

## Darkness 301

### Chapter 301 - The Harsh Truth

In front of 3 billion citizens of the empire watching the match, Kahn declared himself to be the strongest unlike the usual trope of a protagonist hiding his strength till the very end of competition arcs in novels and mangas.

Instead of keeping his cards hidden, Kahn had arrogantly displayed his true potential to the entire audience and the top figures such as powerful saints of all the factions.

At this exact moment, he was the center of attention for the whole empire.

"You.. You will regret this! My clan and faction won't let you live, you lowlife bastard!!" shouted Victor with all his remaining strength as he publicly threatened Kahn.

[Hehe.. What an idiot. Fine then..

I'll give this whole empire a big show!] thought Kahn as he unsummoned Drakos Armor and returned to his usual black and golden longcoat with fighting gear equipped with it.

Kahn's handsome face and tall stature with the epic rank gear made him look like an heir of a prestigious noble clan, yet his countenance was as humble as it could be.

Victor's impulsive declaration after being unable to accept his defeat opened a new window for him as he decided to use it in his favor.

[Are you guys done?] asked Kahn to his subordinates.

[Yes, my lord. We've successfully infiltrated the broadcasting department and incapacitated the staff. Whatever whatever you say from now, will be uninterrupted.] replied Ronin and the rest of the generals.

[What about you, old man? Are you up for the task?] asked Kahn to Albestros who sat in one of the VIP rooms and held a telepathic communication artifact.

[I'm ready when you are.] replied Albestros.

The next second, Kahn's gaze shifted from the subdued opponent and he looked towards the audience across the arena.

"Did you hear what he said, people of Rakos Empire?!" asked Kahn loudly as he looked right in the center of projection artifacts that were floating around the battlefield.

These were the artifacts used to relay the live feed to broadcasting stations. And thus the entire empire could see and hear Kahn loud and clear.

"I've rightfully defeated him in front of everyone. He can't even move a muscle and by the rules of the competition... I have officially won the match!

Yet the referee hasn't declared me as the winner. The announcer hasn't spoken a word about it. It's as if they don't want to declare me as the winner at all!" he exclaimed.

"At this moment, if it was me lying in the ground all bloodied and wounded, they wouldn't have waited even for a moment and declared him as the winner.

Nobody would have cared whether I lived or died at his hands because I don't come from any powerful force or have the support of these noble clans and factions." he iterated.

At this moment, all the audience was stunned on the spot. Everyone watching the match suddenly came to realize that what Kahn said was indeed true. It had been a minute since Kahn defeated Victor in a fair and square battle but no one made any announcement even now.

"It's as if the whole competition itself is a scam and anyone who isn't one of these prestigious noble clans and factions will never be allowed to progress furthermore.

Let me ask all of you something.. Why is that in the past one thousand years, no one from a commoner background has been able to qualify till the semifinals before me?

Is it truly because the common folks lack wealth or resources? Do you really believe that our great empire didn't have talented warriors sitting amongst you?

Wasn't the first emperor, the one who created our empire and was the strongest warrior to ever exist in the past millennium born as a commoner?

Open your eyes! Until when are you going to believe in these lies?!" questioned Kahn in a grandiose manner.

Gasp!

Billions of people came to a sudden realization. Because what Kahn said was indeed a fact that no one could deny.

"Just now, he tried to use his clan and faction's name to threaten me after I defeated him. And yet, no one has spoken a word about it.

To be honest with you... I have already been threatened a couple of times to forfeit my match against him. And if I win, not only me but everyone I ever knew would be killed.

So tell me.. How is that fair?!" he spoke with a fierce expression.

"This competition itself was created by the first emperor to give everyone a chance to become a respected and powerful person in the empire as long as they have the strength and capacity. But now.. It feels more like a playground for the rich and influential where only they win and we participate for the sake of entertaining them.

Do we commoners have no right to fight to better our lives? Do we not have the right to control our fate? Are we only supposed to live and die under somebody's thumb?" Kahn riled up the crowd again.

The majority of the audience had clenched their fists as all of them resonated with Kahn's words.

"They don't want you to rise in ranks but always stay under their control. They act all fair and just in public but have you ever seen a commoner as one of the top ruling figures in this empire?

Even now, the government itself is made with the members of these clans and no normal citizen has ever risen a rank above a magistrate or a normal officer of the army.

So tell me! What's even the point of holding this competition if none of us are even allowed to win?!" asked Kahn with fearless eyes.

Let it be an old person who had spent their lives struggling or a teenager, regardless of their species, race and gender.. All of them found Kahn's questions relevant to their lives.

Why was it that the status quo never seemed to change in their empire? Why is every influential person in the empire, let it be a grandmaster or a saint, they always came from these forces?

Was it really because of their resources and wealth or could it be that the gifted people among them were never allowed to rise up in the first place?

**BOOM!!!**

Before Kahn could continue his words again.. Two oppressive auras landed on his body and he was instantly made to kneel on the ground in front of the whole empire.

Two mighty demonkins, both of whom seemed to be third stage saints appeared in between Kahn and Victor and they directed their saint aura as well as intense killing intent on Kahn. Both of their enraged gazes landed on the young swordsman as they declared in a tyrannical voice.

"You have provoked someone you shouldn't have. Now you shall pay for it..." spoke a demonkin swordsman.

"With your life!"

Chapter 302 - The Stunt

Amongst the debris of the now destroyed battlefield, Kahn was barely managing to maintain his consciousness after being targeted by the two demonkin saints out of nowhere. His life was in jeopardy once again.

"Do you really think that anyone can just openly insult the three factions and all the noble clans? And you think you can get away with it just because people are watching?" spoke the demonkin swordsman as his immensely threatening aura oppressed Kahn to the point where multiple cracks formed on the broken platform he was standing.

"You think too highly of yourself, boy. You shall pay for your arrogance for looking down on us!" spoke the second demonkin halberd warrior as he pointed the blade of his weapon at Kahn's neck.

Kahn on the other hand was frozen on the spot. Forget about talking back.. He couldn't even lift his head.

But before anyone could even react... in front of the billions of people watching this match, the saint swung his weapon...

**BOOOOMMMM!!!**

The next moment however.. Everyone among the 6 million people audience in this 25 floors battle arena, including the top saints of the empire were frozen on the spot as a godly blue aura that spread for dozens of kilometers in the sky suddenly suppressed every living being present here.

