

## Darkness 271

### Chapter 271 - Walking Into The Trap

After the teams were dispersed into three sections of the battle ring, each one facing their targeted opponent, Kahn revealed his intentions to the tengu swordsman without a second thought.

"My my.. You're a grade-A dumbass. Did you even fight in a real battle or just this competition?"

How can you be so naive to walk into a trap just with simple provocations?" asked Kahn with a coy expression.

"What.. What trap? The one who should be worried is you." said the opponent.

"Ahh... it's like I'm talking to a toddler.

Well then filler character no. 34, let's begin. I promise I won't pluck out too many of your feathers." spoke Kahn as he took a defensive.

"Bastard! Who do you think you're talking to? Pluck my feathers? How about I skin you alive instead?!" retorted the tengu and spread his large black feathery wings.

His species had a head of a crow and two black wings on their back in addition to their humanoid body structure of 2 arms and legs.

But their wings were what their kin prided in most as they enabled their kind to fly in the sky unlike other species.

And Kahn's remark about plucking his feathers angered the swordsman to his core in just a second.

As for Kahn who usually made such type of remarks to rile up his opponents hit the mark again.

At the same time, Elaine and Cattleya passed similar comments to their respective opponents and made them furious as well.

Showing them a middle finger, then making such disgraceful remarks was something Kahn already planned ahead of the battle.

It was to see if their opponents were cool-headed seasoned warriors or some hot-headed buffoons who couldn't even see through this simple war tactic. And luckily.. Their opponent team was the latter type.

They clearly didn't prepare for a battle strategy and were too overconfident of themselves.

"Listen to me, idiot. We just broke your formation with a single finger and separated your entire team. And now you're already by yourself.

Yet you don't even understand it. I guess I shouldn't have expected anything more from a bird brain." said Kahn with a grin, making another bird joke.

"You motherfucker! I'll kill you!" shouted the tengu in an irritated tone and took an attacking posture.

**BOOM!!**

On the left side of the battlefield, Elaine and the demonkin mage started their battle with a bang.

The female mage created a protection barrier around her and launched AoE fire spells that exploded and shook the nearby 20 meters area. Elaine on the other end launched a volley of wind elemental attacks using her archery skills, fanning back the fire back at her opponent.

On the right side, Cattleya faced her Enchantress opponent who was casting magic formations after formations in the air and then using them to launch various types of elemental and destructive attacks at their opponent.

Cattleya, who was a Summoner gathered her mana around and created a tall and sturdy wall to protect herself. Then she summoned a giant halberd made up of dense mana in the air and attacked the opponent from a long distance.

Although both classes functioned just like mages who were dependent on mana, the way they used it in a battle differed by a huge margin.

Enchanters/Enchantress first created magic formations using their mana and these magic formations channeled that mana to either attack or defend. Every magic formation had different uses.

So this class paid more attention to mastering these formations and casting them quickly than studying how to use mana to cast different elemental spells.

Summoner class had the same foundation as a mage but instead of casting spells infused with mana, they created objects such as walls, spears, swords, shields and even mimic a monster using their skills and mastery. And they could infuse a particular element inside their summoned objects as well.

The key difference between these three classes was how they utilized and structured their mana for their spells, formations and constructs.

Kahn was a person who was already studying magic so knew about this basic and key difference, unlike the common population who thought they were all the same.

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In the middle of the battle ring, Kahn's opponent dashed towards him as both his swords glowed faint green and highly compressed wind swirled around them while the wings also increased his speed by twice.

Kahn had already activated the draconian bloodline effect for Lucifer since the beginning, making it leak intense heat since it was made from the body parts of the magma drake.

He gave a light smirk and sprinted towards his opponent for a frontal clash as well.

CLANG!

Two swords with a faint green glow clashed against a black giantsword with crimson veins leaking intense heat, as if it had lava running inside.

Spark!

Sparks formed in between the blades as Kahn pushed the opponent back.

He took a step back after gauging the opponent's physical strength from the first clash.

[He's fast and precise. But I can take him..

The only problem will be those wings and his armor which isn't even hindering his speed or movements despite him being fully covered in it.] spoke Kahn to himself and launched another swing at the opponent.

This was how high-ranked warriors tested each other. They didn't just start with their aura attack skills or combat techniques but took note of the opponent's strength first by exchanging basic moves.

A few more moves were exchanged between him and the opponent and both of them were forced into an impasse.

Although Kahn was fighting by limiting his rank and stats to match the intermediate rank grandmaster opponent, he had to admit that his enemy had good posture and control over his weapons.

Just based on his attack patterns, he felt that the tengu swordsman had the advantage in speed and movements because he was using two normal-sized lightweight swords while Kahn was using a 5 feet long greatsword.

Although his control was perfect over the sword, it was still a 2 vs 1 scenario where he was at a disadvantage.

Just then, an idea came into his mind and he spoke to himself in a hushed tone...

"I guess I'll have to Sekiro this guy."

### **Chapter 272 - Shadows Die Twice**

The battle took an intense turn as three sets of fighters clashed against each other in a frontal clash. Dozens of spells and attack skills filled the battlefield at the same time. And to the audience, it was like fireworks lightening during a festival.

Clang! Clang!

Kahn clashed again with his opponent and forced him backwards as he tilted his own head to dodge a stab made by the enemy.

Since Kahn couldn't reveal his top S and SS Rank swordsmanship skills at this stage of the competition, he had only 3 skills that he could justify as an intermediate rank individual.

Namely Windcutter, Lightning Flash and Bladestorm. The last one being the most effective one when used at the right time.

The tengu swordsman launched blades after blades made from his aura while Kahn kept parrying and evading like his prior battles.

It wasn't that he was lacking in combat techniques.. But he rather wanted to tire out his opponent first since their combat prowess was evenly matched at this point.

For the next 10 minutes, everyone was engrossed in their own battles while the crowd enjoyed the show.

And Kahn acting like the parry king he was, kept engaging the opponent.

Shing!

And just as expected, the tengu warrior lost his balance for the first time while attacking continuously.

The downside of using two swords was that both the swords needed a lot of speed, maneuvering and additional force exerted by one arm at once while attacking an opponent. And hence, compared to a greatsword user like Kahn who needed to only maintain his balance and speed defending, the tengu warrior's stamina was depleting at a much faster rate.

Sizzle! Sizzle!

