

Darkness 561

Chapter 561 Real Beginning

After Venessa's declaration about Kahn... both of the saint retainers were stunned and dumbfounded.

The first stage fireborne saint was completely confused.

The third stage saint on the other hand facepalmed himself as his shoulders slumped down and he let out a sigh of helplessness.

"She really messes up her words when she's riled up." he said.

"Princess... Please be careful. Those words can be misleading." he spoke in a gentle tone.

"What do you mean?" asked Venessa curiously.

"I simply meant that I'm going to make that ungrateful bastard into my slave and make him regret rejecting my offer." she explained.

"Yeah, but your words suggest that you want him to become your man." said the first stage fireborne saint.

"Eh?"

Suddenly, Venessa came back to her senses and remembered what she spoke just a minute ago.

"Heh?!" her eyes widened as the shock hit her mind.

As soon as she herself understood how those words would be perceived by others... her entire face turned red like a ripe tomato.

"No! That's not what I meant!" rebuked Venessa and grabbed her head with both hands.

A visible red tinge appeared on her cheek as she shook her head in denial.

She was thoroughly embarrassed at the moment. And tried to hide her blushing face from the two saints.

"I need to take some rest. That rascal ruined my mood!" she exclaimed and started running towards the door that led to her living chambers while hiding her flustered expression.

After she left in a hurry like a charging duck... both of her retainers let out a defeated sigh.

"May God Hetrax have mercy on his soul..."

Knowing how her highness never gives up on something after she sets her mind to it..." said the middle-aged fireborne and continued in an empathic tone.

"He's going to get dragged into a lot of trouble."

At the Oakenshield company premises... the main building's largest area was filled with noises and constant echoing sounds of hammers clanging against metals and object like sound of raindrops falling on the ground all at a single moment.

"Speed up ye lil buggers! We don't have an entire day just prepare one part of the set.

You call yourself dwarves? Even a newborn pup can do a better job than all of you, you useless bums!" he shouted.

In the main forge of the Oakenshield company, Throk was overseeing over two thousand blacksmiths, all of whom were dwarves that they hired while paying a hefty sum.

Because of the demand for arms by both Hector and Venessa as well as the great feedback they received from their respective trading companies and deals made with their followers for the weapons supply... Throk was burdened with even more work.

And now, he was guiding others in the production line while giving them instructions on how to efficiently perform shaping and fit the parts in a way that won't drag down the wearer and hinder the physical movements while fighting.

The biggest challenge for them was that the armors weren't made just for a single species but too many varying species and that too with different physical builds and body measurements.

So every single one of the dwarves was tasked with preparing one set of armor that included many different parts for one individual each. [☞☞☞](#)

Hence, Throk himself had to overlook their work because a messed-up measurement or slight mistake would ruin the entire set.

It wasn't a task like mass producing and copy-pasting the same set like some fictional story where every soldier was a human and everyone would wear the same type of armor regardless of the difference between their physiology.

But in the evening after their work for the day ended, Throk called Kahn and Blackwall.

"Today, we will start with hammering." he said and handed down two hammers made for novice blacksmiths.

He told both of them about how to hammer down the hot metal ingot and how to distribute their hits to flatten it out.

"You both will be doing it without using mana or world energy.

Use only your physical strength." he ordered.

Bang!!

Suddenly, a shockwave was released in the room as soon as both Kahn and Blackwall made their first strike.

Crack!

The hot metal ingots were cracked open in multiple pieces while the hammers in their hands were mashed like potatoes themselves.

"You idiots! I didn't say you have to use all of your physical strength. Just enough to broaden the ingots!" shouted Throk as he reprimanded both of his students.

"But this is our normal physical strength." replied Kahn casually.

Blackwall also nodded in affirmation because neither of them was using even 1% of their power.

Throk was completely taken aback. Because if this was them using their minimal strength... then how powerful would they be if they used mana and world energy infused in their strikes?

"What kind of freaks are you two?!"

Even I, a second stage saint can't flatten an entire ingot in a single strike just with pure physical strength!" he exclaimed in denial.

However... little did he know that the two disciples of his were walking-talking calamities themselves.

Kahn had the War Deity Body and Blackwall was a Primordial Titan. Even if both of them didn't want to... they were simply too strong in terms of physical strength alone compared to others of their rank.

After another earful of scolding, they began the practice again.

Throk then told them how to angle their hits based on the type of part of the armor under the forging

procedure or the type of hammer they're using.

Kahn understood that these little details actually saved a lot of time, effort and shaped the sample at hand at a much faster pace.

So in other words, Throk was indeed sharing his decades of experience if he could guide them this effectively even in the novice level training.

Both Kahn and Blackwall slowly started hitting the ingots carefully as if using 0.1% of their strength.

Hours passed and finally, both of them were learning to control their physical strength and how much force they had to deliver in each strike of the hammer.

, c`o`m Kahn and Blackwall had a smile on their faces after they too started enjoying the process.

Because for both of them...

This was the beginning of their real training.

Chapter 562 The Living Hack

Two more days passed since Kahn and the Abyss Knight general aka Blackwall started their blacksmithing skills lesson and practiced 7 to 8 hours a day under Throk's supervision.

In just 2 days, Kahn also noticed that he was improving bit by bit and not mindlessly banging his hammer without the grasp of the metal on the anvil and how they wanted to shape it.

And on the third day... Kahn finally received a notification in his head.

[Skill Unlocked!

Blacksmith's Hammering (F Rank) (Active) :

Allows the host to manage the force delivered in each strike while hammering on different parts of the metal or alloy.

