

Darkness 451

Chapter 451 - Spring Season

Kahn stood rooted on the spot as the Raven Sorceress suddenly hugged him out of the blue and said that she missed him right after her reappearance in Verlassen fiefdom after more than a month.

He is not able to make sense of what was happening at this moment at all.

Just this evening after, Ronin received the message from Cassandra, the heiress of the Mikealson Clan who very recently saved Kahn's life instead of protecting her own.

Kahn on the other end, sacrificed a portion of his soul to repay this life debt to ensure her survival despite the cost both of them had to pay.

Kassandra told Ronin to set up an urgent meeting only between herself and Kahn. So the rogue general informed his master about it.

Hence, Kahn came at night while avoiding the public eye or bringing any of his generals together. This mansion was currently occupied only by Kahn and Cassandra. There weren't even normal guards on the gates of this mansion as if Cassandra wanted to maintain utmost secrecy.

Yet Kahn spread his assassins and many magician subordinates in the 5 kilometers vicinity just to check if there was any sort of magic formation or trap he failed to sense.

But surprisingly, there was no hidden formation or any force trying to ambush Kahn either.

Kassandra, who was in violet attire that made her look like a princess or even a queen of an empire based on appearance alone, suddenly hugged him.

Because of which, he was taken aback by this sudden change in Cassandra's behavior.

"I've missed you." spoke Cassandra after Kahn asked her the meaning of her actions.

There was no malice or any hidden motive that Kahn could sense from her expression either. Even her eyes had nothing but warmth in them.

[System, check if it's because of the soul link. Could it have affected her mind in any way? This is so not like her...] thought Kahn.

[System detects that neither the host nor the individual named Cassandra Mikealson is under any influence because of the soul link.] reported the system.

[Fuck! I should've brought Armin with me. Maybe he'd be able to detect something.] he thought.

Kahn hid the surprise on his face while he tried to read Cassandra and the situation around them.

There was no one present in the 5 kilometer radius. No formation, no barrier and not even a recording artifact. Yet Cassandra was acting strange and suspicious for some reason.

"Alright, this is completely unexpected." said Kahn and he gently grabbed her arms and slowly created some space between them.

"I'm sorry if I startled you. I should've talked with you personally before I invited you here." said Cassandra with a light smile on her face.

"Why did you call me here?" asked Kahn with a curious countenance.

"The truth is... I... I... I have..." spoke Cassandra but she suddenly started stuttering.

"I have been thinking about you ever since I left Verlassen. And after thinking about it over the past month. I've come to realize that I..." she said and continued as her pleasant voice landed on Kahn's ears.

"I like you. I like you very much.

And I couldn't wait anymore to tell you my true feelings." confessed Cassandra with gleaming eyes.

Kahn on the other end was neither baffled nor surprised. Instead, a different memory was running in his head at this moment.

Kahn remembered the situation and air around Cassandra the last time they met and had a walk together in his castle's main garden.

Kassandra back then was a prideful, firm and strong woman regardless of the injury she was recovering from or the pain of losing Issac, her cousin who was like a younger brother to her.

Even though she was suffering through a lot, she still maintained the tough girl act.

The independent and talented young woman with an unyielding mindset was now acting completely out of character as if she suddenly became a needy woman who desperately needed a man in her life.

Completely opposite of what she acted like during all the encounters she had with Kahn ever since they met in the finale of the Emperor's Chosen competition.

HOWEVER...

Suddenly... a pleased expression appeared on Kahn's face.

His entire countenance changed from that of dejection to a man who felt happy and even flustered after Cassandra's confession.

Kahn then turned his head away and spoke shyly...

"I... I've missed you too." he said in a cheerful tone.

Kassandra was suddenly taken aback by Kahn's words.

"The truth is... I fell for you the moment I saw you. I know it sounds very stupid but for the first time... My heart fluttered for someone after we met." he said in a gentle and caring voice.

Kassandra suddenly felt like the feeling was mutual between them and then closed her eyes as she forced herself onto Kahn.

She kissed his cheek, then neck, and soon, her hands started running through Kahn's undercoat and his shirt.

One by one, she started unbuttoning his shirt and as she was done... her soft palms ran through his chest and ripped abs.

Kahn on the other end, grabbed Cassandra by her waist. His right palm grasped her left cheek and the thumb touched her luscious lips the left hand pulled her in his embrace.

In the following moment... Their hot bodies were closely stuck to each other while Kahn's masculine palms and strong arms ran over her back under the layer of her clothes.

Kahn then kissed Cassandra on her forehead... then her neck. And just like her... he too started to undress Cassandra as if he could no longer control himself and had given in to his deepest desires.

He kissed both her cheeks over and over while Cassandra hugged him even tighter than before. Both of their bodies turned hot out of nowhere.

Kahn picked her up from her hips and took her to bed.

At this point, Kahn's upper body was completely exposed after Cassandra took off his clothes...

Kahn too slowly took off her top while only her red lingerie that was covering her two mountain peaks remained.

Kassandra's face turned faint red and she quickly wrapped her legs over Kahn's waist as she came close to his face.

She wrapped her arms around Kahn's neck and both of their gazes met each other with a sense of unending yearning.

Their hot breaths collided against each other as the distance between their lips kept shortening.

Both of them were in total heat at the moment and the look on their faces felt as if both of them were nothing but a man and a woman reveling in ecstasy, wanting to ravage each other.

And finally when there was only an inch gap left between their lips...

Kassandra closed her eyes, waiting for a passionate kiss.

He embraced her tightly with his arms.

Kahn finally spoke the three magic words...

"You disappoint me."

Chapter 452 - Fallen Prodigy

Kahn's words sent shivers in Cassandra's body as he suddenly said that he was disappointed in her right when both of them were in the heat of the moment.

She was frozen on the spot and her mind went in awry. Kahn on the other end, still had Cassandra in his embrace. Other than the thin layer of her lingerie, there was nothing else that separated their warm upper bodies.

Kassandra suddenly returned to her senses and quickly pushed him off. She scooted over to the other side of the bed and covered her exposed body with her hands as she had finally understood that Kahn wasn't buying her act.