When Kahn pushed the opponent back again with a kick on the torso, the opponent's armor absorbed the impact as he was thrown back in the air. Right at that very moment, Kahn quickly activated lightning flash skill and made a forward strike move..

BOOM!!

A loud boom filled the battlefield and a bright flash blinded the crowd.

Crang!

The tengu swordsman's armor made a krrr sound after receiving the lethal strike head-on. Since the opponent had lost his posture and left an opening, Kahn made a decisive strike in that timeframe.

Flap! Flap! Flap!

The tengu for the first time used his wings for the flight and recovered his form in the air.

"It's over, human. I have the high ground."

Said the tengu swordsman.

"You underestimate my power."

Replied Kahn and for the first time, he used the bladestorm skill.

Flutter! Flutter!

His clothes fluttered as an intense aura was leaked from his body and Lucifer shone crimson red.

One by one, dozens of aura swords formed around the greatsword, many of which had different elemental attributes to them. All of them whirled around the greatsword rapidly like a tornado forming

Swing!

He swung the sword towards the flying enemy and quickly closed off his escape routes should the enemy try to fly away.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

Multiple lethal aura blades struck the flying tengu but for Kahn, this wasn't going to cut it.

Sword Battlemaster!

He activated the SS Rank skill for just a second that allowed him to control all the swords in 1 kilometer radius and the target for it being none other than two swords used by the opposition.

Clatter! Clatter!

Suddenly, the grip on the swords held by the opponent loosened while he was in a pinch as he flew from one direction to another, trying to avoid elemental aura blades.

He quickly tightened his grip on the sword hilt but before he could even control them, both the swords pulled him down towards the ground.

Defense Shatter!

Kahn activated his most useful critical strike skills that allowed him to bypass physical defense and do additional 50% critical damage.

"What the..."

With broken posture and form, the tengu dual swordsman was pulled down like an apple falling from the tree and before he could even grasp what was happening..

STAB!

Kahn suddenly appeared in between him and the ground and quickly stabbed through his right shoulder and collarbone.

"Arrrh!!" wailed the opponent as Kahn impaled him so suddenly.

Kahn gave a slight grin to the groaning opponent after landing a deathblow and electrocuted him with lightning flash skill.

The tengu swordsman fainted on the spot as his burnt feathers let out smoke and he dropped on the ground.

Kahn pulled out the bloody greatsword and dashed towards Cattleya who was in an impasse against the hybrid succubus enchantress.

Soon, in front of the onslaught by two opponents at once, the succubus was taken out by Cattleya dealing the finishing blow with a ginormous fist she summoned.

After that, their duo assisted Elaine and defeated the already cornered female demonkin mage.

And that way.. All three of them officially won the match and qualified for the next round.

Applause after applause, cheers after cheers resounded in the battle arena as their team successfully defeated their opponents and won the hearts of the crowd with their well-organized teamwork.

In front of a million gazes, Kahn and the team left the battle ring victoriously.

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While Kahn was discussing his next match details with the arena management staff, there was a certain group of people who were watching from quietly in one of the luxurious rooms built for the VIP audience.

Not just one but more than 50 of such rooms that were occupied by many people from different influential clans and organizations had only one thought on their mind..

"What's his name? Where does he come from?" asked a second stage saint gray wolfkin spearman to one of his aides.

"We don't know much about it yet, your lordship.

But based on that sword he was using.. He could be the rumored prodigy we recently came to know about." responded a foxkin male dressed in businessman attire.

"I see. But keep an eye on him. We can't make a move unless we know that he is backed by that person or not." said the saint as he quietly watched Kahn leave the battle arena from one of the entrances.

His gaze then turned serious and he spoke with a tyrannical and deep voice.

"Let's see if he becomes a good chess piece..

Or someone we need to get rid of."

### **Chapter 273 - Change Of Rules**

Kahn returned to his mansion at night while the subordinates were carrying out their duty to collect all their earnings from his matches which would take them a few days to tally before they reported it to their master.

But this time, Kahn also had an infuriated expression on his face. When he was having dinner, the maids and servants thought that their master was unhappy with their service or the food was bad but in reality.. It was something else that even made a calm and collected person like him feel enraged.

THE RULES WERE CHANGED... AGAIN!

By the previous set of rules, he should've qualified for the Quarterfinals after winning today's match. But after he went to arena management for details regarding his next match.. They informed him that new rules were added and the match schedule had changed since yesterday.

There will be another 1 on 1 battle for all the participants in the seventh round, where the winner who wins both the matches will qualify for the quarterfinals.

"What kind of fucking bullshit is this?!"

Does the government really thinks people with brains won't know.." he spoke with an infuriated tone.

To the normal public, it would appear as if the competition would give them extra matches and more entertainment with all these rounds that were happening every day throughout the empire.

To someone dealing in the business world, it would appear that the government was trying to extend the competition to make extra money with more matches and rounds where people would bet their fortune through the betting system.

But to someone like Kahn who had seen a side of the inner circle and how the powerful ruled the empire.. Knew that it was just a front to cover up something big. Something that even the top 3 factions and their clans who controlled the government itself had collectively agreed upon.

And anyone who wasn't part of their circle would not be able to see through it at all.

"Fine then.. I'll play along for now. Until I find out what's happening behind the scenes." he said with a resolute mind.

5 days later, the subordinates came back with the reports and also suggested some ways to launder the money in case they have to legally invest it somewhere in the future.

Kahn was now the owner of 50 trillion gold coins.. He had no idea how rich he would be on earth if the gold prices were to be converted into dollars. But since this world was far richer and vast in terms of resources, the normal sense of denomination on earth did not apply here.

For the Seventh round, his matches were to be held in the seventh richest district of the capital famous for exotic tourist points and rich lifestyle. Even the normal shop owners here earned more than 10 times when compared to normal people. The capita per annum was simply too high for ordinary salaries.

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As Kahn finally reached the battle arena and waited till his turn came for the first match, there was something different in his demeanor.

His odds were as always, 50:50 and today, his opponent was a half-naked blue thrall swordsman who had a wreath on his neck which had multiple small skulls woven in it.

Anyone who saw this opponent would be scared to death after the first glance.

And as usual, he put up a good display for the audience by having an intense battle with the opponent.

Thralls could temporarily turn themselves into smoke for a dozen seconds so Kahn acted like he was getting cornered and played around by the opponent as he dodged, evaded and parried the variety of attacks in a nick of time.