Two bright blue beams of saint aura filled with extremely dense world energy had frozen these two demonkin saints.

But unlike everyone else.. Kahn who was subjected to the suppression from these two saints could finally move his body as the auras oppressing him ceased to be.

In front of billions of people throughout the empire, an elderly figure who had waist-length silver hair and was dressed in completely white robes descended from the top floor of this 800 meters tall and 7 kilometer circumference battle arena.

The massive amount blue fire releasing from this being made him look like a deity coming down from the heavens above.

Suddenly, an archaic and solemn voice filled the battle arena as not a single living soul aside from Kahn could move a muscle under this horrifying aura.

"My my.. How brazen. You sure are giving a bad name to all of our noble clans and factions." said this elderly vampire who calmly descended in the battle ring.

And as soon as his feet touched the ground.. In just two seconds, the entire shattered battleground was restored to its former state.

The aura emitted from the owner of this tyrannical voice was something that couldn't even compare with anything Kahn had felt before. Compared to Stronoff and Ismaetrazel, both of whom were 4th stage saints.. This godly being's strength was in a completely different realm.

His gaze landed on Kahn, who was openly declaring that the whole competition was a scam and only the elites and influential of the empire were allowed to win while the common folks, who made the 95% of the population of this empire were never given a fair chance in this competition.

His claims about how no one from a commoner birth was allowed to fight till later stages even if they had the talent and ability for it had already caused a mayhem.

The next moment however, his gaze turned towards two demonkin saints and his eyes turned furious as a despising expression appeared on his face.

"I'm not talking about him.. But you two. To attack a citizen of our empire, one who rightfully won against his opponent in this match... You both have brought great shame and embarrassment to your clan and faction." said the old vampire as his archaic and kingly voice resounded in the battle arena.

To Kahn.. Who had seen this blue fire and felt this familiar aura just 10 days ago when Stronoff visited him in his manor... he quickly recognized who this superior being was.

And on top of it.. He also recalled the time when he heard this voice.

The old vampire in front of Kahn wasn't just some saint or an influential figure. This person was someone respected and also feared by the whole empire.

In his moment of peril... the being who came to save him was one of the three strongest individuals of the entire Rakos Empire.

It was none other than Szayel's grandfather, the Faction Leader of the pureblood faction and a seventh stage saint himself...

Allister Mor Vandereich!

Stunned! Every single person among the audience throughout the empire who was watching this broadcast was stunned.

Billions of confused people questioned one thing.. Who was this old vampire that like he owned the place?

Not everyone had actually seen or met him. And the common folks hardly had time to care about who was the bigshot among the elites as they focused on their daily life struggles to make a living.

But one thing they knew for sure.. Judging on the current state of these two saints who couldn't even bat an eyelid under the immense pressure released by this person..

He was definitely one of the top figures of their empire.

[So we finally meet... human boy. No wonder my son was so adamant about offering my personal token to you. You have outlived both of our expectations.

I'm pleased to see that the one to hold my recommendation token is indeed a capable and worthy warrior.] spoke Allister in Kahn's mind.

He wasn't using any form of artifact or a magic spell but his thoughts were clear for Kahn to hear inside his mind as if they had a sense of bond already.

[But you have created quite a ruckus now. This stunt was unnecessary and you could've lost your life today.

And what you just did... it won't be forgotten by the ruling powers of the empire. Not unless..] he relayed his thoughts again.

[Unless what?] asked Kahn in a cautious tone.

The next second, the seventh stage saint declared in his authoritative tone in front of the whole empire.

"I.. Allister Mor Vandereich, the current head of the pureblood faction and the general of the army of our great Rakos empire."

His gaze turned to Kahn again and then face the projection artifacts as he announced in his archaic voice that echoed through the whole empire.

"Declare mine and the pureblood faction's full support to the candidate named Kahn!"

Chapter 303 - The Three Kings

After Allister Mor Vandereich, one of the three strongest individuals of the empire and the general of the army which was unknown to many citizens of the empire till now declared his full support to Kahn..

A young swordsman who came from no powerful background, even all the top ruling powers of the empire were gobsmacked.

With this declaration, all the saints who were previously enraged and wanted to kill Kahn instantly retracted their killing intent and murderous aura. Although the two demonkin saints reacted first, others weren't far off from doing the same; let it be the Neutral, Demi-Human and Pureblood faction, majority of their top figures had the same thought.

All of them were the most powerful figures of the empire who lead millions of people in their respective clans and their strength as well as authority was unparalleled. Yet someone like Kahn insulting and then exposing the inner happenings of the competition had ostracized them in front of the whole empire.

But after Allister, the vampire faction leader announced his support... not a single one of them dared to have those thoughts linger in their minds. Because now.. Nobody in this empire could touch Kahn unless they wanted their entire clan to be wiped out of existence.

Kahn's jaw was wide open after the sudden predicament he was in. This was going completely against his plans and he was completely baffled at the moment.

Two days ago, when his opponent for the match was announced.. Kahn had Ronin do a thorough Intel gathering on Victor and his records of the previous matches.

After receiving the info and how this halfbreed demonkin usually fought against his opponents as well as his demeanor, Kahn devised a plan that he would be able to use in his favor.

Based on the information he received, Victor was simply too arrogant, impulsive and prideful of his background and lineage. And that was why Kahn started to insult this opponent since the very beginning of the match by telling him to kneel and beg on the ground if he wanted to win the match.

And as expected, the demonkin warrior ended up threatening Kahn after he didn't want to accept his defeat. And that was the exact moment Kahn was aiming for.

And all the High Lord subordinates who had a human form were ordered to infiltrate and subdue the staff of the broadcasting station so his blood boiling speech would enrage the crowd. *[Visit for the best novel reading experience]*

His original plan included him exposing what happened to him, how he was being targeted and even nearly getting killed. And to put the cherry on top.. Albestros himself was going to come down here and give his support as well as tell their tragic story about his children and how Kahn avenged them. To sway the public opinion and gain their imminent support.

And once the whole audience watching the match sided with him.. Not just these noble clans.. But any powerful figure or a saint would dare to touch him until the finals.

Because if anything happened to Kahn after this.. The whole empire would be filled with riots and public disorder to a degree that even the saints, clans, factions and the government itself wouldn't be able to contain it even if all of them joined hands together.

And that was exactly what Kahn had planned after the meeting with subordinates and Albestros.

