutes.] commanded Kahn.

[Yes, master. I will take care of it.] replied Ronin.

This time, the battle rings were 50 meters wide in length and breadth, indicating that the stakes were higher and the battles would be intense.

Kahn dressed in his black and golden longcoat with gear made for swordsman fighters walked to the battle ring with thousands of gazes at him.

This was the turf of the opponent so naturally, a hundred thousand clan members of hers and also her fanboys were already part of the audience that were cheering for her.

Their vehement support already gathered the attention of most of the crowd in the whole arena of a million people. And Kahn being one of the people in the center of attention.

"Boooo!! Die you scum!"

"This trash dares to fight our Goddess?! Let me give him a piece of mind!"

"Get lost, loser!"

One by one, hundreds of people started insulting and hurling abuses at Kahn.

Even in his previous life of an Otaku as Elric.. Kahn never fell into that cycle of joining such clubs and idol support stuff. Because he thought it was too extreme and one should focus on their personal life rather than wasting time, money and energy on these things where the idol or celebrity you support wouldn't even know or remember your name and face in their entire lives.

But now, he was on the receiving end of their hatred.

It was like saying you don't like BTS while standing in the middle of South Korea.

The risk of getting killed by the public was too high in such cases.

Kahn looked at the audience where a few thousand men were looking at him with their eyes fired up and full of malicious intent as if they wanted to shred him to small pieces.

On top of that, she's an heiress of a popular clan so the popularity spread among the masses was already too much for someone like him who wanted to lay low and do things quietly.

When he stood in front of his opponent, the killing intent from thousands of men was directed at Kahn even before the match began. He was already public enemy no. 1 before even doing anything.

Historia from the other end gave an enarming smile, her cute appearance on the projection screens melted the hearts of many young men in the audience.

But as soon as she gave Kahn a proper glance. She noticed his well-toned body and handsome face. She was stunned for a while and kept staring at him from a distance.

"Ara Ara.. Such a handsome man. Do you want to have dinner with this big sister here?" spoke Historia in a cute and seductive tone that caught Kahn off guard.

Stunned! Kahn was stunned and rooted on the spot. This sudden invitation by Historia came out of the blue. As if getting hated by so many people at the same time wasn't enough.. She was pouring oil into the fire.

At this moment, Kahn thought in his mind with a bewildered expression on his face..

[Fuck! She's a Ara Ara Onee-san!]

### **Chapter 255 - The Poser**

Kahn's battle with Historia started under the gazes of half a million people since one of the famous prodigies of this district was fighting in this against a no-name outsider.

Kahn was relieved about the fact that he wasn't a Shota-kun. Otherwise, every man of culture knew how the story would progress when facing this Ara Ara Onee-san.

"Begin!" spoke the female elven referee and both the fighters started the match.

"Hey... what is your name?" asked Historia.

"It's Kahn." he replied.

"Why don't you admit defeat? I wouldn't want to hurt that handsome face of yours." said Historia as she gave him a wink.

Kahn sighed with an exasperated expression. He knew that she was only putting up a front for the audience. Trying to act all lovely, kind, cute and also desirable.

"Fight or get lost!" replied Kahn.

"Everyone.. I tried to be kind and gave him a chance to concede. But he doesn't appreciate my goodwill.

What should I do with him?" asked Historia to the audience.

"Beat him!"

"Kill him!"

"Ungrateful peasant, accept the mercy our goddess is showing you!" shouted people from the fan club.

"He dares to challenge our young mistress?! Show him his place!" shouted a member of the Weiss clan.

Another volley of abuses and insults were launched at Kahn from the audience.

"Then that's what I shall do." said Historia softly and released her pink aura of a peak master rank fighter.

She started moving her sword in a vertically circular motion and amassed an aura incorporated sword attack.

"Here, take this!"

Love... Beam!!" she shouted and launched the sword aura attack towards Kahn.

[What the fuck?! What kind of nonsensical attack name is that?] thought Kahn as he quickly sidestepped and avoided the pink beam of aura skill.

"Oh.. So you dodged my attack. Then try dodging this!" she declared and started gathering aura around her sword again.

But this time... her movements were flashier and graceful and soon, she completed her skill movements.

Flabbergasted... Kahn was left flabbergasted on the spot. Because the shape of Historia's attack was a.. Heart.