As for why Kahn suddenly acted the way he did?...

After noticing the changes in her behavior... Kahn inferred the situation at hand and figured out that once admirable Kassandra was now behaving like a completely different person.

But he also realized that directly asking her won't help. So he decided to play along.

Kahn acted like that because he knew that asking politely won't help. Rather a sudden confrontation and shock in the spur of the moment would yield a truthful answer.

And that's why he decided to become intimate with her and caught her surprise.

Yet as he looked at her... Kassandra's face now had a plethora of complicated expressions. As if she had been wronged and yet felt guilty at the same time.

But soon...

Beads of tears amassed in her eyes and her countenance turned to that of someone ashamed of themselves.

Sob!

"I'm sorry." she said.

Sob!

In the following moments, the tears dropped from her cheeks as if a welled-up pain and agony were finally being let out like a broken dam.

Her expression turned crestfallen and she looked away from Kahn. Feeling angry and disappointed in herself while she clenched her fist tightly.

Kahn was no longer a narrow -minded man who would start throwing blame and scorn at others just because they did something. And in the current situation... he felt like there was more than met the eye.

Kahn quickly got up and brought his black and gray longcoat. He covered Kassandra who couldn't dare to look him in the eyes.

Yet Kahn didn't intend to act like an ignorant and moody teen and start badmouthing her. Instead, he calmly tried to assess as well as resolve the problem.

"Can you tell me... why you tried to seduce me?" he asked in a gentle and understanding tone.

Kassandra kept sobbing with puffy eyes...

Her fingers scrubbed off the eyelids and nose as she was doing her best to hold her tears inside.

"I was... I was ordered to." spoke Kassandra with a scared and embarrassed voice.

Even her words and voice felt like she could barely talk while the stream of tears kept falling. No matter how many times she wiped away her tears... one could tell that she was deeply hurt.

Just then, the system notified Kahn.

[System scan complete.

The individual named Cassandra Mikealson has no traces of mana in her body. She is no longer a magician or has any rank.

Now, she's a normal human.] reported the system.

Right when their half-naked bodies were in close contact, Kahn ordered the system to scan Cassandra's body through his physical touch. Like how he could scan other people's rank and levels before he became a semi-saint and an intermediate mage.

To see whether she was under the influence of some sort of spell or mind control.

But just now, the system reported Cassandra had completely lost her magic and her ability to use mana.

In other words... she was no longer a prodigy of the Rakos Empire or even a normal sorceress.

She was just a normal individual. Like the majority of the people of this empire.

Suddenly, a realization struck Kahn...

"Who did?" he asked Cassandra. *[Updated from . c o m]*

"My... my parents, the clan, and our faction's main council members. They... they forced me to do this." she replied with an aghast expression.

Even talking about her own family made her body shudder in fear.

"But why?" asked Kahn with a befuddled face.

"I don't know why... but they're under the impression that we both are very close to each other." she replied as he covered herself under his longcoat.

"But why did you agree? Could it be because..." spoke Kahn.

But before he could finish, Cassandra interjected.

"I don't know the reason... but after the incident with Caladrius, I have not been able to recover my powers.

My body's mana reserves have depleted and I can no longer absorb mana from cores or ores either.

I have fallen in ranks and I no longer..." said Cassandra as the words stopped in her mouth.

He took a deep breath while the tears didn't stop. With a sobbing tone, she continued...

"I can't use magic anymore!"

Exclaimed Cassandra with a voice filled with defeat and hopelessness.

She kept crying and wailing as the grief she had been holding inside for over a month had burst out.

Kahn, who was still half-naked, didn't interfere or speak a word. He understood that Cassandra needed to let out all of the sadness first than forcing answers out of her.

If his assumption was right... then Cassandra was suffering from self-doubt, sadness, anxiety and desperation for the entire past month.

A dozen minutes passed and finally, she regained some composure as she finally raised her head and looked at Kahn.

Unlike what one would expect... even in this room, where both of them were in a steamy situation not long ago... Cassandra noticed that Kahn's eyes had nothing but genuine worry for her.

"I... I'm no longer the heiress of the Mikealson clan." said Cassandra.

"What?! Is it because you no longer have your magic?" asked Kahn.

Kassandra nodded and spoke again.

"Everyone has partially made Veronica the new heiress to the position of the clan leader.

And I have been discarded. Both from my position and as a member of the head family." she revealed.

"And even my father and mother have stopped acknowledging me as their daughter. Treating me as if I'm some sort of a burden." she explained with a heavy voice.

"And the reason they sent me here..." spoke Cassandra as her expression turned resentful and she revealed the truth...

"To become your woman."

Chapter 453 - Unexpected Revelation

As soon as Cassandra revealed the real reason why she was suddenly forced to act like a horny bitch in order to seduce Kahn... the latter was completely flabbergasted.

"My clan and the entire Neutral Faction, including our faction leader, want you to join my clan and also bring the Tablet of Arcana to them." she explained.

"In return, they'd offer you a position in the faction and full support to aid you as the sovereign of Verlassen.

If something like what happened with the Demi-Human faction happens again, they pledge to help you out and bury everything against you throughout the empire.

And all they want is you to become my husband and the son-in-law of the Mikealson clan." spoke Cassandra with an irritated tone.

"What the fuck?!" exclaimed Kahn.

"Why would they go so far? Don't they already have Celine Armitage to enter the forbidden zone?" he queried.

"That's the main reason." responded the Raven Sorceress.

"The Pureblood Faction and Neutral Faction are the only two factions with strong candidates who can enter that region.

In the current situation... Victor is gone. I have lost my ability to use magic. So the neutral faction only has Celine Armitage.

While the pureblood faction has you and Ezekiel Nabi.

Just the two of you working together inside the forbidden zone is more than enough to ensure the success of the task and retrieve the Tablet of Arcana." revealed Cassandra.

"But compared to everyone else. You're the strongest semi-saint of the entire Rakos Empire.

Even both of them can't defeat you unless they join hands. Which I don't see happening because Ezekiel is part of the Pureblood faction." he elaborated.