Current progress : 6%

The host can increase his mastery just like Weapon Mastery and Combat Techniques Mastery blessings in this skill by practicing and increasing his proficiency.]

"Yes!" exclaimed Kahn after hearing this unexpected notification.

He found it extremely useful that the blessings could also be used to improve his blacksmithing skill, unlike his previous assumptions.

And it would be just like he practiced combat techniques and weapon mastery, he now had a way to improve these skills as well.

This news had a big impact because if this applied to blacksmithing skills... then it could help him in other lifestyle professions and their respective skills as well.

Obviously, there was no shortcut just like in the former cases but he no longer had to be anywhere else or had to manage a fiefdom.

Money, resources and even upgrades in his weapons and armor... he was getting all of it for free. So Kahn was going to dedicate all of his time to blacksmithing and raise his rank in this profession as well.

"Wait a minute..."

Just then... a thought came into his mind.

"System... can my weapon mastery, magic spells, combat techniques as well as world energy be shared if my Doppelgangers also learn and practice them? Can I receive them from my doppelgangers?" he asked curiously.

. c`o`m Because the doppelgangers were able to absorb mana and world energy through Rathnaar's core, convert it into space force and share those reserves with Kahn when they deactivated and all of it passed to the original body.

[Now that host is a saint and the doppelganger skill has evolved to Saint Rank... it is possible.] replied the system.

"Holy shit! This changes everything!"

Show me the newly evolved version of Doppelganger skill." ordered Kahn.

[Following is the new upgraded version of the Doppelgangers skill :

Doppelganger (Saint Rank) (Active) (Upgradable) :

Allows the host to create an identical copy of himself with all of the host's skills and abilities for 75 seconds. The range of this ability is 15 Kilometers.

The Doppelganger will share the mind connection and vision with the host and they all share a soul

connection with him so the skill mastery, combat techniques mastery, weapon mastery and magic spell mastery can be shared after the new evolution of the skill to Saint Rank.

The host will also be able to increase his proficiency and rank up his skills that are learned and practiced by the doppelgangers. ㄟ`θ`m

Note : The Doppelgangers will have 65% of all of the host's stats. The activation time will increase with the increase in the host's levels and rank.

In case the Doppelganger dies, it can be revived again after 30 minutes.

The host can extend the time of activation indefinitely as long as the doppelgangers have high-grade SS Rank cores or ores to sustain their existence.

1 SS Rank core is enough for one doppelganger to continue existing for 2 hours.

5 more doppelgangers will be added with each new rank up in saint stages.] informed system with all new details.

"Muhaha ha ha!! Haha ha ha!!" laughed Kahn like a maniac.

"Why do I keep forgetting that I'm basically a living hack these days after all those abilities and skills I absorbed.

This one... is the most helpful in saving time." he said with a wicked smile.

Since all the doppelgangers shared a direct soul link with him and thus the transfer of energy and mastery was also possible... this opened another door for Kahn.

And after his rank-up, they could stay active for 2 hours just with 1 SS Rank core instead of only 1 hour before he became a saint.

"Great! This means I can simultaneously study magic, perfect my weapon mastery and improve all my skills that I already have, study and enhance my magic study and skills...

I can also continue studying space law and even learn and improve my blacksmithing skills.

Means I'm accomplishing 4 different tasks all at once!" he said in exhilarated voice.

"Since I already have my space force reserves full... let's allocate all the doppelgangers to a particular task and keep all of them busy." he said and tried to think of ways to use this another cheat ability of his to maximize his gains.

Kahn then decided that he will use 5 doppelgangers to practice blacksmithing after he acquired skills by

himself. Later, the doppelgangers will also get the ability and through them... he will increase his mastery and proficiency.

Then he allotted 5 to practice magic and space law.

This way, he will also greatly improve his use of mana, world energy, and magic spells that he was going to study from the books he got from Solomon, who himself was an elven mage.

And finally, he decided to put the remaining 5 to practice all of his new fighting skills, abilities and weapons as well as combat techniques that were unlocked after he became a saint.

The ones he previously had were already at 100% mastery but the newly unlocked ones and the upgraded ones also needed a lot of work to perfect. But because of his blacksmithing training... he wouldn't get enough time for them even if he started training at early dawn.

So as a result... Kahn would have a perfect mastery in these sectors and won't have to waste time or wait to become free.

Kahn then made a new resolution in his mind.

From now on... he will work endlessly with one clear goal in mind.

That whatever field it was...

He was going to become the best of the best!

Chapter 563 - The Congregation

Inside a central region of the capital Arkensan, was a territory of a particular institution that played a very important part in the social and cultural structure of the entire Vulcan empire.

Inside this 50 kilometers wide territory, were hundreds of lavishly decorated white and red-colored buildings that were filled with millions of people since the early morning.

Through sound amplifying artifacts, all these people prayed to the hymn that resounded in these settlements while maintaining peace and order as if this was part of their daily routine.

At the innermost parts, were 5 gigantic castles that were not only heavily guarded but also appeared to be the most highly maintained among all these buildings.

And at the end of it... was a ginormous castle that had 5 layers of different sections while at the very end of it... was a 500 meter tall enormous statue of a figure with multiple arms that were covered with blistering flames and yet it appeared to not be affected by them at all.

Unlike the other portions of the region, only the highest authorities of this institution were allowed to set foot in the closest areas of this statue while the rest were permitted to only look from outside regions of these castles.

This place... was the Church of Hetrax. And the statue belonged to the Hetrax, the God of Fire in the world of Vantrea.