Yes, in front of her, a heart-shaped blob of condensed aura was gathered and she made a swinging motion towards her enemy.

"Heart... Breaker!!" shouted Historia with grand attacking gesture.

Kahn covered his eyes with left palm as he was completely frustrated at this point. He then made a vertical slashing movement with his sword and used the windcutter skill at the incoming heart-shaped attack.

RIP!!

His wind blade quickly cut the aura skill in two and the attack evaporated in the air.

"Ah.. She's a quack. I wonder how she even reached the master rank.." spoke Kahn to himself.

At this moment, even some of the strong fighters from the resting area facepalmed themselves after looking at these attacks.

Both of the attacks were far weaker and fragile compared to when Kahn learned the swordsmanship skills at peak master rank.

As per Kahn's judgment, both of Historia's moves were only created for the sake of appearance. Too flashy but no force or precision behind the attacks.

He was thoroughly disappointed with Historia at this point.

As someone who spent hours training himself in weapon skills and combat techniques on daily basis despite having the blessings given by the goddam War Deity himself, this experience felt like an insult to all the hardworking sword fighters around the world.

She was like an overhyped product by excessive marketing but actually didn't have any quality or substance to it.

[Fine. I'll do it myself.]

Thought Kahn and charged at her with full speed, he too revealed his skills and attributes of a peak master rank warrior for the first time.

Even on the same level, he was already many times skilled and experienced compared to this Daddy's Little Princess who was giving a bad name to all the female swordswomen.

Swing! Slash!

Kahn quickly attacked her vital points as soon as he appeared close to her.

Clink!!

Historia barely managed to defend against his horizontal slash after getting caught off guard.

"Oh my... you're nothing but a poser who doesn't even know how to fight. I wonder how did you even become a master rank swordswoman." teased Kahn.

Sparks flew in between their swords as Kahn forced her to step back.

"You're so bad that I feel offended sharing the battle ring with you." spoke Kahn with an irritated face.

"Why don't you admit defeat? I wouldn't want to hurt that hideous face of yours." said Kahn as he smirked.

**GASP! SHOCK!**

Tens of thousands of people gasped at the same time as Kahn openly insulted the heiress of the Weiss clan.

"You.. What did you just say?! Who did you just call hideous?!" exclaimed Historia in rage as her eyes burned with hatred towards Kahn.

"I don't see anyone else here." replied Kahn and kicked her in the stomach.

"Arggh!" groaned Historia in pain as her entire body was flung towards the other end of the battle ring.

"Hey.. Shoo!! Get out of here. I don't have time to waste on a pretentious clown like you."

He again insulted the opponent, rubbing salt on her wounds.

Historia adjusted her footing and gazed at Kahn with an infuriated expression.

For the first time in her life, she was insulted and publicly humiliated. And that too in front of a crowd of a million people together.

Her scornful face was visible for everyone to see and many people stopped paying attention to other battles and their gaze shifted to the projection screens that were displaying Kahn's battle.

"You.. I'll never forgive you! Come fight me to death if you dare!" screamed Historia and a murderous aura was released from her body.

Not just her but hundreds of people from her clan sitting amongst the audience directed their killing intent at Kahn at the same time.

If it was someone else, they'd fear for their lives but to a semi-saint like Kahn, all these killing intents were as thin as a paper.

"I.. Don't." replied Kahn coyly.

"Why?! Not man enough?" asked Historia as she started walking towards her opponent.

"Not exactly... the thing is; if I fight you to death..." he spoke with a benign smile and continued...

"I might kill you with a slap."

### **Chapter 256 - True Colors**

After Kahn's declaration, not just Historia but all the onlookers were baffled and the majority had their jaws wide open. Even for people who didn't pay attention to this match before.. This was too much to accept.

On the surface, both of them were peak master rank fighters but from his words.. He was implying that Historia wasn't even a real deal.

And saying that he could kill her with a slap hinted that she was nothing but a con and had no real strength.

"Heeey!! Now I'm not even going to care about the rules. I'm going to kill you with my own hands!" shouted Historia and pointed her blade at him as she activated all her offensive and burst skills to attack Kahn.

A small storm filled with murderous aura surrounded her body and multiple blades made of mana swirled around her sword.

She made a slashing swing in his direction and all the blades launched at him in a synchronized manner.

But all Kahn did was sidestep from left to right swiftly and avoid every single blade as if nothing happened.