But in the end, defeated the opponent with Executioner's Gaze skill as he threw the thrall out of the battle ring when he couldn't move because of being paralyzed and put into stasis.

After doubling his earnings, he waited in the resting area for his next match.

But just then.. An employee from the arena management came and handed him an envelope.

"What's this?" asked Kahn.

"Sir.. Please read this and then come with me." said the employees in management uniform.

Kahn read the letter inside the envelope and his countenance turned serious. Because the letter mentioned that the head of the management for this battle arena wanted to meet him in his office.

Kahn followed the employees and headed towards the northern end of the highest floor of this battle arena.

In a grand office, Kahn now sat next to a 2nd stage saint dwarf battleaxe warrior who was the chosen official appointed by the government and the man in charge of handling this arena.

Although he didn't leak it.. His aura was tremendously horrifying for someone like Kahn who wasn't even a first stage saint yet.

"Kahn from the Rukon district is it?" asked the Dwarven warrior who was drinking a big glass of mead.

"Yes, sir. May I ask why I have been summoned?" asked Kahn politely.

"We have had our eyes on you for quite some time now. After your previous round.. I have been informed about your strength and talent as an intermediate grandmaster rank swordsman. And even today.. I do see that the words were indeed true." spoke the dwarf in a carefree tone.

"But a young man like you should know when to win and when to give up. Being hot-headed at this age can turn out catastrophic, don't you think?" asked the dwarf in an authoritative tone.

"I don't understand what you mean, sir. Can you put it in simple words?" asked Kahn with an alarmed expression on his face.

**BOOM!!**

The next second, the entire room was filled with heavy and horrifying pressure as the 2nd stage saint released an insurmountable aura.

**Thud!!**

Kahn was forced to fall from the chair and both his hands and legs gave out under this pressure.

The dwarven official then spoke in a deathly tone as he released his killing intent on the young swordsman.

"What I mean is..." he took a pause and spoke in a tyrannical and grim voice...

"I want you to lose the next match."

### **Chapter 274 - The Gambler**

Inside the main office where the elected official handled the management of this particular battle arena, a dense and tangible aura filled the entire room as the dwarven saint released his killing intent on the young swordsman in front of him.

Kahn who was on the receiving end of this intense and deathly aura was forced to kneel on the floor for the first time in his new life.

His veins pulsated rapidly and popped out his face while the bones in his body felt like they'd shatter if this predicament carried on for a few more minutes.



[Stay inside! I'll handle this!!] Kahn yelled at Rudra & Blackwall, both of whom went awry inside his shadow and wanted to come out as they too felt the unshakable threat to their lives.

He himself didn't dare to use War Dominance either. Because that skill could barely make him stand pressure from a 1st stage saint. But this dwarf was a second stage, even 5 times stronger than Kahn's current max capacity.

Blood leaked from both the nostrils and his eyes almost popped out as Kahn struggled to move a muscle and almost couldn't breathe.

In nearly a year of his new life in this world.. Kahn had felt this feeling three times so far.

One was when he fought Ajak, the Dark Summoner who literally killed Kahn in the dungeon. The second time was when Kahn had been facing Arkham & Solomon alone in a battle to life and death inside the restriction barrier and the third was this exact moment.

The last one was far more terrifying than the first two incidents because at this moment, the dwarven saint had Kahn's life was in the palm of his hands and if he wanted to, the young man would die from suffocating from this aura alone.

The dwarf quickly retracted his aura and Kahn finally regained control over his body.

Blergh!

He puked blood out of his mouth and coughed spontaneously.

"Do you understand what I'm saying?" asked the dwarf. His tone felt like a mountain looking at a small pebble.

"Y.. Ye.."

Cough!

Cough!

"Yes.. Yes sir." spoke Kahn while he was still struggling to breathe. Beads of sweat covered his face as he barely gathered the strength to stand up.

"Good. Now go and prepare for your next match. Your opponent is someone who belongs to one of the influential clans from the three factions.

Just put up a good show and lose with some dignity. That should be enough to entertain the crowd.

And remember..." spoke the dwarf as he continued in a threatening tone.

"Don't try to pull some sort of stunt. Or only your corpse will leave this arena." warned the second stage saint.

Kahn clenched his fist tightly and nodded in affirmation. It took every inch of his being to control his anger and not do something reckless at this moment.

There was a time to attack while there were also times where one had to take a step back.

After Kahn left the room, the dwarf called out for his secretary.

"Keep an eye on that human. If he tries to pull something during the match... You know what to do." commanded the dwarven saint as he gave a deathly glance to Kahn's back.

Kahn, who returned to the resting area was covered in sweat and breathing heavily felt like being born anew.

The happenings of a few minutes ago felt like he had been forced at death's door only to be brought back.

Compared to the time when God of Darkness killed him thousands of times for being rude and brought him back to life in microseconds.. This experience was hardly worth mentioning.

But now, it was his body that could hardly stand such pressure and he needed immediate rest.

Any blunder back in the main office and Kahn would be lying dead on the floor. And this time, there was no coming back to life for real.

He kept panting and spoke to himself..

"So that's how it was.. This whole competition itself is a scam!

Even I had a feeling that they'd rig the matches where only their chosen combatants from the top three factions would win both the matches and progress to the next round while the rest would be disqualified by either fixing the matches or forcing the participants to forfeit.

I'm sure many other fighters with no background or backing are subjected to the same threats throughout the empire.

So in the end, the quarter-finals will have only their chosen representatives from the three factions and the winner will always come from their circle of the top brasses." spoke Kahn as he finally regained control over his body and leaned on a chair.

"Who's going to ask for justice when the entire system is rigged."

[This... why are you so weak human?! This humiliation.. I shall never forget it!!] shouted Rudra inside Kahn's mind.

"Yeah.. As if you were any help either." retorted Kahn.

[Ronin, can you hear me?] he telepathically contacted the rogue subordinate.

[Yes, master.] replied Ronin who was mixed in the crowd.

Kahn gave him a particular instruction and explained his situation.

There were only two options now.. Either win and die a fool's death or lose and multiply his wealth by betting on his loss.

But there was still the slap in the form of humiliation he received today. The current Kahn knew when to retreat but this was something he just couldn't swallow down.

[Yes, master. I will need only an hour.] replied Ronin.