Among the many high-ranking people including hundreds of Paladins, over a dozen of whom were bonafide saints.

Then thousands of deacons and priests who worshipped their mighty god with vehement eyes were also gathered a few kilometers away from the statue of Hetrax.

In front of them, were a few hundred bishops followed by over 40 archbishops, 3 cardinals and finally... the Pope himself.

An elderly fireborne whose eyes shone brighter as if they were on fire while donning a red and golden cassock stood the closest to the statue a few hundred meters away.

"Your Holiness... everyone is here." spoke the middle-aged Cardinal who was adorned in white and red robes of the church.

After completing their prayers and worshipping rituals... the Pope who had summoned all the important figures of their church that were spread across the whole empire then gathered over a hall created for holding a congregation.

"May the eternal flames of our almighty god Hetrax cleanse your bodies and soul." he spoke vehemently while widening his arms and looking at the gigantic statue of Hetrax.

"We pay heed to the mighty god Hetrax and offer our lifetime pledge of loyalty!" spoke all the attendees in unison at the same time.

After the introductions were done, refreshments and delicious food were put on long tables, enough to feed 10 thousand people at once... the mood was set properly for a proper discussion.

"I, Demiurge Val Arhelm, gladly welcome you to our annual congregation." he spoke and his voice reached the ears of every single person present in this 2 kilometers wide building.

The aura given by the pope himself was of a 6th stage saint who had the profession of a Healer.

"Forgive me for my rudeness, your holiness. Wasn't our annual congregation supposed to happen 3 months later as per our usual schedule?" asked one of the archbishops who were suddenly summoned on short notice.

"Yes, Archbishop Clive. But there is a reason why I was forced to summon everyone here on short notice." he explained in a kind voice and continued while gazing at all the people present in this vast hall.

"After the recent Imperial Court's decision regarding the crimes of the former second prince, Rogis Hos Sigfried and his allies... we all know what kind of situation we're in." he emphasized.

To his words, everyone's face turned sullen all of a sudden. Because not only Rogis but all of his allies and those who partook in his crimes of killing humans for fun and releasing their hatred on the innocent people who were shunned by the laws of the empire... all of them were judged under imperial punishment.

"Among the perpetrators... over three thousand and two hundred people belonged to our church.

And all of them previously held an influence in several regions and had high ranking positions in our institutions throughout the empire." he iterated and gave a number to all of the high ranking people.

"And now... every single one of them has been either caught and imprisoned or executed under the imperial decree.

This was something neither we nor any prominent race of the empire could fight against.

Because if I spoke one word against it... the Emperor and the Imperial Clan could've used it against us in order to get rid of many more among our ranks in the name of investigation or dug up some buried past that we didn't want the common populace to know about.

And hence... I too had no choice but to give up many of those who previously attended our congregation just last year." he elaborated with a stern expression.

However, no one dared to speak a word against the emperor or the imperial clan at all. Because that was enough to get them in trouble.

"It's not just us, but many other races and even the dwarven race had their infrastructure and chain of command broken to bits.

Just one imperial decree by the emperor was enough to destroy centuries of the system that we established.

Our losses... are probably the largest in the history of any pope who came before me." he brought everyone's attention to this hard fact.

"This is why... I don't think we can afford to stay on the sides anymore. This empire..." he looked towards everyone's expectant gazes and declared in a loud voice.

"We are the main force that bound different species and classes of society and showed them a proper direction to live their lives.

We formed communities, regardless of one's origin and brought them together.

If not for us... the imperial clan would've never managed to rule the empire on their own.

But after the recent imperial decree...

I have only a clear vision that we should all join hands to accomplish." he spoke.

"What is that?" asked the first Cardinal.

To their curious gazes... Demiurge declared his final decision.

"The Vulcan empire... shall only be ruled by the Church of Hetrax!"

Chapter 564 - The Envoy

As soon as the current Pope of the Church of Hetrax, Demiurge Val Arhelm revealed his ambitions to make their institution into the sole rulers of the Vulcan empire... the vast hall and everyone present in the congregation were discombobulated.

Stunned!

Dumbfounded!

Shocked!

Everyone including the Cardinals had their eyes popped out because of this sudden bomb dropped by the pope.

In this meeting, the majority were the firebornes and the rest were a mix of different species. But their forces were different from the nobles, fireborne clans or the imperial clan. However, they had indeed played a big part in reforming this empire since it was founded.

Although the pope was right to be angry about the imperial decree... Just saying these words was enough to be considered high treason.

But before anyone could question his intentions... the pope raised his red-skinned hand and spoke...

"I have a perfect plan to takeover the empire and even get rid of the emperor himself. It is something that my predecessors already prepared for should the situation arose.

I'm telling you all about this because of the way things are about to go from now on... I need all of us to be unified and share the same mindset." he stated with a calm tone.

"But your holiness... this will forever damage our reputation among the populace.

We swore equality and neutrality from the affairs of the empire. Even if we managed to overthrow the imperial rule... the people would not be able to accept it." said one of the Archbishops.

To his statement, the pope replied in an authoritative tone.

"History is written by the winners. Those who conquer are glorified as heroes while the ones to lose are branded as villains."

Then he stood up from his throne and walked forth with steady steps.

"We can simply use the incident with Rogis as an excuse and then label the entire imperial clan to be of the same kind.

The emperor used his son's name to cut off our hands and feet... and we will use the same reason to justify our coup.

And most importantly..." he stopped his words and a wicked smile appeared on his face.

"These people who worship with full devotion...