Even with his stats and rank lowered, he was simply too experienced and had better control over his body compared to the female opponent.

Historia ran towards him and started swinging her sword frantically. To which, Kahn didn't even bother dodging. He just parried and directed the direction of her sword again and again.

Soon, the scenario of their fight completely changed from two equally matched opponents to a grown-up schooling a toddler.

"You motherfucker!! I'll fucking kill you and your whole family. A trash commoner like you isn't even worthy of standing in the same battle ring as me!" shouted Historia.

Her outraged expression completely contrasting her previously enarming and cute appearance as she lost all control over herself after Kahn had insulted, humiliated and then toyed around with her.

And to make things worse, not a single one of her skills or lethal attacks met their mark or hurt him in the slightest.

The biggest flex Kahn was doing at this point was that he wasn't even using both of his hands. Rather his left hand was inside the pocket of his longcoat while the right hand was doing all the work. As if Historia's attacks weren't even powerful enough for him to use both hands.

Just in a couple of minutes, Historia started losing her balance and the grip on her sword loosened after Kahn had exhausted her without even making a single strike.

CLANG!!

Her sword fell on the ground as Kahn parried it easily without exerting any force.

"Go pick the sword." he said.

"You.." she tried to refute but couldn't because she was shown to be one at fault.

But as soon as she picked her sword again, Kahn put his own in the sheath and folded his arms.

"Come. I won't fight you with my weapon from now on. Try to kill me if you can." he said and threw a grin at her.

"You bastard!" she shouted and aimed for Kahn's heart.

This was a new level of humiliation. Her opponent implied that she was so weak that he didn't even need a weapon to defeat her.

But before her thrust even touched Kahn's heart, he quickly grabbed her wrists, stopping her sword and the next second, he did something that shook the entire arena.

SLAP!!

A crisp slap resounded in the battle ring and Historia's left cheek with visible fingermarks appeared on the screens.

Silence! The arena was deathly silent at this point.

"Dammit.. Why do I keep meeting these types of women? Some scam me, some try to kill me and this one is a textbook pretentious bitch.

People would say that I'm some sort of woman abuser at this point." spoke Kahn to himself as he sighed.

"I'll give you another chance. Attack me with all your power."

He said and let go of her wrists.

This time, Historia was enraged to the point that her face had turned fuming red.

SLAP!

"Again." said Kahn as he slapped her again after stopping the sword attack midway.

SLAP!

Kahn repeated the cycle and kept slapping her again and again till her face was swollen and the fair cheeks looked like rotten tomatoes.

Snif! Snif!

Historia started crying at this point because she was basically getting thrashed now.

Kahn had publicly bullied and roasted her so hard for looking down on him earlier, that she could die just from the shame.

As the teardrops drizzled from her eyes.. the makeup on her face started being undone.

GASP!

"No! This can't be true!"

"Somebody.. Tell me this is a dream.."

"What the hell! You gotta be joking me.."

Hundreds of people started muttering under their breath as Historia's face was revealed to everyone again.

Finally, the people saw the real face of this girl behind all that heavy makeup which made her look like a princess of some country. A face that was full of pimples and wrinkles.

Even her lips were blackened as an aftereffect of excessive smoking.

Historia was crying after losing her shit like a baby, her runny nose and the undone makeup that was spread over her face made her look hideous; shattering the beliefs of every single member of her fan club and clan members.

Especially for the fan club members, her cute and lovely girl image was completely gone and an erratic and hateful character of hers was revealed to everyone during this fight.

Her charming and innocent persona no longer existing and her loathsome character who hated and looked down on other people from the commoner class, which 90% of the audience belonged to, was revealed to the world.

The Mask was broken and her true self was revealed for everyone to see.



Kahn quickly grabbed her sword and put it on her neck. Whilst Historia who was broken at this point did not even have the strength or will to retaliate.

"The winner is no. 2,98,370!" declared the female elven referee and Kahn officially won the match.

His gaze turned towards the people holding banners and wearing the clothes of Historia's fan club.

He quickly started walking out of the ring and spoke in a tyrannical voice that filled the entire arena..

"And this is why you should..." spoke Kahn and took a pause. He looked at Historia again and continued..

"Never judge a book by its cover."