Everything was going according to the plan until the two impatient demonkin saints who were foolish enough to attack him while the whole empire was watching came into play.

But then, Allister showing up and now declaring his support to Kahn turned his original plans upside down. Because even in his case, the recommendation token should've worked again to save him in that situation but instead.. The owner of the token himself came to save Kahn.

And now, Allister openly declaring his support also meant that Kahn was now tied to the pureblood faction whether he wanted it or not. In a way.. He just became a proxy chosen representative of their faction.

While he was lost in thoughts.. Allister spoke again in his authoritative tone.

"The reason I'm declaring my support to this young man is because I'm impressed with his courage and bravery.

He chose to speak against inequality and injustice that I was suspicious of myself.

To reveal the misconduct in front of the whole empire despite knowing the risk to his life was something only a true patriot of our empire would do.

In my eyes, he is no different than those brave soldiers who fight and risk their lives on our borders as they defend our empire with their sweat and blood!

Tell me.. O' people of Rakos Empire.. Does a brave man like this do not deserve our full support?

I can't say anything about others but I and my pureblood faction shall never condone such actions and hence, we will fully support Kahn during the investigation that I will appeal for to the government." spoke Allister with his regal demeanor.

Clap! Clap! Clap!

The next moment, two more godly beings descended from the air and landed in front of them.

A white-bearded tigerkin and an elven mage dressed in kingly robes also entered the chat group.

"For those who do not know, my name is Stalin Joseif. I'm the leader of the Neutral faction as well as the chairman of the council of ministers." spoke the Tigerkin with an upright expression.

"And I am Jeremiah Themis, leader of the Demi-Human faction as well as the chief justice of the supreme court of our great empire." spoke the elderly elven mage with a kind expression.

"We are here to applaud this young man's chivalrous deed; the selfless action of putting the truth out there and exposing the shameful act of trying to dictate the winner of this sacred competition." spoke Stalin.

"And I will personally form a committee to investigate this whole issue myself." spoke the Elven mage but then his gaze shifted to the demonkin saints and Victor, who was still lying in the ground.

He spoke with a grim and contemptuous tone that sent shivers in their bodies...

"As for you three... I shall deliver the judgment myself!"

## Chapter 304 - The Damage Control

As Jeremiah Themis, the faction leader of the Demi-Human faction spoke in his kingly tone.. The three demonkins shuddered in fear. Their bodies barely able to handle the godly pressure from this seventh stage saint and both of the third stage saints caved in.

[You two bastards came to do the damage control and save your factions from the public wrath?] asked Allister as he telepathically talked with the two seventh-stage saints in front of him.

[Aren't you doing the same, you damn bloodsucker?] asked Stalin with a benign smile on his face.

[These little impatient runts.. They really put me in a pinch.] said Jeremiah as he gave a look full of disdain to the three demonkins.

The next moment, he cast a cage made of saint aura and captured the two demonkin saints who were actually Victor's uncles in reality.

"You have greatly shamed your clan and our faction's name by committing such an atrocity.

Just because you have some strength and a background... Did you think you could go around oppressing and killing people of our empire?

Did you really think that I and our faction will stay silent and do nothing?

From this moment forth.. I, Jeremiah Themis, publicly banish the Apopis clan from our Demi-Human faction!" he declared in front of the entire empire.

"But.. But lord faction leader. Please, let us.."

"Silence!! I have made my decision. And you three shall be taken into custody and a trial would be held so you can reflect on your actions." he spoke like a true judge since it was part of his job in the government of the empire.

"Lord faction leader.. It's him who provoked.." spoke Victor but before he could complete his sentence, Jeremiah released some of his pressure again and froze his body on the spot.

Unbeknownst to everyone else, the seventh stage elven saint spoke in Victor's mind..

[Don't embarrass us more than you already have, boy!

You fell for his small trick and implicated all of us, you imbecile!] he commanded.

At the other end, Kahn who had no choice but to watch this charade had thoughts of his own.

[Mother... fuckers! These old bastards..] cursed Kahn in his mind.

To normal folks, Jeremiah appeared like a righteous person who was punishing the guilty. But the powerful knew that he was basically throwing Victor and the entire Apopis clan under the bus to not affect their faction's name or reputation when the whole empire was watching.

One thing Kahn realized was that all three of the faction leaders were doing damage control and lying on the spot to recover their images in front of the citizens after the stunt he pulled off.

Realizing the fact that if he was a professor who taught the course of lying and deception...

Every single one of these three people was the one who wrote these books!

[As if! He will only declare that in public but actually, it won't change a damn thing behind the curtain. There will be no trial either.] thought Kahn.

[Am I going to be their puppet again?

First, God of Darkness.. Then Arkham and Solomon. Later, it was Ismaetrazel, the Vandereich clan and now these three faction leaders.

Why the fuck am I never truly in control?!] cursed Kahn in his mind.

Because no matter how smartly he played his cards.. He was still being used by the truly powerful in the end.

He knew that after this.. The whole image correction campaign of the noble clans, the three factions and the government would start throughout the empire and before the finale, today's incident would be buried as if nothing ever happened.

So in the end.. All his efforts were going in vain.

And all of it kept happening because Kahn was playing along with the big guns with his meager strength.

If he was a powerful saint like the three faction leaders.. Things would go in a completely different route than his current predicament.

[Never again! After this.. I'd rather die than do their bidding!] thought Kahn as he made a firm resolution in his mind.

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In front of billions of audience, Kahn was officially declared as the winner of this semifinals match and the whole incident regarding him risking his life to shed light on the truth regarding this competition was etched into the minds of the normal citizens.

More than a billion people discussed Kahn's sudden revelation as a semi-saint despite coming from no noble background or any powerful force. The way he fought like a seasoned warrior and how he completely decimated his opponent with pure skills alone became the talk of the empire.

And after this match, Kahn was recognized by all the factions as a potential top figure in the upcoming future because even one of the strongest people in the entire empire had given his support to him.

But the saints of these powers and factions also recognized his true potential as someone who had already surpassed the majority of the semi-saints, let it be the younger generation or the old ones based on his unparalleled skill called the Dragon Strike.

Up until now, he was a nobody in their eyes. And no one had thought much about his journey till this point because all of them expected only the top clans to make it to the finale anyway.

Meanwhile, all the high lord subordinates who were safeguarding the broadcasting stations already returned and mixed among the crowd. All that left for them was to collect the money they bet on Kahn.. And given the odds and the amount they spent.. It would be a miracle if they managed to collect it all before the finale.