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After 2 hours, Kahn's turn came and his opponent was an intermediate rank grandmaster of the young generation who was an heir of one of the top 100 most powerful influential clans in the whole empire.

And naturally.. Kahn's odds were 80:20 because of the opponent's popularity.

[Master.. I have gathered the information. But you'll be gambling your life if we do this.] spoke Ronin and reported the key information Kahn asked him to gather.

[Good. Proceed as we planned.] he relayed the command and entered the battle ring before the betting counters were closed off.

"Begin the fight!" shouted the referee.

BOOM!!

Kahn's aura suddenly erupted, his bloodlust fully released and his angry face made him look like a berserk beast as he stared right in the eyes of his opponent and spoke in a grim voice..

"Oye.. My hands are itching today. So be prepared." he said and approached the enemy with wrathful eyes.

"Because I'm gonna use you as my punching bag!"

### **Chapter 275 - Public Declaration**

After the match commenced, Kahn openly declared that he would beat the opponent as if his victory was already decided. The 30 years old, 7 feet tall human knight, clad in white and golden armor with a lion head sigil embedded on the chest, stood at the other end of the battle ring and was completely taken aback but then his face turned furious toward Kahn.

He was a knight and Kahn was a swordsman... Everyone knew who had more resilience and defensive capabilities based on their professions.

"Huh? Who do you think you're talking to, peasant?! I was going to go easy on you. So if you don't want to get publicly humiliated by me, you should apologize to me right now!" exclaimed the man in fury.

He was the clan heir of one of the powerful clans from the neutral faction. Yet someone he never even heard of was looking down on him and that too in front of an audience of 2 million people.

He banged his greatsword on the shield and equipped his helmet as he took a defensive stance. A yellow and hexagonal barrier made of aura appeared in front of his shield.

To Kahn, who was agitated and needed something to release his anger on.. The cliché words of this young master didn't faze him in the slightest.

This time however, Kahn decided to not hold back and go all in. Because if he kept hiding at this point, people wouldn't pay attention to him or ask questions if he went missing out of the blue. So attracting public eyes on him was the only choice he had.

His countenance turned grim again.. A face of a man who was completely fed up with holding himself back was revealed to the audience.

Swoosh!

Before the opponent could charge at him, Kahn suddenly appeared in front of the knight and swung Lucifer to strike the aura shield.

Crack!

Without even using the draconian bloodline effect, Kahn instantly broke through the aura shield and his blade clanged again the metallic shield of the opponent.

Screech!

His sword made a gash on the shield and Kahn gave a look to the tall opponent.

"Is that all? I'm not even using both of my hands." scored Kahn.

BOOM!!

He let out another burst of aura revealed his rank in front of the entire crowd.

"Peak Grandmaster! He's a peak grandmaster!" spoke one of the clan members of this knight.

More than 10 thousand members from the knight's clan had come to show their support but as soon as Kahn revealed his rank.. Not just them but people who had bet on this knight felt like a cat got their tongue.

Clang!

Kahn used lightning flash skill and broke through the defense of the knight, he round kicked him in the stomach and sent him flying towards the other end of the battle ring.

Swoosh!

Before the knight's body even landed on the floor, Kahn appeared right next to his flying figure.

Bam!

He elbowed the levitating opponent and put him in the ground with a loud bang.

Horrified.. The knight was horrified of Kahn in just a few exchanges.

One, because he was a rank above him and two, Kahn was not even using his full strength, yet he almost felt like dying.

"Impossible... how can this be?" spoke the knight as blood leaked out from his mouth.

"Oye.. Are you in a position to think about something else?" asked Kahn as if he was looking at a dead man.

Sizzle! Sizzle!

He finally activated the draconian bloodline effect and a blistering heat was released from lucifer.

Clang!

Shing!

Shrill!

One by one, Kahn's sword repeatedly attacked the opponent and heavily damaged him despite the knight using his damage reduction skills and defense increasing skills at the same time.

Each of the swings made by Kahn felt like a hammer striking on the anvil. And the impact alone was sending tremors in his body.

"You.. Don't think you can defeat me just because you're a rank above. My entire armor and weapons are made by sir Mephisto!

He's a peak grandmaster blacksmith of the empire. There's no way I'd fall short against someone like you!" he bellowed in rage and banged his shield on the ground.

Dhang!

The battle ring shook and the ground started shattering from the point of impact.

A shockwave rippled from the knight's shield and forced Kahn ten meters away.

Kahn spoke as soon as he regained his footing.

"Hey, bitchass punk! Why are you resisting? It makes me want to hit you even more.

Just stand there quietly so I can beat you to a pulp!" spoke Kahn and the very next second, his figure disappeared from the knight's sight.

"Behind you." a whisper reached the knight's ears and he turned his head back.

A set of wrathful eyes stared right into his own and a palm appeared right in front of his face.

Grasp!

Kahn jumped and grabbed the knight's helmet. He pulled it out and threw it out of the battle ring.

Swing!

He made a horizontal swing infused with fire element aura and pushed the opponent on the backfoot again.

This time, there was a big and hollow dent on the massive shield after suffering from the impact.

"Why the hell should I care if your gear is made by a peak grandmaster blacksmith?

Who the fuck said that you can win against anyone just because you have better armors and weapons?

Let me break that stupid notion of yours." said Kahn and dashed at the enemy with full speed.

Clang! Clang! Bang! Bang!

For the next two minutes.. The entire battle arena went silent. Nobody paid attention to other matches because the one between the knight and the swordsman had taken a sudden turn of events that baffled all the onlookers.

Because right now.. Kahn was consistently attacking the knight like a maniac gone berserk.

Kahn hadn't even activated all of his attack buff or berserk skills and yet.. His heavy and unshakable aura blades from the Bladestorm skill had started chipping down the knight heir's shield and even the greatsword in his hands started cracking.

It wasn't that the opponent's shield or sword were weaker.. Just that Lucifer was made from the Magma Drake's claws which even a sword made from myhril couldn't scratch. It was already in a different league above other epic rank swords.

But incorporated with Kahn's furious attacks, there wasn't much the epic rank weaponry of the knight could do.

Crack! Crack!

In the next 5 minutes, Kahn cracked open the shield and broke the sword in two pieces using lucifer. The knight almost started crying after watching how his opponent break his precious gear.

Just then.. Kahn declared in a loud voice. His words echoed in the entire battle arena as he made a groundbreaking revelation.