"But why you... why would they send you of all people?" asked Kahn.

To his question... Cassandra felt even more depressed but controlled her urge to cry again.

"Now that I'm no longer worthy or a genius of the clan... they said that I should make myself useful at least.

And hence, I was forced to offer myself to you." she said with an angered tone.

"But why would they..." just then, another realization struck Kahn.

The incident with him flirting with Cassandra during the finale of the Emperor's Chosen competition. Where he admitted his affection towards her at the beginning of the fight.

Although he was taunting and trying to get in his enemy's head... dumbass people would only see it as him falling head over heels for her.

Then the incident with the Caladrius attack and his speech where he glorified Cassandra as a hero zealously in front of the whole fiefdom and through the recording that spread among the normal citizens of the empire.

And in the end, his walk with her in the garden on the day Cassandra left... which was witnessed by the people who were part of the envoy of the Mikealson clan that came to pick her up.

These three instances were enough to fan the flame to the assumptions of Kahn having a deep relationship with the Raven Sorceress. That at least he liked her a lot.

So Kahn finally had the full view of the whole picture and quickly got the gist of the situation.

After Cassandra's explanation... Kahn understood why they went to the extent of even offering the clan heiress.

They desperately wanted the Tablet of Arcana and were willing to sacrifice Cassandra's life for the sake of it.

[That fucking bastard! Does power and authority matter so much to him that he sent his own daughter to act like a prostitute?!

Just so they could win my favor and have me join their side now that Cassandra was no longer useful to them?] thought Kahn as he was thoroughly infuriated.

He tightly clenched his fist and looked at the helpless Cassandra. Even her parents abandoned and ostracized her as soon as she lost her usefulness.

She became nothing but an offering for them to get the so-called Tablet of Arcana.

Taking his relationship with Cassandra into account and now that she was no longer useful to them... they treated her like a means to make the desperate final attempt.

Since it was the only way because no saint could enter inside Verlassen or force Kahn to join their side.

"Your uncle... Stronoff Mikealson also proposed my marriage to Veronica before the finals.

I guess he too wanted to use me for his personal gains back then." said Kahn.

Gasp!

"Really? But that was more than half a year ago. Did he know about you before the competition?" asked Cassandra with a surprised expression.

But instead of replying... Kahn started connecting all the dots inside his head.

"It's not that simple. I think it's not just your uncle...

But even your father and Stalin Joseif, the faction leader, planned everything from the very beginning." he said.

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"Remember the golden envelope that your father sent me.

Your clan allied themselves with me.

In the letter, he said that the Mikealson clan does not wish to follow the commands and gang up with others in a vendetta against me.

Tell me something... your clan is one of the two strongest and most prestigious clans of the Neutral faction.

Could they really afford to become my allies without facing the wrath of the faction leader and the other powerful clans of the faction?" asked Kahn.

"No... You're right. First, the Armitage clan would've made a big fuss over it. Because their clan leader is actually a contender for the Faction Leader's position just like my father.

No way in hell he'd let such an opportunity go." spoke Cassandra as she too came to a realization.

But then... her entire body froze on the spot because she came to figure out another truth.

"Do you mean that they..." queried Cassandra with a shocked expression.

"Yes. It was all planned by them seven months ago when I won the championship. You being present here... in these circumstances..."

Kahn replied with a somber expression and made a revelation that shook Cassandra to her core.

"They planned to offer you to me even if you hadn't lost your magic."

Chapter 454 - Similar Fates

Kassandra was rooted on the spot. This was not something she ever dared to imagine.

"I had some suspicions of my own back then when I read the letter sent by your father. And now it perfectly makes sense." said Kahn as he looked at the woman in front of him.

This was the only explanation why the Mikeelson clan suddenly decided to ally themselves with Kahn just like the Pureblood faction before all the young heirs arrived in Verlassen; despite him being the one stealing the only opportunity of getting a fiefdom of their own where they'd be the absolute rulers.

Kassandra quivered and had an expression of complete disbelief on her face.

Because if Kahn was right... which she also believed to be the truth given their situation...

They planned to use her to get Kahn on their side even before she lost her magic. When she was at her peak and could even stand against a legendary rank monster on her own.

To Kassandra... this revelation shook all of her beliefs about herself, her clan and the Neutral faction.

Even if she hadn't lost her magic due to the injuries caused by the Caladrius... They were eventually going to force her to act like a whore by any means.

Her losing the ability to use her magic was just an excuse. Things were set into motion even before she came to Verlassen.

That she was nothing but a chess piece for them from the beginning.

"But why... to make such a meticulous plan even before I took command of this fiefdom.."

"Why does it even matter?... It was all a lie..."

Why did I work so hard?... I was nothing but a pawn for them... even for my family." spoke Kassandra with lifeless eyes... as if her reality had been toppled.

Another stream of tears ran across her cheeks as she suddenly felt like her entire existence was meaningless.

Everything she did to become a semi-saint sorceress... to live up to her clan's name and prestige... all the hard work she put in the past 15 years to become a worthy daughter of her parents... none of it even mattered.

"What did I work so hard for? They never treated me as a human being but an object they used for their selfish goals." she said and even her body stopped breathing as Cassandra entered a state of severe depression.

It was this moment...

Like everyone who would be shaken after finding that their whole life had no meaning...

Kassandra had completely broken down.

As if having no will to carry on any longer, she looked at the closest balcony of the room and slowly walked towards it. She looked outside and gazed at the ground from the border of the ledge.

They were currently on the 3rd floor of this grand mansion. And since she was no longer a semi-saint or even had any mana in her body... the height, which was around 50 meters from the ground... was enough to get the job done.

Sniff!

Kassandra brushed off her tears, presumably for the last time. She took a step towards the stone parapet. Her figure suddenly leaned downwards.

After having her life turned upside down from the past month... and now finding out that she had been seen as nothing but an expandable accessory to achieve their goals for her own family...

Kassandra finally lost her voice of reason.

A chilling breeze passed by and Kassandra, whose entire existence just crumbled and she decided to let go...

Grasp!