When the night came and all the people returned to their homes.. A different atmosphere filled the main headquarters of the top three factions.

Their respective faction leaders along with the top figures of the council held a secret meeting.

In case of the Demi-Human faction.. Even Victor's father, Darius Apopis was present in there.

All these top saints of the Rakos Empire had only one topic in their mind as they discussed amongst themselves as if the matter was of the utmost importance.

"No matter the cost.. We have to make him willingly join us. No matter the price..." spoke the faction leaders in their respective headquarters. And gave a final command...

"We must get Kahn on our side!"

Chapter 305 - Pureblood Faction

The next day after Kahn's matches, the hype for the next match continued as the next and final round before the main finale was even more popular compared to Kahn and Victor's match.

Because the two candidates who'd be fighting in this match were two of the top 3 candidates who were expected to win this competition based on their talent and prestige amongst the three factions.

A semi-saint vs a semi-saint.

The Raven Sorceress vs the Dual Swords Saintess.

Kassandra Mikealson vs Celine Armitage!

Both of whom were the chosen representatives of the neutral faction as well as heiress of their respective clans.

On paper, both the young human sorceress and the demonkin swordswoman were eventually matched. But none of them had revealed their full extent of strength or skills even till now.

So what everyone in the empire expected to see was these two young women fight against each other to prove their worth since rumors had spread among the masses that in case any of them wins the competition, they will be chosen as the successors of neutral faction leader

And given the fact that both of their fathers were sixth stage saints themselves.. It became a matter of prestige as well a key moment in the history of the neutral faction.

So the exposure and anticipation was already twice compared to Kahn's match.

However... On the day of the match, Kahn received an invitation.

Not just a normal invitation but one that arrived with a warship. Kahn had no choice but to accept and read the contents.

"I see. I expected as much." he spoke and departed in the warship that was actually sent to escort him to the residence of the host.

After spending 1 hour and traveling nearly 900 kilometers in this warship that resembled an intergalactic spacecraft, he and the force of grandmasters that was sent to escort him finally landed in the western end of the central region of the capital.

In front of Kahn, stood an enormous fort situated in a large city. Kahn still couldn't see an end of the enormous construct as the entrance gates themselves were 100 meters tall.

After a luxurious flying carriage picked him up, Kahn spent half an hour just to reach the main meeting hall where he was showered with flowers and escorted inside like a celebrity.

At the end of the one kilometer long hall where dozens of platforms and chairs were placed and could hold a grand meeting of at least one thousand individuals, were 2 people waiting patiently.

On the huge main throne, was an elderly and silver-haired vampire sitting like an absolute king and on the side of the throne, was a small throne where another silver-haired man who barely looked in his thirties awaited Kahn.

The father-son duo of Allister and Ismaetrazel had invited... more like summoned Kahn.

"How are you, human boy? Did you have a comfortable journey?" asked Allister in a magnanimous tone.

"Yes, your lordship." spoke Kahn respectfully as he half knelt in front of the seventh stage saint.

"Do you have any idea why I have called upon you?" asked the faction leader.

"I think I do." replied Kahn with an understanding gaze.

"Good. You're smart enough to understand these small things at least.

You do know that you're alive at this moment because I declared my support to you in front of this whole empire, right?" he asked.

"Yes, your lordship." said Kahn in an understanding tone.

He didn't have any domineering attitude or rebellious tone in his speech as the being standing in front of him was someone he couldn't even dare to stand in the same room.

At this moment, Allister looked at Kahn as if a gigantic dragon was gazing at a small puppy.

The realm of strength both of them were at was worlds apart.

"So what do you want in return for the protection?" asked Kahn as he stood properly in front of the two saints.

"Have you reconsidered the offer I made you months ago?" asked Ismaetrazel in a solemn tone.

"I have. And it's still no." spoke Kahn without a pause.

"However.. I have been approached by others just like you." he said before either of the saints could speak anything.

Both of their expressions turned alarmed but they quickly regained their composure.

"Who?" asked Allister in his old and grim voice.

"Stronoff Mikealson. Just like lord clan leader here.. He too offered me to become his disciple. And more importantly.. He offered me to join their clan through marriage." revealed Kahn with a calm expression.

The next second however, both the father and son lost their composure and instantly reacted.

"You can't!" spoke Allister.

"Airshh..." suddenly Kahn's expression turned to that of irritation and he no longer acted like an obedient child in front of these two powerful beings.

"Lord faction leader and lord clan leader.. Can we drop these pretenses for once? It's suffocating." spoke Kahn in a carefree tone.

There was a reason why he revealed the inside info about Stronoff trying to recruit him.

He wanted to see the expression on the faces of the two vampires. And after seeing their reaction... he knew one thing for sure..

THEY NEEDED HIM.

Kahn carefreely walked towards the left and sat on a golden ottoman-style chair and crossed his legs. His attitude took a U-turn as if he no longer cared about angering these two saints.

"If anyone could tell me what the hell is actually happening.. That'd be great!" spoke Kahn as if he had suffered a great injustice.

The next moment, the old vampire spoke again but without getting enraged or offended by Kahn's sudden shift in attitude.

"I can tell you.. But can you stomach it? Because me telling you the truth also means you will have to choose our side."

Sigh!

Kahn sighed as his shoulders dropped and he took a deep breath.

"After yesterday's fiasco.." he took a pause and spoke in a helpless tone..

"Aren't I already on your side?"

Chapter 306 - Truth Behind It All

No extra words were spoken between the 3 men after Kahn's affirmation about being their chosen representative after yesterday's events.

"I'm basically representing your faction in the finale." he said.

To his words.. Both the saints gave an understanding nod. Allister gave it a final thought and decided to speak.

"Before I tell you anything... know this. If you leak this information to anyone else or try to join any faction.. There will be dire consequences.

If you betray us or try to double-cross us.. The one to kill you will be none other than me."

Kahn on the other end wasn't fazed by these words. He had been facing death quite often these days anyway.

For the next one hour.. All three of them had a hearty chat where Kahn was either in complete disbelief, holding his head in surprise and pulling his own hair in irritation.

"WHAT THE ACTUAL FUCK?!!" he exclaimed loudly.

"So that's why everyone was after me?"

Then what about this competition? What part does it play in all of this?" asked Kahn to the old vampire.