They're not god-loving, rather god-fearing." he declared.

"If I say that it was a divine message from our god Hetrax himself... that we must purge the vile and evil imperial clan, all of these people who know nothing other than showing blind faith to our church and our god's doctrine... they will accept it and no one would dare question it either." he elaborated on how he planned to deal with the aftermath.

"But there is another important issue that we must pay attention to first. Because it will decide the direction of our plans in a way." he explained.

"What may that be, your holiness?" asked the last Cardinal curiously.

The next second, the Pope's expression turned dead serious as he presented the main issue that was clouding his mind...

"The Oakenshield company."

Another silence ensued as people of the church had many questions raised in their minds after Demiurge suddenly said a weapons and arms company, that wasn't even a big corporation of the empire, to be something important that would shift the direction of their plans.

"Your holiness... How can a single saint blacksmith's company affect us greatly?"

For all we know, he was just another victim of the second prince's shenanigans." spoke a dwarven archbishop.

Demiurge, who was now standing in the very center of the hall spoke in a somber voice.

"Tell me... what has been our stand since the news about Throk Oakenshield spread throughout the empire?" he asked.

Suddenly, everyone's expression turned alarmed.

Sigh!

Demiurge let out a sigh and continued...

"Other than some vocal support and using the incident to pressurize the imperial clan to start an investigation against Rogis... our side did nothing.

Not a single person among you even met the blacksmith.

Was I supposed to do that for you?" he questioned.

"The representatives of the dwarven race haven't provided him with any help either.

But do you know who is aiding him now?" he questioned again to see how well informed were his people.

But after looking at their clueless faces... he signaled a particular step in.

The leader of the Paladins of the church, who was a 5th stage saint knight walked forth and informed all the attendees...

"From the past 3 weeks... Throk Oakenshield's company has been thriving many times compared to before the incident with Rogis Hos Sigfreed.

Suddenly, he received immense backing out of nowhere.

He is being provided with money, resources, connections and manpower to even transport and safeguard his products.

While we were trying to minimize and deal with our losses... a particular party extended their help." said this tall and burly fireborne knight.

"Some of you may have heard the rumors that either prince Hector or princess Venessa have declared their support to the old dwarf and his company as a form of responsibility to revert the losses caused to him because of the former second prince.

But recently... one thing has come to our attention." he said and continued under thousands of curious gazes.

"Our Intel says that half of the people are from the followers and clans that back up Hector while the half are from Venessa's side.

But the transportation of the top-grade weapons and armors are equally divided among them for some reason.

These shipments of products are in millions and we tracked them down to many of the nobles and influential figures, whether they're from legit businesses to even underworld organizations that do the dirty work for the imperial clan...

Everyone, as long as they ally them with either of the sides, are receiving them spontaneously." he reported to the whole crowd.

Gasp!

Hundreds of gasps echoed in the hall because this was something no one had even heard of.

"Given the fact that both of them are in the race for the throne... it is impossible for them to wholeheartedly join hands together unless there was a bigger force who commanded them to do so." spoke the Paladin commander and cleared the way for the pope to speak again.

"The relationship between the heirs of the imperial family is no secret to any of us.

But if the only two candidates for the throne are working together... means there is an angle that we have failed to see yet.

But if my assumptions are right... this can only happen if a certain person wills it." he said and continued in a grim tone as his eyes turned hateful.

"The Emperor."

He openly declared without any hesitation. And soon, everyone had a baffled expression because if the emperor was directly involved in something... no way would it be a small matter.

The cunning emperor used his own son, sacrificed his second-born to maintain his reign, and used his crimes to take out many of their important members to shift the balance on his side with a single imperial decree.

"Because these two wouldn't ally themselves with Throk Oakenshield because of their disagreements with each other.

Unless the emperor himself ordered them to.

They're planning something big... something we're not even aware of or predict the consequences of." spoke Demiurge.

This was indeed an issue for them. Because their institution received the biggest hit in the history of the empire last month... and over a century's established power and authority was taken from them when all the involved members from the church who partook in the crimes against the human race were executed in the name of imperial punishment.

"What should we do?

If what you said is right, your holiness... then it is a long-term plan by the emperor that will show its effect in the future.

He doesn't do anything on a whim at all." spoke one of the Cardinals.

"We can't directly show up there. If the Paladins and Arbiters show up near the company... then not only the imperial clan but even the normal population and the dwarven race will get suspicious.

Just our envoy is more than enough to start rumors such as the church is also officially backing Throk Oakenshield and that we are finally showing our support to a victim of the second prince.

We can't ally ourselves with anyone on the surface." stated Demiurge with a thoughtful expression.

Many people also nodded in affirmation because their presence or a personal visit to any person or an organization was always seen as something worth noting in the whole empire.

"But he... he can just make a visit and find a few things on his own without raising any suspicions." said the pope as a grin appeared on his face.

"Send him and his party to deliver my message."

"Who?" asked the commander of the Paladins.

This time however, many of the people present in the hall understood what the pope was hinting at.

"Send Axel Lobethrox to visit the Oakenshield company."

Chapter 565 - New Guests

At the northern end of Nidavellir, in wide and open grasslands, was a gigantic castle-like building that was spread for more than 5 kilometers in total length alone.

There were three floors from start to beginning and everything was sculpted and renovated to the point that one would believe this building to have been built just a few days ago.

At the entrance of this building were two 20 meters tall stone statues. One of the dwarfs had a sword while the other one with a battleaxe. And even the hundreds of stone-paved stairs were made so well that even those who walked on them couldn't help but feel guilty to have dirtied these amazing creations of architecture.