### **Chapter 257 - Escape Route**

As soon as Kahn left the battle arena under public eyes.. The seemingly silent crowd went into an uproar.

Brazen! Kahn was too brazen!

Not only did he defeat the clan heiress of one of the most influential clans in this district, but he also publicly humiliated her in front of audience of a million people. That too right on their home ground.

And because of his deeds, many people from Weiss Clan and Historia's fan club were outraged to their core. Since many didn't care if she was putting up a pretense of an idol type of image for the selected individuals.

As he returned to the resting area hurriedly, he gathered the details about his next matches and the new registration token.

But instead of dilly-dallying, he quickly went to one of the rooms inside the facility.

Soon, hundreds of people from both the Weiss clan and Historia Fan Club started heading towards this section of the battle arena where Kahn entered the resting area for the participants.

Most of these people had malicious intent in their eyes and some of them were even grandmaster rank fighters.

A flock of haters marched towards the entrance of the resting area and soon, even the arena management employees as well as guards were alerted after sensing the approaching crowd.

[Do it now!] ordered Kahn as he sensed the group with murderous intent.

Although he could easily escape from here or subdue the people who were coming after him.. He would have to either reveal his strength of a semi-saint being or gather too much attention even with the shadow walk skill, as there won't be easy opening for him to use this skill.

This was not something he could afford to do till the endgame of the competition as it will greatly affect his approach, his future earnings and bring too much trouble if the top powers knew that there was semi-saint fighting in the competition except the already confirmed candidates of the three factions.

"Where is he?! Tell him to come out!" shouted an armored man from the Weiss clan.

"Come out bastard! How dare you humiliate our goddess?!" shouted an individual from the fan club.

Soon, a big crowd amassed in front of the entrance and the guards on duty were surrounded by hundreds of people. There was no opening left for anyone to enter or exit out of this facility at all.

Some even tried to break-in and threatened to kill the guards if they didn't bring Kahn out willingly.

Boom!

A heavy pressure of a grandmaster mage was released in the surroundings as he revealed his killing intent.

"Bring that man out. Or we can't guarantee who we will end up hurting in the process. Do it when we are asking nicely." commanded the intermediate rank grandmaster.

Two more grandmaster-rank individuals who belonged to the Weiss clan released their horrifying aura on the guards and made them fall on their knees.

"Do as he says. Or no one will be able to find how you died. The law does not punish a mob in case of riot.. Think about saving your own lives rather than someone you don't even know." spoke an elderly human swordsman who himself was a peak grandmaster.

At this point.. The guards were hesitant about what to do. Their job entailed providing safety for the participants but given the number of unhappy people in front of them.. They'd be subjected to mob lynching for trying to save someone who provoked all these people.

Thud! Thud! Tap! Tap!

But before things escalated furthermore, another crowd marched towards these people who had already surrounded the entrance.

"What's happening here?" asked a tall and burly man who was dressed in the uniform of the arena management. His long white beard and waist-length hair made his features stand out.

SHRILL!!

He quickly released his aura of a peak grandmaster individual and warred off the approaching crowd.

"Don't get involved in our matters. If a fight breaks, you will be at loss." spoke the elderly man and the next 3 individuals revealed their aura of grandmaster rank individuals.

One beginner, one intermediate and lastly the old man who was a peak grandmaster.

SHING!

However, the next second, two more individuals from the other end of the crowd revealed their deathly aura that surrounded all the members of this group.

"Is that so? What do you people take us for? Just because you belong to some clan, you're looking down on the government?" asked a middle-aged man with green eyes as he revealed himself as a peak grandmaster as well.

"Get lost! Or we know of many ways to kick out those who cause trouble inside the arena." said a brown-haired man with two black wings on his back.

The heavy and insurmountable aura along with the killing intent revealed by these 3 peak grandmasters instantly put everyone from the group on their knees including the other grandmasters from the Weiss clan.

"You.. You better know who you're crossing by protecting that brat!" exclaimed the old man.

Creak!

But the next second, the entrance door was opened from the inside and a frail-looking white tigerkin mage walked out.

His eyes were wide open as soon as he noticed the situation in front.

"What.. What's happening?" asked the beginner master rank mage.

"You! Did you see a young man dressed in black and golden clothes inside?" asked the elderly man.

"Oh? You mean that human with a big sword?" asked the tigerkin mage curiously.

"Yes! Go and tell him to come out!" ordered the old man.