"Obviously.. The one to win this competition can legally pick that area as their fiefdom. Not only can they use the resources of that place to fill their pockets but also have full control over it both in terms of political and military power.

Do you really think the winner faction will let others enter that area after choosing it as their fiefdom?"

No amount of authority or political pressure can make the other two factions gain any form of footing there.

Since all three of the faction leaders have taken a blood-oath... We will die if we try to betray the contract. And hence.. The one to win this competition also has the best chance to get it." iterated Allister.

"So tell me, Kahn. Do you accept our proposal?" asked Ismaetrazel in a solemn tone.

Sigh!

He sighed again and spoke in an exasperated tone.

"It's not like I have a choice. I was already playing the game I didn't even know the rules of. What choice do I have left now?"

"Let's say that I accept this deal..

But I have some terms of my own. And I don't think you have any other choice but to accept them at this point if you want me to do with my free will." said Kahn and gave a resolute expression towards Allister.

"What is it?" asked the old vampire with a curious gaze..

Kahn then replied with a fearless expression as he spoke in a domineering voice...

"I will do everything on my terms."

Both the vampires had confused expressions as they signaled him to elaborate.

"What I mean is that it should be okay as long as the means meet the end, right?"

I will not answer to anyone. I won't allow to be monitored or report anything to any supervisor. And do not expect me to join your faction after everything is done." he stated.

"Careful boy.. You're not in a position to make such demands." said Allister as he slightly leaked his aura.

"Is that so? The way I see it.. Only me and Celine Armitage of the neutral faction have a 50% chance to succeed.

If you try to force me in any way.. You know that you'll lose your last chance.

Is that a risk you can afford, lord faction leader?" asked Kahn with a smug expression.

Wrinkles formed on the old vampire's face as he squinted his eyes to hold his irritation.

"Fine! State what you want in return." he said with a grunt.

"Now we're talking. So here are my terms of exchange..." spoke Kahn.

For the next 10 minutes, he stated his secret demands and what he wanted in return from their Pureblood faction.

After the deal was agreed on both sides and evening finally came, he was escorted back to Rukon district in the warship he came in.

The secret behind why these factions wanted Kahn to join their side, the offer made by both Ismaetrazel & Stronoff and the whole truth behind the Emperor's Chosen competition itself was something nobody aside from the top dogs of the three factions knew of.

And after he heard the real reason.. Kahn's own plans had to be changed as well.

In the meeting hall of the pureblood faction headquarters.. Allister who remained with his son, spoke in a ghastly tone..

"I'm sure that Stalin and Jeremiah sensed it as well. We have to make sure that their people can't approach him or pressurize him in any way.

Deploy 5 of our 3rd stage saints for his protection. That human boy.. I believe he's the key." spoke the old vampire with a serious expression.

"What do you mean?" asked the silver-haired swordsman to his father.

"Why do you think we did no kill him after the blunder he pulled off in front of the whole empire?" asked Allister.

"Because the entire empire was watching?" asked Ismaetrazel.

"It did play a part in thar decision but it's not the primary reason." replied the elderly vampire.

"Then what is it?" asked the clan leader.

"First tell me... What do we know about his family history?" he asked.

"We found out that he is an orphan. There's no information about his parents. But we do know that he once belonged to a mercenary group that was massacred in a bandit ambush just a year ago.

And his uncle, the only blood relative he had, also died. He is the sole survivor as per our intel.

He met the peak grandmaster blacksmith Albestros Winston after getting hired as a bodyguard and saved his life many times during their journey to the capital when he also saved Szayel.

As for his talent and rise in rank without any support or resources from a powerful backer.. It's still unknown till this point." reported Ismaetrazel.

"I see. Then it makes things easier.

If anyone can do it.. It'll be this human boy.

Although it's extremely weak, I'm certain that aura I feel from him belongs to that man's bloodline. Kahn could be their descendant but he doesn't even know it." said the old vampire as he crossed his arms.

"Whose aura, lord father?" Asked Ismaetrazel with a curious gaze.

To his query.. The old vampire replied with a stern tone..

"The aura of the previous emperor."

When Kahn returned to his Manor and sat in a meeting between him, Albestros and the subordinates.. He explained the whole truth to all of them and why they were being targeted since the beginning.

He spoke in a sinister tone after he proposed his new full-proof plan.

"Till this point.. Those fucking Vampires and their faction used me like a puppet.

But from now on.." he said and continued with a sinister expression.

"It will be me who uses them."

#### Chapter 307 - Beating For The First Time

Five days after the second round of the semifinals was done.. The day of the finale finally came and a grand festival-like atmosphere came to be throughout the Rakos Empire.

This day would be etched into the history just like the finales of the Emperor's Chosen competition in the past millennium. And by no means it would be overshadowed by anything else.

What would happen today will directly impact the future of millions of people as the winner would get to choose a fiefdom and then live as a ruler of that area. The fate of the millions of citizens would be in their hands.

Although it appeared as a bad idea to let an inexperienced person take charge of such places.. History had proven from time to time that it also created good leaders and often, the people from these fiefdoms lived better lives and quality of lifestyle.

Because their rulers only paid attention to developing their rule and did not work like a government officer who couldn't even arrange enough funds for the development of these states.

And after a thousand years, only 3 areas big enough to be chosen as a fiefdom were left in the empire.

Two of which were extremely rich in natural resources and had a plethora of opportunities for redevelopment which would often create new jobs for the common folks and cultivate new cities in due process.

Hence, the common folks were looking forward to which area the champion of this competition would choose.

As for the results of the previous match on the day Kahn met and made a deal with the Pureblood faction leader.. He willingly chose to not watch it from recordings and only heard about who the winner was.

And after hearing the results.. He chose to meet this opponent right in the battlefield without even checking how this female opponent looked in reality.

For the first time in this competition, he was going without any prior information about the opponent as he was busy taking care of his last cards and the wealth he earned.

He planned on how they were going to use it so that nobody from any faction could harm him in any way and he will be using it to the best of his advantage.

All the money he won after his match with Victor was only gathered but yet to be tallied completely as it was going to take them months based on the estimations presented by Sirius, his new head accountant who had been managing their legit and the business through Seven Deadly Sins.

The orc accountant had proven himself as an incredibly talented and capable person who wasn't only good with numbers.. But also knew how to launder their money through legal means more than the generals.

Kahn saving this helpless orc nearly a month ago and deciding to cultivate him as a useful individual for the long term indeed turned out fruitful. So there were many things Sirius was left in charge of so Omega and the generals could handle other things.