"What a trash gear. It still cannot stand up against the better quality weapon made by a better blacksmith." he revealed.

"What do you mean.." asked the knight in disbelief.

"You see.. My sword is forged by the best blacksmith in the entire Rakos Empire. It's made by.." he said and continued in a kingly tone.

"The Peak Grandmaster Blacksmith, Albestros Winston!" he declared for the audience.

"As for you.." he said with a wide grin on his face.

"Let's start the real beating session."

## **Chapter 276 - No Mercy**

In the middle of the battle ring, Kahn intentionally revealed the information about his sword being made by Albestros Winston, one of the peak grandmaster blacksmiths of the Rakos Empire.

There was a reason for him to reveal this hand this early. Because today's experience already made him realize that nobody paid attention to an underdog and they're easy to remove if people aren't watching.

So before the result of this match came out, he'd at least use this opportunity to reveal the man who was backing him up.

He only revealed that his sword was made by Albestros to the audience but soon, the news would reach the top brass and then will take notice of him because of the rumors he already spread last week.

So the majority of the so-called clans and their people will be hesitant about picking a fight with him as they do with people without any powerful background.

And the reason why he revealed his rank only as a peak grandmaster was to surprise the people and not question how he was easily thrashing the opponent.

As for this guy in front of him.. Kahn hadn't even warmed up yet or let out his anger at all.

Clang! Bang!

What happened next was something that gave chills to the majority of the audience.

Kahn made precise cuts and well-controlled swings in a way that they cut through the armor but didn't hurt the opponent. And in front of 2 million people.. This heir of a top influential clan watched his precious armor getting torn down to pieces while all he could do was try to avoid the greatsword's edges and hope that it wouldn't cut him instead.

Pieces after pieces fell on the floor and the 7 feet tall opponent who was taller than Kahn was reduced to a half-naked sausage.

This was a thorough humiliation. Not only could the heir retort or fight back.. but also couldn't willingly submit defeat either. Otherwise, he won't have a face to show after this match.

For now, the opponent being a peak grandmaster could at least justify his loss but if he quit.. He'd be a laughingstock for his entire life.

However, the next minute... even the knight himself was shocked.

Because Kahn plunged Lucifer down in the floor and rolled up his sleeves.

"Hey, bastard.. Didn't I tell you to not fight back? Was that hard to understand?" said Kahn in a tyrannical voice as he walked closer to the opponent who was panting heavily and kneeling on the floor.

"You think I won't beat the shit out of because you're some glorified heir of some noble clan? Didn't you understand what I said?

That I'm already in a bad mood and would use you as a punching? Why did you resist?

Now I'm even more angry." spoke Kahn as he kept releasing his deathly aura and froze the opponent on the spot.

Slap!!

Then what he did would go down in the history of a millennium of the Emperor's Chosen competition.

In front of 2 million people, the enraged Kahn started a street brawl and attacked the already worn down opponent with his bare fists.

Punch!!

Dishoom!

Pow!!

Kahn started punching and beating the opponent with his iron fists as if he was an Asian dad beating his undutiful and reckless kid who was a disappointment to the family.

Thwack!

Blood started splattering on the ground after the knight opponent's swollen face turned red like a tomato but Kahn kept treating him like a punching bag.

"DAAAYYUUUMMMM!!" spoke two black men in the audience.

Kahn lowered his pressure on the opponent.

Punch!

"Fight back!" he said.

Slap!

"Fight back you little rat!" he exclaimed.

There was no sense of pity or mercy for the opponent in his eyes.

Just like he said previously.. He was literally using the opponent as a punching bag.

Just as the tall knight stood up and tried to counteract with a swing of his right hand, Kahn dodged it and his own right hand grabbed the opponent around the neck.

Kahn put all his strength into the right arm and jumped along with the opponent to slam him on the ground.

ROCK BOTTOM!!

Kahn used The Rock's signature move and slammed the opponent on the floor of the battle ring.

Dozens of cracks appeared on the ground. The knight opponent was slammed so hard that he couldn't even get up.

Kahn then did a little jog to the left and again ran towards the half-naked knight lying on the ground as he jumped high in the air and did an elbow drop on his chest.

PEOPLE'S ELBOW!!

Kahn finally performed the signature move he always wanted to perform since the time he watched the wrestling during his childhood.

Spat!

The knight spat a chunk of blood and almost choked on it.

Kahn then came close to the opponent and waved the back of his right palm in between them.

"You can't see me!"

Said Kahn and his figure disappeared again.



"Arrr.." groaned the knight as he tried to get up with a hazy mind. His body was damaged and the immense pain heavily affected his consciousness.

Just then, Kahn appeared behind the knight and half squatted, he widened both his arms and gazed at the opponent with crazy eyes like The Viper.

And as soon as the opponent turned his head, Kahn lunged towards him and grabbed his head midair in a headlock as he slammed both their bodies on the ground.

[[Author : Watch out, watch out, watch out!]]

RKO!!

Kahn Rko'd the opponent in front of millions of people and made the already beaten-up enemy faint on the spot.

"One! Two! Three!" counted the referee!

Ding! Ding! Ding!

"The winner is Kahn of Rukon District!" declared the referee!

"Yaaaah!!"

"Fuck yeah!!"

"You rock!!" thousands then over a hundred thousand of people mixed in the crowd jumped in joy and cheered for Kahn.

In reality.. Most of these people were from the seven deadly sins who cheered for Kahn.

As for the vast majority who bet on the noble clan heir knight.. They were rooted on the spot.. Contemplating their entire life and thinking about their lost fortunes because of this young man.

Kahn shrieked his body and flexed his arms.

His gaze then landed on the main office of the saint on the highest floor of the battle arena.

His eyes met the dwarven saint who was looking at him with a furious and murderous gaze.

Kahn gave a light smirk in response and spoke in a content tone..

"Now I'm motivated!"

## **Chapter 277 - The Ace**

After the fight ended and Kahn won despite their previous agreement, the 2nd stage dwarven saint was enraged to the core and wanted nothing but to kill Kahn on the spot.

But given the sheer number of onlookers, he controlled the killing intent lest it brought too much attention to him, hence the old dwarf had no choice but to hold in his anger.

Kahn on the other end didn't feel any sense of threat to his life and walked down the battle ring completely unfazed.