But next moment, the tigerkin mage replied in a soft tone..

"But.. But that man already left. I saw his jump out of the window that's inside the staff room." he explained.

"What?! That bastard! Everyone, charge! Don't let him escape!" shouted the old man furiously. Even the three peak grandmasters didn't bother to stop them for some reason.

In just a minute, the entire resting area was swarmed with hundreds of people and they were searching for the man who was their main target.

But to no avail, none of them managed to find Kahn or any window that could be used as an escape route inside the facility.

Outside of the battle arena, the tigerkin mage who informed the people amount their target's whereabouts sat inside a luxurious carriage-like vehicle and one by one, his physical and facial structure started changing.

In just a minute, a handsome young man came to be. The man spoke with a light smirk on his face as he looked at the arena.

"Hasta la vista, baby."

## **Chapter 258 - The Backer**

He successfully returned to his mansion and held another meeting between the subordinates at night. The three subordinates also returned after spending the whole day collecting the money from their people.

On the table in the middle of the room where they did the meetings normally, the three subordinates returned with a total of 83 space rings holding nothing else but only gold coins.

Each of these space rings had inner space comparable to a medium-sized warehouse and the wealth stored inside was so much that it took eighty three of such rings.

Since all the transactions were done in small amounts from nearly 50 thousand people, they received only coins for the bets they won. And a denomination such as Oriclclum plates was out of the equation, thus it took so many space rings.

With the previous earnings, Kahn now officially had 1 Trillion gold income in personal wealth. This was a hundred times what they initially had by gathering the wealth from Bloodborne company and the funds from Seven Deadly Sins.

Even if they worked tirelessly and expanded their enterprise throughout the capital, they wouldn't be able to earn this much money within a decade let alone in a month as they did in reality.

And it was thanks to Kahn who luckily met the qualifications to participate in this competition and planned how to benefit by fixing his own matches. So the fortune they garnered today made him one of the 1000 richest people in the whole empire.

"Master, what should we do with all of this? It's too much and more than enough to expand our organizations and companies in every district of the capital." said Omega.

"It's not that simple. Do you think others will let you open up a shop in their own territory?"

"We're still far weaker and behind the majority of the top noble clans of the empire. Even this much wealth is hardly one-fourth of what those people earn through their business and connections within a year." said Ronin who was the most knowledgeable as if information gathering was in his blood.

"He's right. We shouldn't be hasty. Rather, we need to strengthen our forces and recruit more people. Rukon District is our turf and we should be undefeatable here. We should at least have enough manpower and weaponry to kill even a Saint should the situation arise." said Oliver who had developed an addiction for wine recently.

To him, wine looked a lot like blood and he was always elated to drink it leisurely. Every sip he took always made him happy for some reason that neither Kahn nor the other subordinates understood.

"He's right. We've already done the mistake of overestimating ourselves whether it's wealth or our strengths. And if what Ronin says is true.. Then we're just monkeys trying to grab the moon." spoke Kahn who was sat on a throne inside the room.

"Master... If you don't mind; you can leave recruiting fighters and soldiers to me and Ceril. We have gotten the hang of it recently while maintaining the expenses and security of both of our organizations." said Jugram who was akin to a giant even in his human form.

"Dismissed soldiers from the army, veteran adventurers, mercenaries, local thugs.. There are plenty of places we can recruit fighters and then discipline them later to fight as one organization with our own methods." proposed Jugram.

"He is right, my lord. While managing the company in your absence, I've come to learn many things about how to expand our forces and manage them properly thanks to all the big leagues of customers and clans we've been doing business with.

I also know how to funnel the funds using shell corporations and shops so that nothing can be tracked to us." explained Ceril.

Kahn who had a slightly surprised expression by the ideas of the subordinates, found their opinions very intriguing.

All of them had adapted and evolved as individual entities during the past 2 months of his absence. And his decision to let them get experience about the world on their had turned out very fruitful as none of them were just brainless monsters anymore whose entire use was to follow his order.

Now, all of them were individuals with their own characteristics, identities and minds who can manage many things on their own even if he wasn't around to order them.

And this wasn't even their full potential. The future would definitely be full of surprises at this rate.

"Let's save it for now. We can expand later anyway. The more money we have, the more we can use for betting.