"Lord Kahn.. It is done." spoke Sirius as he bowed in respect to Kahn.

Throughout the tournament, he was receiving surprise after surprise when Kahn kept progressing from rounds after rounds and he too was taken aback.

It was only when did Kahn and the generals needed a reliable hand to manage the income, did they bring Sirius into their inner circle.

But after the semifinals... Sirius had nothing but respect for Kahn in his mind because it was now well known to the whole empire that Kahn was someone who reached this stage in the competition without the support of any force and backing. And even risked his life to expose the misconduct during the competition.

In a way.. Kahn had gone from a Savior to a God in his eyes.

"How much did we need to spend?" asked Kahn.

"Approximately three hundred billion gold coins, my lord." reported Sirius as he handed Kahn records of their expenditure.

"Good. It's money well spent. Now let's wait till the right moment. After this.. We won't have to be afraid of anyone." spoke Kahn in with a smirk.

Sirius nodded and left for his task.

[Master.. It's time. We should leave.] spoke Jugram in his mind.

After Kahn and his envoy gathered.. They departed for the battle arena where the final match which would decide Kahn's fate in this empire was to be held in the evening.

After safely reaching inside the arena while avoiding watchful eyes, Kahn reverted to his original appearance and entered the battlefield.

After the grand opening ceremony, while being escorted by a dozen peak grandmasters, he finally reached his side of the battle ring.

The arena this time was one and half times bigger than his previous match while the main battleground in itself was 5 kilometers in circumference.

Even in the novels and mangas Kahn used to read, the cultivator protagonists didn't have this much area during their fights. Entailing that the power scale of this world was on a completely different level.

Because even an ancient immortal from such novels and stories would be bitchslapped to death by a fifth stage saint in this world.

On the highest floors, were the top saints including faction leaders present in the arena to watch the match.

Kahn and his opponent's odds are 70:30 for betting. Him being on the losing side again because after the second match, people came to a realization about who was most likely to win this competition.

Yet the previous match with Victor also greatly boosted his odds and reputation.

[Go all in.] he commanded and waited for his opponent to enter the battlefield.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

The resounding footsteps of his opponent filled the tranquil battle arena.

SHRILL!

The very next moment, Kahn felt a familiar killing aura that he sensed on the day when he defeated Veronica in the quarterfinals.

He already heard who his opponent was and how she defeated her opponent in the semifinals with an impeccable display of control and diversity in terms of her skills and how she controlled the battlefield.

But it was the first time he saw how she looked in real life.

In front of him, now stood the other finalist. But before Kahn could speak a word or do anything...

Thump! Thump! Thump!

After he saw his female opponent... a sudden rush of emotions spread through his body and mind.

And for the first time in Kahn's new life...

HIS HEART FLUTTERED.

Chapter 308 - The Raven Sorceress

In front of the 8 million people, every single one of whom was rich enough to buy this 50 thousand gold coins worth ticket, Kahn gazed?was simply awestruck after looking at her.

[Is this what they call... Love at first sight?] thought Kahn as he kept staring at the young woman on the opposite side while a gentle breeze passed by.

The distance between them was just half a kilometer but since both of them were semi-saints, Kahn could notice every minute detail about the woman who made his heart pound for the first time.

Even at this moment, his racing heart was out of control and so was his mind that was lost in a different dreamworld.

Because at this exact moment, a young woman of the same age as Kahn was dressed in an epic rank black sorceress robe, a black drape fluttering behind her with yellow gauntlets, waist belt and pauldrons as part of her gear, stood on the opposite side.

In her left hand, was a bright yellow orb that was an artifact often used by the summoner class to channel magic.

Her well-proportioned figure was barely 3 inches shorter than Kahn. Yet her skin tone was very fair and pleasing to the eyes.

Her raven black hair and dark blue eyes only complimented her beauty and made her look extremely desirable in the eyes of every male of the empire watching this finale match.

By no means Kahn believed in those over-exaggerated things such as a kingdom toppling beauty often mentioned in those harem and romance novels where the protagonist was nothing but a horny dog who picked women in every city he went in.

But after looking at the woman who was slowly walking towards him.. Kahn felt that those types of women did exist to a degree.

But what fluttered his heart was her overall personality and appearance.

Because her attitude, her clothing, her facial and physical features were something he had yearned for in his imaginary ideal woman from the past life as Elric.

To him.. The mesmerizing and enchanting figure of the opponent looked like the young version of Eva Green cast in the live-action role for Yennefer of Vengerberg from the third The Witcher game; as far as her appearance was concerned.

"Hello, mister Kahn. I'm Cassandra Mikealson." said Cassandra as she formally introduced herself.

His opponent was none other than the Raven Sorceress, the one titled as the number one genius of the younger generation.

"Hello Kahn, I'm Cassandra." replied Kahn in a hurry.

"Wait, that's not right.." he quickly said and regained his consciousness.

[Dude.. What the hell is happening?!] wondered Kahn in his mind.

[He he.. Looks like you have finally found a mate, human.] joked Rudra in his mind.

[Shut the fuck up, you legless lizard!] admonished Kahn.

[O' mighty Giga Chad... lend me the strength to fight these evil thoughts.] prayed Kahn as he closed his eyes and tried to adjust his breathing.

"What's your full name?" asked Cassandra in a gentle tone.

"It's Kahn... Salvatore." he said.

By the law of conservation of The Vampire Diaries.. If she was a Mikealson.. He had to be a Salvatore.

"I've heard quite a lot about you. Even my second uncle speaks very highly of you.

So please go easy on me during our battle." she said in her merry and pleasant voice.

[This creep... Why does he keep staring at me like that?

I'll step on his face in front of the whole empire for hurting our Veronica.] thought Cassandra as she maintained a friendly smile on her face.

[So beautiful.. Oh, fuck!! Control yourself you damn simp! She's a red flag!

Remember... Just like Katherine, her name also starts with a K!

Wait.. My name also starts with a K.

Seriously, who the hell is this novel's author?

That imbecile has no naming sense!] he kept cursing and regained his composure.

The next moment, Cassandra spoke again. This time.. Her tone turned from friendly to authoritative.

"Why don't you do me a favor and forfeit this match? I would hate to form an enmity with you because of this fight." said Cassandra as she gave a gentle smile to Kahn.