But instead of running away.. He headed towards the main head's office of the arena management where he was made to kneel on the ground just 3 hours ago.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

His footsteps echoed in the passage leading to the door of the main office. The saint could already sense his location in this 5 kilometer wide arena so he too was surprised to see that Kahn didn't try to run but chose to approach him instead.

Creak!

The secretary opened the door for him and Kahn walked in fearlessly as if he owned the whole place instead. And he sat on the same chair while he faced the saint without any fear in his eyes.

"Know your place, boy!! Do you really think I won't kill you myself?" spoke the dwarf saint and released his highly condensed aura on Kahn again.

War Dominance!!

Kahn activated war dominance this time. Although it wasn't enough for him to stand the pressure from this second-stage saint for long, it was barely enough for him to at least not fall on the floor like last time.

"Just because you have the backing of a peak grandmaster blacksmith, doesn't mean that you can mess with the 3 factions!"

In his eyes, Kahn only had the advantage of revealing his backer. But it wasn't something that would protect him for long after the blunder he pulled off by winning the match.

"Can you really afford to kill me though? Do you want to die that badly?" asked Kahn as he looked down on the saint. His expressions and the way he conducted himself had taken a 180-degree turn for some reason.

"What?! What did you just say? Have you gone senile?" asked the dwarf battleaxe wielder saint with a baffled expression.

"Let me ask you something... Which faction do you belong to?" asked Kahn with a confident voice.

"I'm from the Gimli dwarven clan of the Pureblood Faction." spoke the dwarf with a curious expression on his face.

"Good. Then take a look at this before you do something stupid again." said Kahn with a carefree expression.

The next second, he took out something from his space ring and displayed it to the dwarf!

In his hands.. Was a brightly glowing golden and rectangular object. This was something he had kept as a secret from a month before the competition even began.

"You.. How did you get this?! Why does someone like you have this?!" exclaimed the dwarf as he looked at the object in Kahn's hand with a bewildered expression.

At this moment, a golden glowing plate with a sigil of two swords surrounding a shield embedded on it glimmered in Kahn's palm.

The Recommendation Token!

What he displayed just now was the exact Recommendation Token given to him through Szayel by the clan leader, Ismaetrazel Mor Vandereich of the Vandereich clan, the most powerful and representative clan of the pureblood faction.

BOOM!!

Kahn's figure let out a burst of chaotic black and red aura that shook the entire room and the shockwaves released from his body made even the saint wary for a second.

Semi-Saint!

Kahn revealed his real rank and full strength of a semi-saint rank warrior.

Even the dwarven saint had his jaw dropped on the ground after this sudden revelation.

"Do you understand why I have this token?" asked Kahn as he folded both his arms.

"This.. This is a recommendation token from the faction leader himself!

Why haven't any of the saints heard about it then?" asked the old dwarf as he still found this new piece of information hard to swallow.

"Each faction is allowed only 2 of such recommendation tokens. And they're given to only the chosen representatives of the faction. But we already gave one to our semi-saint.

This is also a testament of full support to the candidate from the entire faction. Harming them or creating problems for them during the competition means making an enemy of the entire faction." he revealed in a jittery tone.

[Oh, so it actually belonged to their faction leader.] thought Kahn but didn't show the surprise on his face.

"And revealing it would be very helpful in keeping it secret.." Kahn said and gave a daunting look at the dwarf.

"I did a little research on you. You may be a second-stage saint.. But even in your clan or the faction itself... You're not even in the top 20 strongest people." spoke Kahn in a serious tone.

"So what do you think will happen if you do something to me or I spread the word about today's incident to the clan leader of the Vandereich clan?

On one hand, there's someone who doesn't even deserve to sit at the same table as them and on the other.. Someone who was handpicked by the faction leader himself.

Who do you think they will side with?" taunted Kahn.

"Please.. Don't tell them." spoke the dwarven saint. For the first time, his face looked fear-stricken and the almighty and domineering aura around him completely disappeared.

"What will I get out of this? I have no reason to do you a favor. Not only did you try to make me lose the match.. But you also tried to diminish our winning chances in the competition." said Kahn in a serious and vengeful tone.

"What do you think will happen? Will your own clan forgive you for this mistake? Do you think anyone of the faction council will let you go unpunished?" asked Kahn, instilling even more fear in the dwarf.

"Then what do you want me to do?" asked the dwarf haphazardly.

To his question... Kahn only replied with a bright smile in a relaxed manner as he relayed his condition..

"You have to clean after my shit."

### **Chapter 278 - The Dark Horse**

Kahn took a deep breath and spoke in a calm tone as he leaned his back against the ottoman-style chair.

"Take care of the clan members of the guy I just beat up. Nothing should come in my way.

You are at least capable of doing that much, right?" asked Kahn sarcastically.

"That... I'll do it!" spoke the dwarf and suddenly, his tone towards Kahn turned respectful despite being an almighty figure himself.

It wasn't Kahn.. But the two figures who backed this young man he was most afraid of. His countenance turned completely alert as he did not want to stretch this topic furthermore.

[And he fell for it!] thought the young swordsman.

In reality, Kahn was only borrowing the name of the Vandereich clan leader after the key information he received from Ronin.

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### **TWO HOURS AGO**

Ronin and all the assassin subordinates who served under him were ordered to find information on this dwarf by Kahn after the death threat made by this second stage saint.

Ronin, who led dozens of assassin subordinates, quickly infiltrated the inner areas of arena management, had his squadron tail people and ransack records about the dwarf's history, found out about the background of this saint. And after receiving the whole information.. Kahn decided to not give up on the competition and take his chances.

Hence, right before the match even began and odds were revealed to the public for betting, Kahn decided to act as he always did.

He looked at the odds and purposely had his generals bet all the money on his victory through their people while he was still furious about the humiliation he suffered today.

So one way or another.. He was going to take it out on the opponent. Because of which, he knew that he'd end up provoking the entire clan that backed him. Yet, he also planned to use the recommendation

token which he already knew about and how it would tie his fate to the pureblood faction during this competition.

And just now, he found out that each faction had two of such tokens offered to their semi-saints. Also, he understood why the faction leader, Szayel's grandfather who he had yet to meet passed down this token to him under the pretense of Ismaetrazel trying to save him the trouble of not having to fight from the bottom.

It was because they had only one semi-saint in the younger generation compared to the Demi-Human and Neutral Faction that had two candidates.

So they planned to use Kahn as a trojan horse and a backup without him even knowing the truth since the beginning.