Suddenly, a firm right hand wrapped around her waist from the front and stopped her from going forward with her decision.

Kahn stood beside Kassandra while looking in the opposite direction. His back faced the side of the parapet while he didn't make eye contact with Kassandra directly.

"You have two choices now.

You can let your feelings and pain affect you and end your life here...

Or you can talk it out with me." spoke Kahn as he loosened his grasp over her waist.

"Believe me when I say this... the first choice will end your suffering. But it will never turn things for the better or change anything even after you're gone from this world." he said in a firm and serious voice.

"If you go with the second choice... I promise that I will stand by your side till you're completely done with expressing yourself and let out your anger, hatred as well as all the sorrows you've been going through alone.

And if you still don't feel like carrying on... I won't stop you." spoke Kahn.

Because at this moment... he noticed something in Cassandra.

Minutes ago, she found out that her existence itself meant nothing to her parents and family. The one she worked very hard since childhood to please and get the recognition of.

Just for some unknown artifact... they chose to sacrifice her entire being and offered her to Kahn on a platter. They sent her back to Verlassen just so they could reel him in.

If Kahn wasn't a good person... she would've been used like a plaything given the situation and only be treated like a toy.

And the worst part was... she no longer had the strength, authority, or even the right to refuse. She didn't possess anything to even protect herself in the present situation.

If Kahn was someone who lusted after her body and wanted to take the advantage of the situation because of Cassandra's helplessness...

The whole scenario would've been entirely different and Cassandra would probably experience something that no woman wanted to go through.

As for Kahn himself...

Kassandra's sorrowful expression and her defeated eyes reminded Kahn of a certain someone he knew very well.

Someone who had seen the world crumble right before him. Someone who went through years of loneliness, misery, self-loathing, and that feeling of being left out since no one cared whether he lived or died.

Because the Cassandra who stood on the edge, ready to let go of everything after having this massive existential crisis, reminded Kahn of his previous life as...

Eric on the night he committed suicide.

Chapter 455 - The Victims

TEN MINUTES LATER.

Kahn forcefully carried Cassandra back to the bedroom before she made any stupid moves due to her current mental state.

Although it looked like a hasty decision... as someone who had gone through it once, Kahn knew how the mind of a depressed person actually worked unlike the self-proclaimed experts on the internet and social media.

When someone has had enough of suffering, constant defeat, their lives changing drastically, and realizing that their whole existence didn't matter... in that mental state, you feel like you're a worthless being.

And letting go of it all seems like the only way because you feel caged inside your body. The mind loses all rationality and voice of reason while the heart-wrenching sadness makes you feel like you don't deserve to live.

And in those moments when you've mentally broken down... you make decisions that you might never return from.

Soon, Kahn left the room as Cassandra properly dressed up again while he donned his white shirt, black tie and undercoat outside of the room.

Kassandra, having no choice but to comply because she knew that Kahn won't let her jump anyway. And now that she was just a normal human, she wouldn't be able to die even if she willed it.

After she got out of the room while still being covered in his longcoat.. Kahn took her to the wide terrace. Both of them sat on a wooden sofa under the bright and serene moonlight.

As for why was Kahn trying to act like her therapist?

Because he was in a similar situation just like Cassandra back when he lived as Elric on earth.

And that night... there was no one who came for him. No one stopped him or said that it was going to be okay.

Although he felt bad for her... there was nothing he could do to help her come out of this situation.

So at least, he wanted to be that person for Cassandra.

"Speak everything you want to say. Don't think that it's weird to let your heart out in front of a stranger.

I'm not going to judge you or even pity you.

You don't need to convince me or think about how I will change my opinion about you.

Just speak the truth that you want to let out. I'm all ears." spoke Kahn.

Kassandra was still in the phase of losing her will to live since her whole life has been proven meaningless.

Tears of sorrow dropped from her face again.

This was the worst day of her life.

After a few minutes, she barely mustered up the courage and strength to speak again.

"I... I grew up pretty lonely despite living together with both of my parents. They were always busy doing things I didn't understand. Other than having two meals together, there was hardly any time we spent together.

Growing up... I always wanted my parent's attention and approval. That they were proud of me as their daughter.

And I worked very hard to surpass others and live up to their reputation, my family name who are the descendants of the first sage.

Even in the magic academy, I was always avoided by others because of my heritage.

Other than my cousins who grew up with me... I never had any other friends or anyone I was familiar with outside of the main family." spoke Cassandra in a hoarse voice.

"Instead of wanting to play house or spending time with other kids... I sacrificed my freedom to learn magic as soon as I could think on my own.

But even after I did everything, surpassed all of my peers, and excelled in magic by putting in a lot of effort... there was no one who praised me or said that it was because of my own hard work.

From childhood till now... I have only lived in the shadows of her parent's glory and their prestige." said Cassandra with a jittery tone as her hands trembled.

Ever her face had a constricted expression as she slowly started to express her mind.

"I even unlocked an Ancient Rank job with sheer will and hard work but then, my family told me not to reveal it to anyone.

The Emperor's Chosen competition was going to be my chance to prove myself to everyone.

And after I lost to you... no one even reprimanded me as if they never expected me to win in the first place." she said with the eyes of a person who at least wanted to be scolded for her failures.

But she didn't even get that. *This content is taken from .com*

"Rather... Everyone in my family focused on you and your rule as the Sovereign of this fiefdom.

And in a way...

You became the biggest target I wanted to surpass." spoke Cassandra as she brushed off a teardrop on her right cheek.

"But when I met you that day along with the other heirs...

I knew that I couldn't even touch your shadow at this rate.

But I still persevered and hoped to achieve my goal one day. But now..." she said and suddenly stopped speaking.

Her head fell down and she clasped her palms.

"I could've managed to accept it that they offered me to you after I lost my powers. In this world... only powerful rule over others anyway.

But if they planned to do so even without me still being as powerful as I was... then what does that mean?" asked Cassandra as she looked at Kahn with an expectant gaze.

"That I was not worthy in their eyes even with all of my strength and achievements?"

She asked and soon, had another meltdown.

As she kept sobbing...