Besides, soon the top clans of the empire will enter the fray for the remaining rounds. Compared to them, we still have a long way to go. So having our funds ready for the big leagues should be our priority." replied Kahn.

This was more of a reasonable choice at the present moment. Because soon, more high stake matches were bound to happen and then need bigger investments would be needed to multiply their income to earn the highest price possible.

Since as things stood, compared to top noble clans, they were still not worthy to stand in the same room as them. Because the personal wealth and income of an enterprise was a completely different thing as they functioned on different scales.

So living frugally now but investing big for the future was a better strategy.

"I need to prepare for our next move. Things will be different from now on." spoke Kahn as he looked at a pile of papers that were kept on the table.

"What are those?" asked Armin who also appeared for the meeting this time.

To his query, Ronin replied in a calm tone.

"List of possible candidates our lord might have to face in the upcoming rounds." he explained.

"What's there to worry about? Can't master easily defeat them?" asked Armin again.

The next second, Kahn decided to explain it by himself.

"It's not the people who I will be fighting... but the people, organizations, clans and factions that back them are the ones we should worry about." he said.

"I don't understand." said Armin.

Facepalm! Everyone including Kahn facepalmed themselves.

"How can he be a genius and a dumbass at the same time?" asked Omega and shook his head.

"What I mean is that the people I will be facing from the upcoming rounds won't be just no-name filler characters but some elite level of filler characters.

Most of them will be chosen representatives of some influential organization or some clan. And their winning or losing would also affect the wealth earned by those who back them. So basically, we would be stealing their food right in front of them.

Since we don't have a backer of our own and neither did I use the recommendation token given by the Pureblood Faction.. We will be an easy target to pick for the powerful.

And because we don't have a deterring force of our own..

Do you really think we would be left off the hook after winning the fights?" elaborated Kahn.

"There is no rule that safeguards the participants during the competition run. If anyone holds grudges, they can kill us outside the arena and no one would even inquire about it.

In the history of this competition, only those backed by the powerful forces have reached to the final three rounds. Why do you think that happened?" he said.

Although Armin was a genius when it came to Alchemy after he was merged with Prithivi, the late grandmaster Alchemist; inheriting his memories, character traits and talents... he was still oblivious to happenings of the outside world.

At this moment, not only Kahn but everyone had a sullen expression on their faces.

The fortune was right in front of them but they couldn't take it because the top brass who also had their eyes on the prize wouldn't let him off if Kahn even thought about coveting it.

That's how the politics in the real world worked. You can't reach the top with hard work or sheer dedication alone.

Because your rise would also spell doom for the others and no way would anyone allow that to happen.

The elites would never allow anyone someone who rose from the ashes to sit among their ranks on equal footing. This was what Kahn most worried about after his previous match with the clan heiress of the Weiss clan.

Just him winning a match against her caused a big commotion and put a target on his back. If not for the odds that made them the fortune in front of them.. Kahn wouldn't have even dared to fight her or win the match in the first place.

He was smart enough to not actively provoke the local snakes just because he was a dragon.

Unless there was a big reward for the risks like today's match.. It wasn't worth it.

"But... but.. We do." spoke Armin as he sipped the herbal tea in front of his seat.

"What?!!"

"What?! What do you mean?"

Everyone exclaimed and asked with a startled expression. Even Kahn was out of his wits after Armin's response.

"Who are you talking about? We can't rely on the Vandereich clan or the Pureblood Faction for it at all." said Kahn.

"Not them." spoke Armin as he shook his head a few times.

"We do have someone who can rival them. Not in wealth or strength but in reputation and popularity.

It's someone we all know very well. I could say even master has a very close relationship with him.

Just saying that he's our backer would deter everyone from even daring to target us." reiterated Armin.

"For fuck's sake, tell us who you're talking about!" shouted Omega.

Armin gave a cheerful smile and spoke in a soft tone.

"The peak grandmaster blacksmith... Albestros Winston."

### **Chapter 259 - The Bond**

As soon as Armin suggested the name of the old man Albestros, who was basically part of the crew at this point, everyone including Kahn was left speechless.

The seemingly dim subordinate who didn't have too many dealings with the outside world aside from making appearances here and there, advised them about using the old man as their backer.

This was indeed a great idea when one carefully thought about it.

"Why didn't we think of it.." spoke Ceril.