[Pick a fight with me.. Please pick a fight with me! If not for my father and those old rascals from the faction council watching.. I would've attacked you already!] she exclaimed in her mind.

Yet the expression on her face was of someone who seemed very pleased to meet Kahn.

To the audience however... this entire scenario seemed completely out of their expectations.

Both of these combatants were supposed to be top geniuses of their generation and extremely fierce warriors. But instead of engaging in a head-on battle from the start..

They were having a formal conversation as if this arena was holding a gathering function and they were trying to get acquainted with each other.

To some.. It felt like at this rate.. They'd soon start flirting in the middle of the ring.

"If you really want it that bad.. I can lose this match for you. But what will I get in exchange?" asked Kahn in a joking manner.

Stunned!! Not just the common populace but even all the saints and the three faction leaders had their jaws dropped on the ground.

Was this a joke?! Was Kahn really considering throwing away the match because a pretty girl asked him to?

Or this whole thing was a setup in reality and the match was already fixed?

More than a billion people throughout the empire had this exact thought at this moment.

[What the hell? Is this guy a nutjob or something? Is he really considering it?] wondered Cassandra.

Unlike her outer appearance.. Cassandra was more of a rough and tough type of person in reality, not some carefully raised princess of a kingdom.

"What? Really? What do you want?" asked Cassandra as she squinted her eyes.

"Something of equal value. Something worth giving up this match for." replied Kahn as he slightly tilted his head and maintained his friendly and welcoming expression.

"What do you want exactly?" she asked with a cautious expression.

The next second, Kahn smirked as he inspected Cassandra from head to toe again and spoke with a charming smile.

"I want you to marry me."

Chapter 309 - Reverse Strategy

Let it be Cassandra, the audience or the top mighty figures of the empire.. Everyone aside from Kahn was stunned and left speechless after this sudden demand by the young swordsman.

Cassandra had her eyes wide open as her jaw almost hit the floor. The next moment, her face turned red as a flustered expression appeared on her beautiful face.

"What.. What kind of nonsense are you talking about?!" asked Cassandra in a high-pitched tone.

Kahn was teasing her in front of the whole empire.

"Hey.. You started it first.

Are you that dumb? Will I really give into your proposal because you asked nicely?

Looks like you know nothing about the outside world, princess.

Only a pretty face but no brains." taunted Kahn in a sarcastic tone.

Embarrassed.. Cassandra felt embarrassed as soon as he mentioned this part.

It wasn't her but her father's command to propose this idea to Kahn and try to not make enemies with him because they too wanted Kahn to join their side.

Also, embarrassing her this way was Kahn's plan to get in her head. It would be useful if he could make her lose composure as he verbally provoked her in front of the empire.

Because no prideful and independent woman would let such remarks pass by easily.

"This kid... the more he pisses her off, the fiercer she will get. I already warned him.

If he keeps doing it.. She might just beat him to death." said Stronoff, who was seated in their VIP room along with Cassandra's father.

[Kassandra.. We will take care of this later. You can start fighting now.] said her father, Damon Mikealson.

The sixth stage mage and the current clan leader of the Mikealson clan also came because today.. He expected to see his daughter win this competition and pave the way for their faction for the upcoming future.

During the competition, Kasandra was the most popular candidate ever since she started from the bottom rounds unlike other semi-saints of the faction. So not just normal people but even the saints from other factions had expected to see her in the finale.

The biggest oddball that no one expected to see was Kahn himself.

"I see. Then there's no point in me holding back, right?" asked Cassandra as she clenched her teeth and tried to hide her anger after Kahn made a fool out of her.

[Just you wait, you scumbag. You'll be begging me to stop.] she thought as a battle intent filled her eyes.

**BOOM!!**

Two loud bursts of the auras instantly filled the battle ring as Kahn and Cassandra released their full strength right off the bat.

A violet aura along with a dark and red aura filled the battlefield. Millions of people among the audience also felt their intensely terrifying killing intent.

Kahn quickly activated Sword Savant skill and created 50 aura blades. All his battle-related passive skills in effect and one by one.. His body let out four different auras.

**Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom!**

Four consecutive shockwaves were released from Kahn's body as he activated all of his attack buff skills and received an immediate boost in his stats.

**SHRILL!!**

Kassandra on the other end finally revealed her skills as six different elemental orbs formed after she channeled her mana and created six different constructs.

And soon, these orbs levitated high in the air and took different shapes in just five seconds..

Two giant lances, two shields and two bows, each of which was glowing with the matching colors of their respective elements such as lightning, light magic, fire, water, earth and wood.

And to top it all, all of these conjured weapons were 10 meters tall in size.

Lightning crackled one lance while blistering heat from the second one raised the temperature of the atmosphere.

Two heavy and rugged shield made of earth element cracked the ground as soon as it landed on the battle platform. While the battlefield shook as soon as the wooden and earth elemental shield banged against the ground.

One bow made of the light element while the other one made of highly compressed water hovered in the air as Cassandra fortified these constructs with her mana.

[So just as I heard.. She has the skills of the summoner class. And yet.. This isn't even half of her strength.

Looks like she wants to probe my strength first.] thought Kahn as he charged towards her conjured construct.

Compared to his size, these constructs appeared like tall towers.. And if this was a real battle...

Kassandra would be easily able to fight against more than a thousand people because her constructs had the best combination of defense, attack and long-range attacking skills.

And based on their size alone.. The damage she could do to an enemy force would be massive.

Bang!!

Kahn's own summoned aura greatswords collided against these highly dense elemental constructs as per Kahn's will while he himself charged to close the distance between him and the opponent.

The next second, he appeared 100 meters as if he teleported using the new skill he created after merging Side Hopper & Flash Steps after the semifinals. This was now his fastest agility and movement skill that surpassed all the other ones he had before.

And he named this new SS Rank skill as...

Quicksilver!

[She's smart. She's using the best element suited for attacks, defense and long-range damage. I guess she's no poser after all.] thought Kahn as his figure flickered again and appeared 100 meters closer to the opponent.

BOOM!!

A loud aftershock resounded as Kahn appeared on the southern end after he quickly dodged a strike from the lightning lance.

His own aura swords started attacking Cassandra's weapons and shield as Kahn's figure appeared and disappeared from time to time while he evaded the light and water arrows shot from her bows.

BOOM!

Bang!

Dhang!

Clang!

In just a minute as soon as both the combatants seriously started fighting and their aura weapons started clashing, the battle took a heated turn.