Kahn was reminded of himself back when he lived as Elric.

His story while growing up wasn't much different than hers.

Just that, he chose to seclude himself from others while Cassandra was an outcast because of her family's background.

And no matter the efforts and achievements... there were still higher levels of expectations.

Both of them were the victims of...

Failed Parenting.

Chapter 456 - Two Worlds

While talking with Cassandra, Kahn came to realize how similar their situations were after Cassandra started expressing her pain and suffering little by little.

In his life as Elric... It wasn't like he never tried to appease his parents or gain their recognition. He was born with a weak body and hence had many disadvantages when it came to sports or any athletics.

There were times when he used made the best use of his eidetic memory and topped in school competitions. But what use was it if your family didn't even bother to come to cheer you up?

He was like an unwanted child born out of mistake to his parents.

Hence, as Elric grew up, he never had real motivation or urge to excel in these fields. Because no matter what he did whether it was sports or academics... it was never enough for them. The standards his parents set for him were too high.

Instead of trying to understand their son and accept him for being different than their first two children, what his parents did was only compare him and then act like it was his fault.

They cared more about what would the society think or what their relatives would say about their fake prestige than actually trying to encourage their youngest son.

For Cassandra, it was the same. However, the only difference was that she really did achieve most of it. But now... they found out that all of her efforts were futile in the end as her parents and her family thought of her as nothing but livestock that they could trade for some gains or political favor.

If it wasn't Kahn whom they decided to offer Cassandra to... maybe her fate would've been sealed if it was some noble clan or some powerful figure.

Instead of having such a talk when she had broken down... Cassandra would probably have to endure even worse suffering.

In a way... their current circumstances turned out to be at least better than what they failed to recognize.

Hours passed under the moonlight while Cassandra let out all of her sadness, sorrows, hatred, and even cursed in words Kahn hadn't even heard in both his lives.

After Kahn offered her to be the person she could vent out all of her misery and anger to... Cassandra who no longer wanted to live was calming down little by little.

Her rambling and cursing the entire world resounded in the surroundings and she wasn't holding back. Bringing even the events that happened years ago and cursing every single member of her family who betrayed her.

Kahn on the other end felt relieved. Neither did he judge her nor made fun of her. He was simply there...

As a person who listened to her story and true feelings.

At this moment... Kahn realized one thing.

That he and Cassandra...

A man born on Earth and a woman born in Vantrea, from two different worlds...

Had much more in common than he ever imagined.

A cold breeze passed by both of them while Cassandra finally took a deep breath. Her turmoiled mind finally regained control over herself and she closed her eyes to contemplate her life.

Even Kahn wondered if he could've managed to come out of that trance state as Elric this quickly like Cassandra.

Although he lend a helping hand... coming out of the mental state of wanting to kill yourself was no joke.

"Thank you..." spoke Cassandra.

Her disheveled hair and puffy cheeks appeared in front of Kahn.

The princess-like Cassandra now looked like a girl who had messed up her makeup. And her once crying figure now seemed to be recovering a bit from her depressed state.

"I don't think I would've managed to feel... less burdened if you didn't stop me." she said with a thoughtful expression.

Kahn nodded but didn't say anything. It had been nearly 4 hours since Dr. Kahn started the session and Cassandra went through many emotional phases.

From sadness to anger, from hatred to loss, from helplessness to wrath. She had expressed so many things and how she felt like a worthless being after she was traded off like some goods.

"You're welcome." replied Kahn in a gentle tone.

"So does it mean you no longer want to jump down?" asked Kahn with a coy smile.

Kassandra then gave him a suspicious look.

"Who knows... I still might." she said.

"Why?... Now I feel as if I wasted 5 precious hours of my life. Man, what a waste of time." said Kahn and shook his head.

Kassandra suddenly looked at Kahn and gave him a deathly look.

"Asshole!" she said and looked away, a sense of playfulness appearing on her face.

"Oh, now I'm the bad guy? My my... some people really don't know how to appreciate kindness.

You should be indebted to me for life after I stopped you." spoke Kahn sarcastically.

Kassandra turned her face towards him and glared at Kahn.

"Is that so?... Then why didn't you start with that instead of going along with my act?

Tell me... you enjoyed that, didn't you?" asked Kassandra.

Kahn quickly turned her head around and looked at the scenery in the surrounding.

"The night feels very beautiful." he said.

"Hey! You opportunistic rascal!

Take responsibility for playing with a maiden's honor." said Kassandra as she lightly punched him on the right shoulder.

"I don't know what you're talking about. All I remember is a woman undressing me out of the blue and after that... I don't remember anything." joked Kahn.

"Hya! Do you think I'm an easy girl? If not for my situation, you think I would be in the same room as you?

Hundreds of marriage proposals are queued up for a beautiful girl like me." spoke Kassandra as she adjusted her shiny raven hair.

"Beautiful girl?" asked Kahn and looked around him and Kassandra with a suspicious gaze.

"Where?"

He asked nonchalantly.

"You bastard!" said Kassandra and started a barrage of fists and punches with her weak and soft hands.

Kahn got off the sofa and slowly ran away.

"Hey, come here!" said Kassandra and ran off after Kahn.

He on the other end started avoiding her incoming punches as both of them started a little play of catch.

Both Kahn and Kassandra knew that this was just a childish act to lighten up the mood.

But to them... this was a gateway to forget their worries and problems for a while.

After going through such a mental breakdown, Kassandra finally regained her old self and Kahn, on other hand, felt relieved.

And this little shenanigan... was their moment of peace.

Chapter 457 - The Confession

As the serene bright night under the two moons in the sky was coming close to an end... Kahn and Cassandra sat on the sofa again while the gentle breeze freshened their bodies and mind.

For some reason... both of them didn't want this night to end.

"This is nice." said Cassandra as she looked at the two moons and basked in their soothing light.

She looked at Kahn with an expression of gratitude. If the man whom she once saw as a rival hadn't been so mature and understanding of her situation... she was certain that she would've committed suicide and ended her life to escape the pain and heartbreak.

And like Kahn told her... it wouldn't have made any change at all. And the one to lose in every aspect would be her.