This was the newly renovated site of the Oakenshield company that now had the sponsorship of both Hector and Venessa, the imperial scions.

While hundreds of people went in and out of the building, the majority being the workers and employees of different departments since this was the main headquarters of their franchise now... the atmosphere and the echoing noises of crafting and metalwork signified the busy nature of this company.

Throk was busy forging parts of Kahn's Drakos Armor at the moment in his personal forge while he left his two disciples with the thousands of dwarven blacksmiths who worked for him.

Kahn and Blackwall stood at the end while practicing their skills just like the rest and tried to increase their efficiency and experience.

For them, the blacksmith's life couldn't be studied... it could only be experienced.

SHING!!

However... not only Kahn but also Throk and everyone from the subordinates suddenly sensed a form of threat incoming their way from 15 kilometers away.

[I can't come out now. You handle this.] contacted Throk to Kahn as he was at a crucial point of forging and mending the parts of armor while mixing them with Drakos Armor.

[Alright everyone... hide your strength and levels. Let's see who this new party is.] ordered Kahn as he sensed 8 individuals coming from the south via a warship at a fast pace.

In just 2 minutes, this warship hovered close to their company building and landed in an open field while the onlookers whether they were employees or customers, looked were gazing at this magnificent and well-designed warship that had a sigil of a particular group.

"It's the Hero's Party!" shouted one of the employees and soon, the majority of the people and even the dwarven blacksmiths left their work and ran around to get a glimpse of these new guests as if paparazzi flocking towards celebrities to get some exclusive pictures.

Soon, these 8 individuals walked out of the warship while being escorted by over a hundred soldiers with the sigil of the Church of Hetrax on their armors.

They controlled the flocking mob towards the members of Hero's party, most of whom were at least a first stage saint while few members were above. And after they finally reached the main entrance of the company building...

One of the members, a wolfkin archer among them spoke.

"The Hero's Party has come to visit Throk Oakenshield!" he said loudly.

The normal employees and customers were shocked alike. Because being personally visited by the Hero of Fire and his party wasn't something that happened normally at all.

Tap!

Tap!

Suddenly, a 3 meter tall human with a ripped body who was donning fiery red armor and had a giantsword on his back came out of the main entrance door of the building.

This individual was none other than Jugram who was wearing his second set of armor that was made by Albestros while the first set was being reforged by Throk using the guardian dragon's body as part of their deal.

Currently, he had limited his rank and levels to match that of an intermediate grandmaster

Kahn had given the mythical rank metamorphosis bloodline to all of the subordinates quite some time ago. So they had no problem hiding their levels and rank just like Kahn and even erase the world energy signature completely.

Unless someone was a 5th stage saint, they wouldn't be able to detect their true strength.

"My apologies, honorable members of the Hero's Party. Master Oakenshield is currently busy with a complicated forging procedure. He can not be disturbed during this crucial time.

Allow me to guide you to our resting rooms till then." spoke Jugram in a respectful tone, trying to maintain his cover.

[How strong are they?] asked Kahn.

[Master, I can easily take out 3 of them myself. But the problem is that there are 4 people who are above 1st stage saint.] reported Jugram as he was closest to these people and could directly gauge their strength based on their auras.

[Tch! Then we better be prepared. I smell some trouble coming.] replied Kahn.

"Huh? What does mean he's busy? Doesn't he know who we are? Or who Lord Axel is?" suddenly, a figure walked forth from the group and spoke in a discontent voice.

This was none other than Edna, one of the members of Hero's Party who was a female succubus enchantress.

But instead of stopping her haughty words, the members of her party including Axel himself acted like they didn't care if Throk was busy or not.

"Apologies, my lady. These were the direct orders from master Oakenshield himself.

If you'd be so kind, please allow us to offer our hospitality till he becomes free of his work." spoke Jugram in a respectful tone towards the new arrivals.

"Ha! The audacity... does your blacksmith has no time to greet the great lord Axel instead of hitting some scrap metal with a hammer?" said a female archer with a head of an eagle.

However, to her words... many of the people among the crowd felt offended because this was one of the most prestigious crafts of their empire and also the pride of the dwarven race.

The dwarven men and women clenched their fists as they tried to swallow down this insult.

Thud!

Thud!

The next moment, a 3 meter tall figure, comparable to Jugram in height suddenly walked forth and released his saint pressure filled with killing intent.

"Tell him to come out... Unless he wants to be forced to kneel in front of us!"

Chapter 566 Questionable Manners

The second stage saint halfbreed orc threatened openly in front of over 500 people who were just close to the main door. However, his words echoed in the surroundings and all those who were listening from in the building and windows also heard his words.

"Mikaela, looks like he really doesn't know the gravity of the situation.

If we visited some other saint blacksmith, they'd leave whatever they're doing and welcome us with open arms just to gain lord Axel's favor with worshipping eyes.

How dare this old fart not show us any respect?" said Tamak, the halfbreed orc warrior with a battleaxe on his back and slightly released his saint pressure.

Tamak was a second stage saint unlike most of their group and his overbearing pressure instantly put the onlookers in a kneeling position.

Jugram himself was forced to kneel on the ground because he was currently limiting his strength and rank. Otherwise, he alone was enough to take down half of this group if he used the Hell Domain in his true Diablos form.

[These fuckers... looks like they're used to being treated like royalty.] said Kahn who listened to the threat loud and clear.

[Kid... if you can't even handle this small matter, then I will have to rethink our arrangement.