But after learning from his previous experience and how the Vandereich clan used him as bait to find traitors between their clan and faction, the now wiser Kahn already suspected that something was off.

And hence, he chose to register for the competition like a normal individual instead of using the recommendation token that was offered to him.

But today, that very token turned out to be the only thing that helped him in his current predicament.

Now, his seat was secured and from the lesson he received today.. It was time for Kahn to set up his own chess pieces rather than being at someone's mercy.

Because who knows if next time his bluff would work or not.

"Fine then. I'll leave this to you." said Kahn and took out the jade medallion.

"You know who this belongs to, right?" asked Kahn.

The dwarven saint was left speechless again, his eyes not being able to hold back the surprise.

"This.. This belongs to Lord Ismaetrazel. He even gave you this.." said the dwarf with a baffled voice.

"Yes. Mess up things on your end and I will personally tell him about today's blunder you pulled off.

Doesn't matter if you did it for carrying out your orders or not. A mistake is a mistake.

Now let's hope that we don't see each other again." spoke Kahn and left the office.

He changed his appearance and species just to be careful and quietly left the battle arena. As for the aftermath... he'd leave it to this dwarven saint.

Given the situation... it was bound to be more of a headache and a form of punishment. This was the best way of revenge Kahn could take for now.

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Kahn returned to his mansion after he had officially qualified for the quarterfinals.

Including him, there would be 15 other candidates and out of which, he was already sure that he'd face the other semi-saints soon enough based on probability.

But what was more important right now was to make waves and stir the entire pond so that he would no longer appear defenseless.

And the show he put on today by starting a brawl with the knight opponent had another purpose behind it as well.

Ceril appeared in Kahn's bedroom since the others were busy collecting their 400 trillion worth of new wealth after today's match.

"Do you have it ready?" asked Kahn in a stern tone.

"Yes, my lord. By the time your next match comes up, we will have more than 10 million of these recording artifacts spread throughout the entire capital.

Everyone from a commoner to a noble class individual will come to know about you after today." replied Ceril as he took out a blue round object.

This was exactly the recording artifact Kahn had previously installed in his shops and warehouses.

As the projections from the artifact were displayed.. The sight of Kahn's entire fight with the knight heir came to be like a video recording.

How he revealed the information about his sword and how he thrashed the knight opponent during the fight was recorded here.

During the fight, Kahn had ordered Omega to film this entire thing before the match started.

Kahn was already 3 steps ahead in planning the aftermath and saving himself from the unnecessary hassle and threat to his life.

"But my lord.. Wouldn't this make you a target for many influential clans and factions?" asked Ceril in a serious voice.

"The more eyes we have on me... the better.

Because no one would dare to harm a commoner who beat a noble clan's heir with bare fists when he is at the center of attention for the entire capital.

Now, we don't have any reason to hide behind the shadows." said Kahn.

He smirked and looked at the bright moon through the window as he spoke in a resolute tone.

"It's time for me to become The Dark Horse."

### **Chapter 279 - Rising Fame**

In the following week, a silent chaos was created throughout the capital Rathna. The majority of the important districts and highly populated cities inhabited by tens of millions of people had been swarmed by a viral video shared by thousands of people in public places.

Let it be restaurants or some gathering, in a bazaar or playground. Many crowded and occupied places throughout the capital had been watching this video on a projection artifact that displayed the match between two opponents during the seventh round of the Emperor's Chosen competition.

The fight between a muscular as well as a ripped swordsman and a tall and massive knight warrior was displayed on these screens. And the narrative spread among the common folks who made 97% of the entire population of the capital was how a commoner like them fought his way through with pure skill and hard work.

And how he did not even faze or get scared while facing an heir of a powerful clan or their forces. In his wake, he fearlessly fought against his opponent to prove himself and progressed to the quarterfinals.

In the past millennium of history of this empire and this competition.. Kahn became the first-ever commoner who reached this far in the competition. And that alone was more than enough for people to relate to him.

Besides, a swordsman facing a knight was always considered as an already decided match because the latter had too many skills that could let the sustain a lot of damage while the swordsman would naturally get tired in time and then be taken out by the knight.

But in this match, it was completely opposite as Kahn broke through all the defenses of the opponent with sheer force and skills alone.

The best part of these recordings was when Kahn plunged his sword into the ground and started beating the opponent with bare fists.

Every male regardless of their species or age felt a rush of power while watching this recorded match because the way this young man handled the opponent who was bigger in size than him and the types of finishing moves he performed were simply too astounding to watch.

According to rumors, many people who had professions such as brawlers praised this man's fighting techniques. Some even questioned if he was a swordsman or actually a hand-to-hand combatant instead.

And like a wildfire, the name of Kahn of Rukon District spread among the masses and anyone who was interested in the ongoing competition.

The general populace was intrigued and then came to like it because a normal person like them beating the crap out of a presumptuous clan heir who never had to struggle for anything in his life.

The story of an underdog who had no one to rely on but him still fighting his way up with his own strength touched their hearts.

And within a week alone, many had started rooting for Kahn.

And also, the name of peak grandmaster blacksmith, Albestros Winston rose to a different level of popularity amongst top powers and high ranked saints because Kahn thoroughly destroyed the weapons and armors made by Mephisto, another peak grandmaster blacksmith by just using normal strikes and swings using a sword made by the former.

The old blacksmith's already renowned name became even more famous among the citizens because of the recording. Raising his popularity on a different level than all the saints from different clans and factions had no choice but to notice Kahn as a participant.

Because as per the rumors, Kahn had been given an armor as well that was said to be the old blacksmith's best work yet.

Although recording fights during the competition wasn't illegal.. No one had done it and then spread it among the populace at this scale before. And given how people were interested in buying these artifacts that had this match recorded... many clever minds also had a business idea.

Soon, the video was copied by many people, pirated illegally by scums of the society and watched by trashes for free who didn't even bother trying to get it from the original source or support the makers who put their blood and sweat into creating it.

And yet many of them had a sense of entitlement to criticize it without even spending a dime as if the makers owed them something.

Little did they know that the creators only cared about the opinions of those who saw this work from official channels than caring about the whiney freeloaders.

[[Author : \*cough\* Just like this novel. \*cough\*]]

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Another rumor spread that Albestros Winston found this young swordsman who didn't even have a relative left alive and took him under his wing after Kahn saved his life during the journey to the capital.