"I should do the same... if you have anything to say, tell me. I can also be a good listener." spoke Cassandra.

Kahn let out a slight smile and replied.

"Be careful what you wish for. My story isn't something that great. You'll be bored to death."

"Challenge accepted." said Cassandra with a playful tone.

For the first time in the past month ever since her fight with Caladrius... Cassandra let out a genuine cheerful smile.

Kahn, for some reason... did not want to play mysterious anymore and spoke...

"My life is similar to yours in some way. And plenty different at the same time." spoke Kahn as he gazed at the blank space.

"It's full of misery, plenty of mistakes and regrets. Are you sure you want to hear?" added Kahn.

"You're the textbook definition of a great person. Something akin to the historical figures we read about in books.

A prodigy born amongst the poor, who lost his parents at a young age and through the sheer hard work and heaven-defying will... You even became the most talented as well as the strongest semi-saint.

On top of it... you're the new Emperor's Chosen champion and also a Sovereign at the same time.

I refuse to believe that your life is anything as you're making out to be." said Cassandra.

"But still... I'll listen. And I promise I won't judge you." she continued and nodded in affirmation.

Kahn sighed and spoke without holding back.

"I grew up in a similar situation. To my parents, I was nothing but a failure. No matter what I did... it was never enough.

In the end... I had a family but I was no different than an orphan." he said.

Kassandra suddenly had an alarmed expression.

"And now... I have too much blood on my hands. Both guilty and innocent." said Kahn as he started with the topics people would naturally avoid right off the bat.

"There was a time when I foolishly condemned an entire clan's future because one of their leaders tried to kill me." he said with a serious voice.

Kahn then remembered how he killed off all the stronger members of Stragabor Sigurd's clan because their young master, a beginner rank grandmaster had poisoned him in a banquet of nobles and influential figures.

"And there was a time when an innocent woman died because I stole something from someone.

And to find me... those people tortured her to death. But even till her last breath, she did not speak my name because I had saved her life twice.

Because of my greed and foolishness... she died in agony and alone. And to make a statement... they hung her corpse on a tree close to my house." spoke Kahn.

The one he talked about was obviously Jessica Artwinger. The redhead girl Kahn saved when he just exited the abyss forest and saved a caravan from a group of bandits.

Later, he saved her in a dungeon floor and robbed a space ring from the corpse of the dead leader of a guild who was hunting the floor boss.

And because she was the only survivor of that group... they caught her and tortured Jessica to find out about Kahn.

But even after having her nails ripped off and her face beaten with an iron mace... she never spoke his name until she finally died a miserable death.

Kassandra gasped in surprise as soon as she heard Kahn. This was not what she was expecting to hear from the man she had come to admire at this point.

"And after finding out about what happened... I stormed inside the guild that caused her death.

In my moment of rage... I killed over a hundred people that day in the name of revenge. Many of whom probably didn't even know anything about her death." iterated Kahn.

That was the very day when Kahn stormed inside the guild headquarters of the Red Lion Adventurer guild and then later, he killed all of their top fighters in the Cintra dungeon while his head was filled with guilt and fury.

Kassandra then covered her mouth as she was unable to accept this revelation.

Although she was aware that this was a cutthroat world... she had never killed a person in her life so far.

"There was a time when I tried to cause a revolution with the hope to change people's lives. Only to foolishly lead them to their deaths because they weren't organized and there was no true leader.

My acts of acting like a hero lead to over a thousand deaths of those who tried to rebel against the powerful." mentioned Kahn.

After his crusade as Azrael started in order to bring justice to the noble clan heirs who r*ped and murdered the daughter of Albestros as well his son...

Kahn gave a moving speech when he carried out the punishment of the last heir that sparked the fire of rebellion among the masses.

But since the commoners who had been oppressed for most of their lives in Flavot city didn't have any weapons, weren't organized or had someone to lead them... the aftermath caused over a thousand deaths.

At this moment... Cassandra was rooted on the spot. Because so far, all her encounters with Kahn gave her a good impression of him.

But now... she came to know the truth about him. That the man in front of her...

Had walked a path made of blood and bones of the innocents.

Chapter 458 - Self Reflection

Kassandra was left speechless, rooted on the spot, bewildered, and shocked by each incident Kahn mentioned and how his actions caused the deaths of a lot of innocent people.

But this didn't seem like the end of the story either.

"Later when I went to Rathna... I made enemies out of a lot of powerful people in order to establish my businesses and earn money.

But as a consequence of my brazen actions and picking fights with the Chamber of Commerce... hundreds of my employees, who had nothing to do with anything ended up being hunted and dying.

On some occasions... The killers finished off the whole family to not leave any witnesses. They didn't spare children, the elderly or even the newborn babies.

Although I avenged them too... the fact remains that their blood is on my hands.

If only I had realized that I was no longer responsible for myself but people who worked for me at the same time... maybe all those families would still be living happily."

Said Kahn as he blamed himself. Which was indeed his fault.

Although he wiped out the entire Red Right Hand assassination organization that was hired by the main council members of the Chamber of Commerce of the Rukon District... the loss of life still remained.

"In all those situations and moments... my actions seemed like reasonable choices when I was trying to advance in life.

But now that I look back at what I did... I see nothing but an overconfident, foolish, ignorant and hypocritical man." he confessed.

This was the reason why Kahn never thought of himself as the good guy. Because whether he intended or not... there was too much blood on his hands because of the choices he made.

"Tell me something... would the people of this fiefdom or the empire accept someone like me if they knew this truth? Would they believe in all the good I have done so far or just discard it away because of my past mistakes?

Can they understand me?

Can you understand me?" asked Kahn.

Kassandra had no answer to his questions.

In her eyes... Kahn was the most perfect man she had come to know. He was talented, strong, reliable, kind, and mature than any other person in her age group.

But now... the good image of the man who saved her and stopped her from committing suicide suddenly seemed... tainted.

"There was a time when I was in a similar situation as you. I too had both those choices in front of me.

To give up or carry on and endure.

Today... I am where I am because of the decision I took that night.