He was the one managing the accounts and logistics of the company the most in the past two months alone until Kahn brought Sirius into their team. So he should be the one to suggest it first.

"Think about it. He is well-reputed throughout the capital and many clans including their leaders such as saints have been trying to curry favor with him recently.

The majority of them have already offered their friendship let it be in the form of money, resources and manpower.

So shouldn't we make use of it as well?" said Armin.

Currently, the name of peak grandmaster blacksmith Albestros Winston was well renowned throughout the capital and many powerful clans, let it be from Pureblood Faction or Neutral Faction have been trying to make him their ally.

Even the powerful saints were trying to make connections with him so that he would take their commissions for making weapons and armors of the highest quality.

There were only 3 peak grandmaster blacksmiths in the whole capital, showing how hard it was for someone to reach this rank in this area of specialty. And he the one who also made Kahn's Drakos Armor and Lucifer.

So Kahn himself knew how truly talented the old man was. There was even a time when Kahn thought about learning blacksmith skills from him but it would've raised many unnecessary questions since no one had ever seen a swordsman being able to use skills of two different classes.

Plus given his weapon mastery & combat techniques mastery blessings, Kahn would've easily mastered these skills so quickly and eventually; he'd have to reveal his real identity to the old man.

Kahn didn't want to put his life in jeopardy after he finally moved on with his life nearly 11 months ago just for the sake of his personal gains.

"I'm not so sure about this. Just him appearing along with me would put too much risk on his life. And what if something happens when I'm not here?"

In the end, he is his own person. I have greatly benefited from him till this point.

"What if I provoke someone and they try to kill him to vent out their anger? I absolutely won't do it." said Kahn stubbornly.

A moment of silence ensued in the room but then Omega spoke.

"Master.. You should at least talk with him about this. He is no stranger to you at this point. Who knows he may think differently about this whole ordeal?"

"Whether to come through or not would be his own decision." he suggested.

After further discussions, the meeting was adjourned and Kahn decided to talk with the old man the next morning.

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The next morning at their usual place, Kahn and Albestros were having tea together before they had to set off for work.

He did not hide the fact about how they have been earning money through the competition and how it would turn out to be a big risk from the next rounds.

The old man had a solemn face after Kahn explained the situation along with his personal opinion not getting Albestros involved.

Albestros replied with a kind expression on his countenance.

"What are you getting so worked up about? It's no riskier than when we were targeted by the chamber of commerce."

"Things like this are bound to happen today or tomorrow anyway." he said.

"But.. But that could put you at risk. Even I don't have the strength to protect you if some top clan or some faction targets you because of me."



And given the goals I have.. It's bound to implicate you if we do this." spoke Kahn with a worried voice.

Albestros let out a long sigh and placed his hand on Kahn's left shoulder as he spoke in a caring tone.

"You always shoulder all the responsibilities by yourself. It's okay to lean on others once in a while.

Besides.. when you were avenging my children, you also put your life at risk, didn't you?

Compared to that.. This is nothing." affirmed the old man.

"You helped me turn my life around for the better. And if not for you.. I would still be stuck inside that downtrodden mansion, wallowing in misery and heartbreak even now.

So if I can help you by facing some risk to my life...

I will gladly do it." spoke Albestros and lightly smiled.

"Tha... thank you." said Kahn with gratitude.

Although he did not intend to address it... but there was already a bond between him and the old man.

"What's that? Did I just hear you thank me?

This punk.. Do we need to thank each other at his point?" he said and rustled Kahn's hair.

"Just tell me when you need to do it. I'll always be ready." said Albestros.

"Actually... I already have a plan ready." said Kahn, avoiding the old man's eyes like a kid denying that they broke something in front of their parents.

"Ahh... this clever bastard! You already knew I would say yes." said the old man and pulled Kahn's ear.

"Ouch! Stop it you old fart! I'm just good at reading people." replied Kahn and he slightly leaned down.

For the following hour, Kahn explained a detailed plan he had in mind and the best way to execute it using the old man's name.

"Understood. It does seem very effective. But I hope it works the way we want. Otherwise, it will adversely affect our company in many ways.

Others will say that we are snooping our noses in places where they don't belong." said the old blacksmith dressed in formal clothes.

"You do not need to worry. I already got things in motion. It will take a week before it shows effect. After all.." he said and continued with a devilish smirk on his face.

"Lies spread faster than the truth."