Didn't you say you'll look after the security and whatever problems that come my way?] patronized Throk who was carefully carrying his work.

Someone like Throk ... he cared more about his craft than some rich guy visiting him when he was

completely immersed in forging.

Suddenly, Rathnaar spoke in Kahn's mind...

[What do you think their sudden visit means? I don't think they're here to hire the old man.

For a Hero's party... reputation and outer appearance to the public matter a lot as it reflects on their image and also the church.

Someone like them... they have to be polite and appear respectful towards someone like the dwarf blacksmith who is one of the top 5 in the whole empire.

And I feel like they're intentionally causing trouble to test the waters.]

"What do you mean?" asked Kahn.

[They're here to see if Throk truly has the backing from one of the imperial scions. I think the church must have sent them.

Because the imperial clan wouldn't interfere in this matter unless the emperor himself ordered them.]

"You mean they're suspicious about something?" asked Kahn.

[Yes. But we also have an opportunity here.]

"To do what?"

[Create more confusion.] replied the peak saint.

Rathnaar then came up with a scheme and told Kahn how to approach this matter that would help him deliver upon his agreement with Throk and also avoid trouble in the long run.

Right at the entrance of the main company headquarters, Tamak's tyrannical aura was suppressing Jugram, the head of security of the company since he was hiding his levels because of the order from his master.

"Looks like he really takes us for nobodies. ㄣㄣㄣ

Volka, send him a greeting message." spoke Tamak as he gazed at the blue wolfskin saint archer who announced their party's arrival a few minutes ago.

He nocked an arrow on his epic rank bow and aimed at the arc of the main wide door that was 5 meters

tall.

"Are you out of your mind?! You want to attack our company's building?!" shouted Jugram as he grabbed the hilt of his giantsword.

"Huh? A human who isn't even a semi-saint dares to talk back to us? Should we show you your place?" said Edna in a threatening tone as she activated her scepter, ready to attack if Jugram even moved a muscle.

And right before everyone, the archer shot the charged arrow attack skill.

BOOM!!!

An insurmountable wave of pressure suddenly filled the company grounds and those who were subjected to fall to their knees under his saint pressure suddenly felt free.

As for the arrow shot by the archer... it froze midair before it even hit the arch of the door.

And this time... apart from 2 members, it was the entire hero's party who were subjugated to kneel on the ground instantly as a killing intent filled with bloodlust suddenly attacked their bodies under horrifying saint pressure.

Flickr!

Suddenly, a figure who released an aura many times stronger than them appeared in between Jugram and the Hero's party.

A waist-length silver-haired man with a ripped and lean exposed upper body came into everyone's sight.

This figure had glowing red eyes and his entire right arm was black from shoulder to his fingers. This individual had a curved blade on the left side of his waist whose sheath glowed red while three more black ones on his right side of the waist appeared to be epic rank curved blades themselves.

This figure... was Omega in his human/hybrid form.

He was currently using Gravity Imprisonment and Bloodlust skills. The former instantly trapped and froze weaker enemies in 5 kilometers radius and the latter was nothing but his pure murderous aura and killing intent that put his enemies in a fearful state for one hour as long as they were weaker than him.

By using just two skills on these new guests, Omega instantly decommissioned 6 out of 8 members of the hero's party.

However... the aura he emitted was many times stronger than himself.

To his tyrannical figure and strength... there was only Axel and another figure behind him who could stand straight.

"Do you not have manners? Is that how you behave when you're on someone else's territory?"

Can you bear the consequences of this grave transgression against master Oakenshield?" he asked in a grim tone as he kept increasing his bloodlust.

"This isn't some carnival and parade where commoners are happy to get a glimpse of you.

A bunch of weak brats that I can kill in a second acting all high and mighty in the domain I'm tasked to protect..." he spoke without showing a single sign of respect or fear as if he didn't care if this was the renowned Hero's party or a group of street beggars.

Just then... Axel, who had assessed the strength of this samurai swordsman, shouted in surprise with his eyes wide open...

"A 3rd stage saint!"

Chapter 567 - Stronger Than Before

The sudden revelation of Omega being a third stage saint had taken the entire hero's party by surprise including the hero of fire himself. And unlike their previous approach to this matter... Kahn's right-hand man wasn't holding back at all.

The normal crowd on the site was spared of his insurmountable aura so they could only be shocked just like the rest.

Omega, who was level 372 when Kahn evolved him using Skoll & Hati's bodies 2 months ago had now successfully crossed level 400 and became a being comparable to a 3rd stage saint.

The main share of his quick succession in levels went to the Energy Plunderer skill that Kahn got from the guardian dragon.

This was a skill that helped him absorb mana and world energy directly from various sources like ores, cores and energy reserves and not eat or absorb them one by one.

And like a habit, he had imparted this godsend skill to all of his subordinates who had met the 100% loyalty condition.

Aside from Rudra, everyone else had it and now... thanks to this skill and the resources they already had at hand... Omega successfully raised his strength and made a breakthrough inside the Table of Arcana after Kahn and Rathnaar gave him access to the Chamber of Exaltation to make a breakthrough without gathering anyone's attention.

This was another function of the Chamber of Exaltation but Kahn intentionally didn't use it last time because he would've been sensed by the gods after his breakthrough to the saint realm anyway.

And he needed to throw them off by sending the signal in No Man's Land which gave him a window to escape and also created a diversion between two empires who served the gods.

After this rank-up, all of Omega's skills and abilities had a massive boost in efficiency and range and now... he was 5 times stronger than before. And now... he could even stand evenly against the Hero and the fireborne with a black trident who stood behind him.