Maybe I would have a different life if I made a different choice back then." said Kahn.

He reminisced the night of his suicide and only gave vague information about it to Kassandra.

"Like how your parents cast you off and betrayed you... I once went through a similar situation as well.

And the worst part is... I have a mental trauma.

Because of which, there aren't many people whom I can trust even now. And so far... I don't truly have friends either.

Recently, I noticed that I willingly don't let people get close to me." admitted Kahn.

Referencing the final push that made him jump from the building as he ended his life as Elric.

A silence ensued as both parties in the conversation suddenly stopped speaking.

The more she heard Kahn speak his mind... the more shock she kept receiving.

"What trauma?" asked Kassandra as she steeled her will.

"That I don't trust anyone. Especially women." spoke Kahn with a content smile... like a psychopath.

Kassandra's entire being suddenly shivered.

"You're like the most eligible bachelor of the entire Rakos Empire.

Half of the females in this whole empire, regardless of their age and race, fancy you. And you're saying that you have a trauma against women?" says Kassandra in a jittery voice.

"It's better this way. For me... and them." he replied.

"I'd rather live a life of solitude than go through it all again.

At this rate... I'm afraid I'll become someone who doesn't even value life. And I will end up becoming a person who would kill anyone just to achieve my selfish goals.

Just like your family who used you as an object to gain my favor." spoke Kahn truthfully.

Kassandra had a complex expression on her face after Kahn kept revealing many things about himself to her.

Suddenly, Kassandra decided to speak her mind.

"It's not like you willingly made those decisions while knowing the consequences. I can understand why you blame yourself but at least in my opinion... you're not completely evil."

"Evil is evil. Lesser, greater, middling... Makes no difference.

The degree is arbitrary. The definition's blurred. If I'm to choose between one evil and another...

I'd rather not choose at all." said Kahn in a stoic voice.

Another silence ensued as Kassandra herself started contemplating Kahn's words.

To her... those words sounded like wisdom spoken by an old man who spent decades exploring the world and had too much knowledge and experience about the world.

A few minutes passed and she spoke again.

"I take back what I said. Our lives are different in many ways. And I made the mistake of making presumptions about something I have not experienced myself."

The next moment, however, she looked Kahn in the eyes with a firm gaze.

"And I thought I had a lot of emotional baggage. I suffered only for a month, and acting like an idiot... I wanted to end my life.

You on the other end... you've been suffering from it for years." she said in an empathetic tone.

"Don't be fooled, Kassandra. I'm not the kind you should feel sorry for.

You will find many people like me in this world. And you can't afford to be kind or understanding to them. Because they certainly won't." spoke Kahn with a somber expression.

"As for me..." he continued in a grim tone as he had a chance to self-reflect for the first time.

"I'm someone who doesn't deserve any salvation."

Chapter 459 - Looking for a Way

Kahn's stern voice resounded on the terrace as he declared that he was beyond salvation because of his actions in the past. The burden called guilt had been weighing down on him for a long time.

But it was this night that he had the chance to finally speak his mind.

This instantly made Kassandra worry about Kahn.

Before tonight... their relationship was no different than rivals and then allies. But after spending the last 7 hours together during which, too many things happened like a drama show... the bond between them had turned to that of close friends.

Both of them shared their feelings about the world, their lives and secrets that they never told anyone about.

Kassandra quickly grabbed Kahn's hand and spoke in a worried tone.

"Don't beat yourself up. The fact that you feel guilty and hold yourself accountable is more than enough to see that you didn't intend to take innocent lives.

Those are indeed caused by your actions but it wasn't like you wanted to kill them in the first place.

Deep down... you're still a good person Kahn. Don't let your mistakes define the rest of your life." she spoke in a caring voice.

She tightened the grip on his palm and came closer to his face. Kassandra went from victim to the one carrying on the counseling after she found out how Kahn's life had been twisted to the point of him blaming himself even for things he couldn't have foreseen or controlled.

"If it wasn't for you... I would've committed suicide and died a useless death not even worth pitying.

Always remember that you have at least one person who will listen to you from now on." spoke Kassandra with a firm voice.

She herself was screwed over big time. And had no power to change her fate either. Yet, she acted like a brave woman and a friend for his sake.

Kahn had done the same for her and now, it was her turn.

"Don't worry. It's not that serious. The reason I told you all these things about myself is to make you realize that what you're going through... is something I have experienced as well.

So don't give up on yourself even in the future when things look tough.

You're much stronger compared to me when I was in the same situation as you.

People take months to recover from what you just went through.

So do not look down on yourself. You may no longer have the ability to use your magic... but your will surpasses even mine by many times." said Kahn as he reaffirmed Kassandra.

As for why Kahn vented out to her and told Kassandra the truth about his guilt and the consequences of his actions?

Because he wanted her to realize that although others had what she didn't... their lives weren't better or honorable either.

Also, Kassandra was not in a position to harm him, rather... she'd keep his secrets to her grave.

Not that anyone was going to believe her anyway even if someone used some mind control skill on her.

So taking this opportunity... Kahn let off a lot of mental burden he had been keeping to himself for more than a year now and confessed in front of her.

As the morning suns finally arose, Cassandra fell asleep due to the mental over-exhaustion that she went through over the past 7 hours.

Kahn looked at Cassandra's tired yet beautiful face. And spoke to himself...

[Don't lose hope. I'll take care of everything.]

Because as things stood... the truth did not change even now, Cassandra still had no magic and she was as useful as a doormat to her family and clan.

If she reported that she couldn't win Kahn's heart or charm him into joining their side...

Kahn wouldn't even be surprised if they offered her to someone else later in the future or gave her a severe punishment for failing the task.

Just then... Kahn received a message from his hidden assassins.

[Master, we found some people on the northern end of the mansion three kilometers away. They're using some sort of artifact to check out on you.] spoke one of Kahn's small-time assassin subordinates through their Telepathy Link skill.

[I know. I sensed them a while ago. I guess they were checking if Cassandra did what she was told to or not.]

He then looked at peacefully sleeping Cassandra again.

[Only if I had a way to help her get her powers back.] thought Kahn.