Kahn quickly swung lucifer and used Lightning Flash attack to break past her defensive shields, only to receive an aftershock from the point of impact.

His aura blades spammed the attacks with different elemental blades as he looked for an opening while consecutively using quicksilver skill to avoid getting hit.

[Right there!] thought Kahn and the next second, he appeared between the gap between the giant shields that was created after a volley of attacks from his swords.

"You're full of openings." spoke Kahn as he dashed forward after infiltrating inside her defensive formation.

"Is that so?" replied the female opponent.

But the next moment, Cassandra gave a light smirk as she spoke in a mocking tone.

"You're right where I want you to be."

Chapter 310 - The Challenge

As soon as Kahn charged through the opening he created... more likely he was led to believe that he created, Cassandra gave a light smirk in response.

Survival Instinct blessing quickly alarmed Kahn that he was in grave danger!

Shing!

But before Kahn could even use quicksilver and get out, an orchid-colored barrier suddenly appeared out of nowhere and encapsulated the 100 meter area around Kahn.

Kassandra who was standing nearly 200 meters away from Kahn then moved her hands as if casting some sort of spell.

Suddenly, his body felt heavy as if all of the strength he had was getting suppressed greatly.

"This.. This is a restriction barrier!" exclaimed Kahn in surprise.

This was the exact experience he had before when Solomon and Arkham tried to kill him.

But unlike the prior event, the restriction barrier lowered all of his physical stats to 60% of the original strength.

[What the hell! Isn't she a summoner? Since when can they cast a magic barrier? And she isn't even using an artifact for it..] wondered Kahn with a shocked expression.

Crackle! Crackle!

Sizzle! Sizzle!

Before he could give it too much thought, both the giant lightning and fire lances attacked Kahn with a quick stab towards his location.

BOOM!

Another big explosion shook the battlefield and shattered the 50 meter radius battleground and sonic booms filled the arena.

Shing!

60 meters high in the air, a bright blue and archaic magical formation suddenly formed above Kahn who barely survived against the lightning and the fire lance attack.

[What the bloody hell..] cursed Kahn as he was already greatly suppressed and now.. Cassandra had cast a 100 meter wide lightning elemental magic formation.

This was an Enchanter's skill as far as magic-related professions were concerned in this world.

Multiple thundering noises filled the arena and Survival Instinct alerted Kahn's mind as if an extremely dangerous attack was coming his way.

[Dude.. This is simply cheating!] he exclaimed and tried to run out of the restriction barrier.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Dozens of lightning strikes from the archaic pentagram-shaped magic formation landed on the ground and Kahn, the main target was caught into the fray.

Even with his quicksilver skill, he barely managed to escape 4 strikes that shattered the 20 meters of space in an instant.

While avoiding the strikes, his gaze landed on Cassandra. The sorceress looked at Kahn and waved her right hand as if bidding him a farewell with a grin on her face.

[This bitch!] he cursed and sidestepped left and avoided a blinding lightning strike.

As if this wasn't enough.. Cassandra started casting another magic formation just above the one that was currently attacking Kahn.

Swoosh!

Bang!

Kahn avoided the light and water elemental arrows shot at him just in a nick of time that were aimed at his path to getting outside of this restriction barrier.

Bang!

Kahn's aura blades finally broke through the defensive shield conjured by Cassandra and flew towards their master.

In just a single collected attack, both the giant lances were pushed backwards.

Swoosh!

Suddenly, a chilling breeze passed by Kahn's body and for the first time during this competition.. Kahn felt shivers in his spine.

[Ah, fuck!] cursed Kahn as he saw the lightning elemental magic formation disappear...

But the new formation just above it was suddenly activated.

Not just Kahn but even the millions of audience suddenly felt chills on their body.

BOOM!!

A loud colliding voice filled the battle arena and right in front of the whole empire watching this match..

Kassandra summoned a gigantic goddamn iceberg!

[Son of a...] before he could complete the words.. The 100 meter wide iceberg descended upon him.

Bang!

A loud explosion banging noise filled the arena. And before Kahn had any chance, Cassandra buried him under the cold and frozen ice.

[Master!!] exclaimed all the subordinates who were hidden among the audience.

Because in front of them, their master was completely overwhelmed while facing this woman.

It hadn't even been 10 minutes since the battle started for real and Cassandra was legitimately whooping Kahn's ass in front of the whole empire.

Without his cheat abilities such as Executioner's Gaze, Hero of Darkness title, Asura Mode, Berserk God Mode as well as darkness elemental skills such as Dark Lightning Strike skill and Void Realm spell..

Kahn was getting thrashed around by Cassandra as if they weren't even in the same league.

Forget fighting on even terms... Kahn couldn't even come close to this woman.

And she herself was a living hack who was using the skills and spells of three different professions like it was as easy as breathing for her.

At this moment, Kahn's aura greatswords hovering in the air also stopped moving and everyone watching this match thought that he was done for.

"Oh my.. Stop playing around, would you? This isn't any fun." spoke Cassandra with a bored expression.

As if not being satisfied with the ongoing battle.. She yawned and kept looking towards the ginormous iceberg that buried her swordsman opponent in the ground.

Suddenly, a deep and grim voice resounded on the battlefield.

"Hey, tell me.. Aren't you just a Summoner? How can you cast magic formations like an Enchanter? And that restriction barrier can only be used by a Magician." asked a man with a deathly tone.

Because from what was seen in Cassandra's match with Celine Armitage, who was a semi-saint herself.. She had only used the skills of a Summoner till this point in this competition and it was a no different case in her previous fight either.

"Defeat me and I'll tell you my secret." said Cassandra as she winked at the iceberg as if she could see the man underneath.

Like Kahn previously teased with the marriage proposal and embarrassed her.. This time, it was Cassandra toying around with Kahn.

BOOOOOOMMMM!!!

A loud and ground-shattering explosion happened that sent tremors in the entire arena. The restriction barrier broke just from the shockwaves alone.

The broken ice and snow were thrown off and spread around the battlefield as the once frozen place that the iceberg occupied before was completely turned into a burning crevice.

GROWL!!!

A deathly growl resounded from the center of this blistering fire as if something was emerging from the pits of hell.

Thud! Thud!

A demonic figure who was literally on fire walked out, baffling all of the audience as his loud footsteps resounded in the surroundings.

This being was none other than Kahn... in the Drakos Armor.