[Master, the Hero of Fire is a 3rd stage saint himself. But the fireborne behind him is a 4th stage saint... but the dense aura I sense from him... he's someone who is about to become a 5th stage saint soon.] informed Omega.

[I see. Means fighting here isn't an option. Not only will we die, but too many people inside the company building will get killed as collateral damage if a fight breaks out.

Well, just stick to the plan.] responded Kahn.

"Behave or you will be thrown out of here." said Omega and firmly warned them without any hesitation despite the two members of the opposition being strong themselves.

"You... Do you understand who you're talking with disrespectfully?

Do you know how big my reputation is?" said Axel as he gave an intense stare to Omega.

"Do you?" asked Omega in return.

"If it was that important... then neither you nor your allies would be behaving so rudely in front of all these people.

Or are you under the impression that just because the church treats you like a prince... you do think of yourself as one?" retorted Omega.

"You!... How dare you speak to lord Axel like that?!"

Do you have a deathwish?!" suddenly, the 4th stage saint fireborne donned in black and red armor from head to toe spoke as he released his pressure and threw off the one released by Omega on his party members.

"You're the one who tried to cause trouble here.

Hero's party?... What a joke.

It looks like a bunch of rich brats who got recommended in the group only because of hefty donations.

They're only 1st stage saints and yet behave like they own the world." replied Omega fearlessly and kept roasting the opposite side.

"You... who do you think you are to slander us?!" shouted Edna with a furious gaze. Her other teammates were no different because this was the first time anyone badmouthed them openly ever since they formed the Hero's Party.

"Tch! Why are you yapping?"

The only ones here who can stand against me are the Hero and the guy behind him.

The rest of you won't even notice how you died. So show some manners when you speak of master Oakenshield, you weak losers!" he kept insulting the whole team again.

"Hey! Which force are you from? To speak to us so rudely..."

"Don't you know we're from church?" said the 4th stage saint as he too released his saint pressure and killing intent on Omega while tightening his grip on the trident.

"Unlike you imbeciles... I don't need to rely on someone's name or a backing.

So stop wasting my time and get lost!

None of you are welcomed here." said Omega while folding his arms as if he wasn't slightly affected by the oppressive saint pressure of the fireborne at all.

"Daring words. You're not even the strongest person here. And on top of it... You're just one guy." said the fireborne who was ready to take an attacking stance and so did the rest of the team members of the hero's party.

Axel on the other hand, had a carefree expression as he was trying to see what this hybrid saint could do in front of his team members.

Yawn!

Instead of getting alerted or feeling threatened by the 7 saints from the opponent team, Omega yawned and stretched his arms and shoulders.

The dual sword samurai was acting like he still didn't care despite all of them directing their bloodlust at him.

The next second, he let out a wicked grin and spoke with a confident voice...

"Am I?"

BOOM!!

BOOM!!

One after another, many other sources of intense and heavy world energy signatures revealed themselves from inside the Oakenshield company building.

One, two, three, four and five!... Five different saint pressures suddenly erupted from the building and directed their collective saint pressure and murderous auras at the members of the hero's party.

Stunned!

Even Axel and the fireborne trident warrior were too stunned to speak and felt a sense of dread this time. Because Omega alone was enough to subjugate 75% of their team. And now... there were 6 more saints who suddenly revealed themselves.

As soon as they let their presence known... every member of the opposite side felt like they were the ones who had to fear for their lives this time.

The onlookers, however... gasped in surprise.

Because the majority of them were the workers and employees of the company and they had no idea that there were mighty saints who roamed in the same building as them.

"What the hell! How are there so many saints?!" questioned Tamak who too felt like they mistakenly entered a dragon's lair.

This was not mentioned in the intel they received at all.

BOOM!!

This time... another burst of chaotic saint pressure suddenly erupted right in front of them and the temperature of the surroundings rose in a matter of seconds.

A man donned in fiery red armor and with giantsword on his back who was forced to kneel in front of them suddenly stood up and brandished his weapon as he casually lifted it off and placed the weapon over his right shoulder.

"This human as well?!" shouted Mikaela as they were flabbergasted on the spot.

Because the one to stand tall and release his chaotic saint pressure that gave them the foreboding of certain death was the very human they oppressed as soon as they got here.

Jugram... the Hellblazer general stood beside Omega and smirked as if he too was toying with them all this time and finally revealed his real strength.

Axel had a complicated expression. Because this was completely exceeding their expectations as told by the church.

At best... they expected one to two saints to protect this place even if they had the backing from the imperial heirs. But seven... This was more than triple their highest expected count.

[Lord Axel, this is bad! Although no one except that hybrid in front of us is above second stage saint rank... the aura they all are emitting is extremely dense and of high caliber.

If we push it and a fight breaks out... apart from me and you... I can't guarantee that others will make it out of here alive.] warned the fireborne through some sort of telepathic link to Axel that couldn't be detected by anyone.

[What kind of trap did we walk into? And why is that giant human a saint as well?!

The last time I heard, I was the only human saint in this empire.] he replied to the fireborne.

[That's not the issue here... if seven saints are protecting this company and the old dwarf saint blacksmith... this is already a very grave matter.

We can not afford to let things escalate more than they already have.] said the 4th stage saint as he saw Omega placing his hands on the hilt of his katanas.

The way things looked... they were on verge of a bloody battle, all because they underestimated the opposite side.

But right before anyone drew the first blood... a loud voice reached their ears as a human in a black longcoat appeared in front of the entrance door.