In the afternoon, Cassandra woke up on the bed... but it wasn't the bedroom of the mansion... rather, it was Kahn's bedroom inside his castle.

"You're up." spoke Kahn who was leaning on a sofa in the room.

"Get ready. You need to have a proper meal. And prepare to return to your clan."

"Why?" asked Cassandra. Just then... she was reminded of the consequences because she had obviously failed her mission.

"I'm done! I'm so done..." she spoke to herself.

"Don't worry. I have a way." spoke Kahn in an assuring tone.

The following moment, he took a black and golden envelope out of his space ring.

"You should return to your clan and give this letter to your father. Nobody other than him should read it. Trust me on this one." spoke Kahn.

In the evening, Kahn allotted a warship and thousands of his covenant soldiers to act as guards for Cassandra.

But he did not tell her anything about what was written inside the letter.

The following day, Cassandra reached her clan's main castle and reported to clan's main council albeit very hesitantly.

Now... she saw every single person in this room as an enemy.

Kassandra then gave the letter sent by Kahn to her father, Damon Mikealson who was a sixth stage saint magician.

And after a thorough read.. Her father had a very pleased expression and said,

"Well done... You were worth raising after all."

Kassandra's mind turned furious as soon as those words landed on her ears. She clenched both her fists tightly but did not show her anger through her expressions.

As for the letter... it contained some conditions Kahn wrote.

But other than that... Damon Mikealson paid the most attention to the last lines...

'I will visit the Mikealson clan when I'm done with the job. Until then...'

'Take care of my woman.'

Chapter 460 - Stalling For Time

Kahn was carrying out his duties while dozens of government officials presented him with reports and sanctions that needed his attention. The sovereign on the other end was lost in thoughts as he remembered the choice he made yesterday.

The letter he sent to the Mikealson clan had words such as calling Cassandra as his woman. But the contents included many more details than just that part.

Although Kahn repaid Cassandra by saving her life... it was also a truth that he left Cassandra on her own.

And neither was it his fault that her family was full of selfish bastards who would sacrifice her for the sake of some powerful ally.

But after spending a night together with Cassandra and having talked their hearts out... knowing how their lives were similar in some ways, the bond between them as friends had deepened.

For the first time in this new life, Kahn felt like there was indeed someone he could be himself with. The fact that Cassandra did not judge him and told him to not blame himself for his past mistakes... made Kahn realize that she wasn't the type who only saw worse in people despite suffering from helplessness and betrayal herself.

Compared to the Elric of the past and the Kahn of the present... she was much stronger as a person, unlike him who still couldn't overcome his trauma and didn't trust people or let others in his comfort zone.

Even someone like Albestros who he knew for more than one and a half years now had never seen this side of Kahn at this point.

This indeed elevated his opinion of Cassandra to a new level and he found her as a trustworthy individual that he could confide in.

So for now, he decided to create a temporary solution for her until things turned in his favor.

And even if Kahn couldn't find a solution to get her powers back... he decided to play along with her clan and faction's offer for now till gained some bargaining chips of his own.

Meanwhile, the contract between him and the Pureblood faction only stated that Kahn would get the rewards only when he accomplished the task and gave them the Tablet of Arcana.

But there was a loophole in the contract itself.

It never said that he must deliver the said object or his life will be jeopardized.

So now that he was offered another choice by the Neutral faction... He decided to play both sides.

Because the Pureblood faction had screwed him over a couple of times in the past... it'd be his turn if he decided after he acquired the tablet.

He'd have a choice to pick the most beneficial side then.

And also, this way... he could stall for time until he had some way to find a way for Cassandra. Not due to pity or obligation... but because he wanted to.

As for the reason he called her his woman in the letter...

Kahn felt like he should at least ensure her safety and make sure that they won't create unnecessary trouble or harass her because she failed her task in reality.

Besides... knowing how cunning and ruthless the Neutral faction was at this point...

If Kahn had refused their offer, they would've spread rumors that he actually joined their side. Eventually making him the enemy of the entire Pureblood faction as well as Allister Mor Vandereich.

Although Kahn had a lot of prestige... if one of the strongest beings of the empire wanted to kill him... when he became a Saint... he'd have to leave Verlassen fiefdom.

And no one would ever find out about how Kahn died. So to avoid that... Kahn would obviously have to join the Neutral faction even if he did not want to.

So instead of giving them an opportunity to manipulate the narrative... he put them on standby. So they won't mess up with him until the deed is done.

So using this method, Kahn had stalled for enough time and also opened new options for himself.

And now... the only thing that was left to do for Kahn was to enter the forbidden zone.

ONE WEEK LATER.

Kahn had spent the past few days making arrangements to have people operate the entire fiefdom in his absence along with the generals.

Just a couple of days ago... Armin had finally finished healing Kahn's damaged soul and now he was back to his former state before he sacrificed a portion of it to save Cassandra.

Although his levels hadn't completely recovered even now, he could at least go all out during a fight.

Kahn then arranged a meeting between him, Omega, and all the generals in one of the closed rooms of the castle.

On the round table in the center... he placed a map in front of them.

This was the exact map sent by Allister Mor Vandereich, the faction leader of the pureblood faction who had Szayel deliver it to Kahn.

And the map pinpointed a particular path that he needed to clear out in order to access the entrance of the forbidden zone that was situated in the Verlassen fiefdom.

This path was one of the only 3 entry points and Kahn had no other alternatives unlike the other factions and their semi-saints.

After discussing their plan of action... Kahn and the gang arrived at a military headquarters on one of the borders.

Kahn brought Jugram, Ceril, Armin and Blackwall, Ronin, Oliver and Omega.

Even the mythical rope named Rudra had recently woken up after he was done with absorbing Bjormngandur's bloodline and abilities.

So Kahn was now back to his full power and the whole gang was akin to a group of supervillains who were on their way to cause mass destruction.

The whole squad had come to the border of the region called Niflheim.

This time, Kahn didn't plan to play stupid and ignorant. This time... he was going all out.

Because Niflheim wasn't just a normal border. It was actually...

The 6th and final hotspot.