And after many powerful people, forces and organizations inquired, all they found that most of the rumors were actually true and Kahn also worked for Albestros as his main assistant in the company named The Bloodborne which was owned by this peak grandmaster.

And given Kahn's talent and the relationship the old blacksmith had with him.. He made the armor and sword that was even better than many epic rank weapons and armors owned by the majority of the saints.

So as the time for the quarterfinals came close.. The once nameless nobody without any prior background or support from a powerful faction or a clan became the talk of the entire capital.

His name reached a different level of fame that not even the most famous and genius clan heirs of any of the factions ever did.

In just a week.. Kahn had become the biggest Dark Horse in the history of this competition.

But in reality... all of this was orchestrated by Kahn on that day after he won the seventh round.

Spreading rumors, using a sentimental narrative, making himself look like the underdog and a dark horse was all part of the plan.

"Master.. Everything is going according to your plans. What should we do next?" asked Ronin when they were sitting in their usual meeting room.

Kahn replied with a grin as he spoke in a sinister tone..

"We provide them some fanservice."



## Chapter 280 - The Day Before

The time of the beginning for quarterfinals came near and only one day left. And as per the tradition of the Emperor's Chosen competition, the remaining matches from here on would be broadcasted throughout the empire in all cities and towns; the setup, as well as management, will be handled by the government.

Compared to the time when the Pureblood faction displayed the execution of traitors in all the major cities of the empire... this event was on a completely different scale. Hence, the number of people exposed to this news were mostly in the billions.

Out of the 4 billion citizens of the Rakos Empire, at least 3 and half billion people would have access to these projection screens and would be able to watch the matches from their respective places as well.

And to add fuel to the fire, the government also made legal betting booths over these settlements so even the normal people could also get a final chance to change their fates since the ticket prices for a single person were already in tens of thousands of gold coins for the last three rounds.

As per the information gathered by Ronin, there would be a total of 8 matches between 16 candidates. Some of whom were Kahn, Niklaus and Elijah.

Sadly, Elaine and Cattleya had lost their matches in their respective battles because their opponents turned out to be peak grandmasters as well.

For the quarterfinals, the sixteen candidates were chosen for their respective matches using a lottery system. And each of these matches will be done on separate days and in different battle arenas.

So that the combatants would get enough time to rest and recuperate after their respective battles.

And luckily, Kahn's battle was to happen on the very first day and from the official announcement done by the government, his opponent was a female swordswoman named Veronica Mikealson.

From the information gathered by his people, Kahn learned that his next opponent was a peak grandmaster individual and also considered as one of the top three best sword users of the younger generation in the whole capital.

Her ranking being only second to Celine Armitage who was also the clan heiress of her clan and nicknamed as the Dual Sword Saintess because she was a semi-saint individual.

On the other side, Veronica herself was well renowned since she was considered to be a very skilled woman whose speed and lethality was well known.

She was the daughter of the commander of Mikealson clan who happened to be the younger brother of the clan leader. Many even debated that if not for her rank lacking, she'd be evenly matched with the dual sword saintess.

So Kahn had been expecting a good match ever since the announcement. Because he too wanted to raise his combat techniques and weapon mastery by fighting with the truly gifted opponents; which was also one of his main goals to participate in this competition in the first place.

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Inside the Mikealson Clan's main castle, a meeting between 3 young people was taking place in one of the gardens.

A group of 2 women and a blonde man were sitting across a round white table while having brunch.

One of these enchanting young women was a raven-haired beauty with deep blue eyes while the other was a redhead woman with a sword who was dressed in white and black attire, looking like she was part of the military of the empire.

"So how are you preparing for the next match, Veronica?" asked Cassandra to the woman in front of her.

"I have done enough preparations, lady Cassandra. Although there isn't much information available on my opponent for tomorrow's match, I'm certain that it will be my victory.

Because my opponent is a self-taught swordsman after all. No matter how talented he is, at the end of the day, true combat techniques and skills are what counts the most." replied Veronica in a stern tone.

"Ah, that guy who beat Namor in a hand-to-hand fight like a street wrestler, right?" asked Isaac, the young blonde knight.

"Yes. It was only because he is a peak grandmaster and Namor was an intermediate rank individual.

Even his sword skills seemed average at best. Even if he's the same rank as me.. I don't think it will be a problem defeating him." replied Veronica.

Just then, Cassandra interjected and spoke in a curious tone..

"Still.. It's the first time I'm hearing a peak grandmaster under the age of 30 who doesn't come from some big clan or a faction.

He may be weak but you should not underestimate him. After all, he beat his opponent without revealing his most powerful skills.

So being ignorant can turn out bad for us." she said, her curious eyes being easy to notice.

"So will you attend my match tomorrow, lady Cassandra? I know you have your own match on the 4th day. " asked Veronica with expectant eyes.

"Of course! How can I miss our little phoenix's fight? You have to make us and commander Zoran proud." said Cassandra in a merry tone and pat on Veronica's head as if she was her little sister.

"Ahm..." spoke Isaac.

"What?" asked Cassandra curiously.

Isaac scooped towards her and slightly bowed his head.

"Me too!" he exclaimed.

"Get lost, you twat!" shouted Cassandra and hit his head with her fist.

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As the night came, in the southern part of the central regions of the capital Rathna, a ginormous red fort that sized 5 kilometers in radius alone was surrounded by thousands of people.

This was the main headquarters of the Demi-Human Faction and currently, a meeting was being held with all the elders and the most influential figures of this faction including many saints and clan leaders.

On the main throne of this 1 kilometer long meeting hall that had a similar structure like the one from Neutral Faction, thousands of important figures were gathered.

And at the main throne, was an elderly white-haired Elven mage who had a hunched back. This was a seventh stage saint, one of the three strongest individuals of the entire empire.

At this moment, he looked at the young man in front of him who knelt in front of him.

This young man who seemed a year older than Kahn had a red horn protruding out of the right side of his forehead and had yellow eyes was kneeling in respect towards their faction leader.

"Victor.. You know how many expectations we have from you, right?" asked the elf.

"Yes, lord faction leader. I will win this competition and show the might of our faction to the whole empire." said the halfbreed demonkin in a vehement voice.

"Good. I like this attitude of yours. I hope you carry on the legacy of your family. After all.." spoke the seventh stage elven mage in a prideful tone as he continued...

"You're the son of the previous Emperor's Chosen."