## **Chapter 260 - New Format**

For the next upcoming days, the way of conducting business for the Bloodborne company changed a little bit and many rumors started spreading in the business world.

News had leaked by some of the employees of the weapon manufacturing company that their owner, the peak grandmaster blacksmith Albestros Winston found a young and talented swordsman recently who is a prodigy of this generation.

And the young man is participating in the Emperor's Chosen competition as well. The peak grandmaster was so surprised and taken aback by his strength and skills that he decided to back up this young man for the ongoing competition and with his own hands, he made a rare set of Armor and Sword that could easily rival the best armors and swords in the whole empire.

Albestros Winston himself called it the best work of his life so far. And if the occasion came, the young swordsman might use them during the fights of the upcoming rounds.

As for the identity of the prodigy, no one knows about it but one thing is sure.. That the peak grandmaster greatly favors this young talent and wholeheartedly supports him.

And if a situation arose, he wouldn't even mind making an enemy of a powerful clan if they made things difficult for him.

And unexpectedly, the news was spreading quickly not only to their circle of people but hundreds of clans and big enterprises. And many found the source of this information to be the people doing the shipments to organizations and clans who bought their weapons and armors from the Bloodborne company.

With the employees who directly worked in the company and their different branches, the validity of this rumor was accounted for.

Soon, this news also reached the ears of the influencing clans and even the saints who had been trying to commission this grandmaster blacksmith. This news also spread across the three factions because at the end of the day, someone like Albestros Winston personally doing his best to make a set of armor and sword was unheard of.

Because even now, only a few top rank saints that were above 4th stage had been able to have their customized weapons and armors made by him and all of them had nothing but praise.

And according to them, his work even excelled one of the other two grandmaster blacksmiths who was a dwarf and worked in this industry for 3 decades now. Thus, rising his popularity and demand drastically in just the past 3 months.

Many other clans and organizations tried to persuade him to join their ranks but none of them succeeded despite trying every method.

One clan's saint warrior tried to forcefully make him accept his commission but he was later dealt with by nearly a dozen clans from the Pureblood Faction.

These were the same people Kahn made deals with after they personally made a visit to their headquarters. And hence, no one dared to force their way on the old blacksmith.

So whoever this prodigy was.. He already garnered the attention of some of the most powerful people of the empire and they all were interested to know how would the best work of this renowned blacksmith would look like.

This gave them another reason to look forward to the Emperor's Chosen competition that was halfway through its run.

In a way.. This would also reflect on the popularity of this grandmaster as the other two grandmasters had already sided with particular clans and factions and made the armors and weapons for the chosen representatives by them.

This would also be a fight to decide who was the best blacksmith in the entire Rakos Empire.

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As for Kahn himself... he had been preparing himself for the next round that would happen 4 days later and as per his plans that were carried out by the Bloodborne company that was spreading these rumors through official channels and the Seven Deadly Sins that was spreading this news among common folks throughout the Rukon district and nearby sections of the capital.

Let it be a bar, a restaurant or some clothing shop.. They were using their established networks and chain of organizations that worked for them to spread this news rapidly so that soon, many people in the capital would know of this rumor.

With time, it would be a known fact among the masses and when the right time came.. Kahn would reveal himself as someone with the backing from the grandmaster blacksmith himself.

To the public, he would appear as one of the three horses chosen by the grandmasters running in a race. The one to win would also signify which grandmaster was better in terms of skills.

And this move was useful to him because Kahn would be able to openly use the sword and the armor in the competition in the later rounds when the time came.

And people won't be foolish to directly target him as the news would already reach their inner circle.

This was also a way for Kahn to let people marvel at the old man's work, increasing Albestros's popularity even more.

For himself, this was a better alternative than appearing as a nameless nobody who was easy to pick on by the random street thugs.

And Kahn was going to use it to the best of benefits.

All that remained was the right time to reveal it when he was truly cornered. Like an ace up your sleeves.

After three days, Kahn had to depart for a new city in a different district where the next round would be conducted. And this time..

There was going to be a new format and the scale of the competition as well as the people involved in it would be leagues above compared to how things had been faring before.

As for the new format itself... Even Kahn had no choice but to start revealing his strength to everybody from here on.

As the next round would cull the pretenders and reveal the real diamonds soon.

Because the new format of the next round was...

THE BATTLE ROYALE.