"Please stop! You can't fight here!"

Chapter 568 Outside Of Plan

Right when things were about to get heated between the two groups, one from the Oakenshield company while the other from Hero's Party... a human dressed in black clothes as if he just changed into this presentable attire, appeared at the entrance of the company door and intervened.

Kahn, who summoned his usual black and gray longcoat and rest of the clothes as soon as he came close to the site of the clash walked forward and tried to calm down the crowd that looked like they were about to draw their weapons and cause a slaughter.

"Sir Omega, Sir Jugram... please calm down.

They're from the church... your allied force.

We're all friends here, aren't we?" spoke Kahn in a respectful tone towards his own subordinates.

"Don't meddle in our affairs. It is them who overstepped their boundaries first." said Jugram, whose normal human appearance was of a man in his mid-30s.

"Tell master Oakenshield that will get rid of these intruders. So can carry on with his work without worrying." ordered Omega to Kahn as if he was his superior.

"Please don't say that. I'm sure there's some sort of misunderstanding.

They're from the hero's party... no way would they truly intend to cause any harm to any innocent citizens here." spoke Kahn in a vehement voice as if he was a big-time fan of the opponent group.

"Am I right?" asked Kahn as he looked at Axel and his team members.

"Yes... there indeed seems to be a sort of misunderstanding.

We only intended to meet master Oakenshield regarding some matters." said Axel as he adjusted his tone.

[Who is this guy? He's only a beginner master rank and yet he seems to be someone close to the

company's administration and the blacksmith.] asked Axel to his teammates.

[If I'm not wrong... he should be the new disciple of Throk Oakenshield. You know... the one who is rumored to face master Tawerik's disciple in a blacksmithing faceoff according to rumors.] replied the fireborne saint.

Just then, Edna also replied telepathically.

[Looks like these saints are from completely different departments. The way he speaks to them with respect... means they're not his comrades.

I think these seven saints are not actually part of the company and they're more like tasked with protecting Oakenshield.

Like some guards or mercenaries. To me, they appear like outsiders.

Because that human saint is too big compared to humans of our empire.] she hypothesized.

[Yes, lord Axel. Edna is right. I think they're hired help.

Otherwise, if they were from the imperial clan, we would've known about them from our sources and they wouldn't be speaking so rudely to us either.] spoke Tamak.

[Still... to hire seven saints and that too from outside of the empire.

I don't think that the old dwarf could afford it or has that type of connections or authority after the incident with Rogis.] replied Axel as he sped up his brain.

[But there's one force other than the church who can manage to hire these powerful individuals just for the bodyguard work.] said the fireborne.

[The imperial clan.] said Axel with a serious expression.

"You there... What is your name?" asked Axel to Kahn.

"Kahn Salvatore, lord Hero." replied Kahn in a meek voice.

"Huh... even a guy with no strength or background dares to casually talk with lord Axel without bowing or kneeling now?" spoke an elf scholar among the group who appeared to be a second stage saint and released his killing intent on Kahn.

Thud!

Kahn's figure quickly slumped down under this pressure and knelt on the ground as he was currently hiding his strength at master rank.

[This fucking moron!] cursed Axel in his mind because this teammate of his ruined the situation that was just calming down.

"That's it!" shouted Omega and quickly unsheathed his katanas to attack while Jugram was ready to leap off and attack the whole group.

"What's happening here?!"

Before Omega could even move and attack the elf, a sudden loud voice resounded in the sky above them.

A floating figure of a young woman adorning an armor that was a combination of white, brown and green suddenly appeared a few hundred meters above in the sky.

Her black hair and green eyes along with an extremely gorgeous facial structure were the most striking features of her appearance.

[The hell! What's she doing here? And when did she even get here without any of us noticing?!] exclaimed Kahn.

[Teleportation scroll. And epic rank one at that.] replied Ceril who was sitting inside the building.

This sudden arrival during the moment when things were close to getting bloody... was Venessa.

[Damn it! This was not part of the plan!

We were only going to maintain our secrecy with ambiguous information and let these idiots think what they liked... but this princess; we can't make up any lies anymore.

Apart from Omega and Jugram, all of you hide your auras completely.] ordered Rathnaar.

Their original plan here was to let the hero's party think that Kahn was only a disciple of the old blacksmith and not someone associated with his subordinates.

And they'd let the opposite side make assumptions of their own and report it to church. But Venessa suddenly showing up here was going to mess things up.

Before anyone could speak... Venessa's eyes landed on Kahn who was forced to kneel... more like he chose to kneel to maintain his fake background.

SHRILL!!

Venessa suddenly released her killing intent as soon as she sensed a murderous aura forced upon Kahn

and then looked at the source... the hero's party.

"The audacity of your trash dumpsters!

Do you know who he is?!" shouted Venessa and quickly landed in between these two confronting sides.

Her wrathful gaze landed on their figures as she brandished her sword the very next moment.

The entire hero's party was simply too shocked at the moment because first, there were suddenly seven saints here... and now, the one and only princess of the Vulcan empire herself appeared on the site.

Venessa, with her raged expression, quickly declared in a tyrannical voice...

"He's my man!"

Chapter 569 Fair Warning

As soon as Venessa's declaration resounded in everyone's ears, the whole surrounding turned dead silent. Whether it was Kahn, his subordinates, the onlookers or even the members of the hero's party... they all were dumbfounded.

Venessa's man aka Kahn had his eyes popping out of the sockets, jaw dropped on the ground and entire body frozen like an ice sculpture.

Even Omega and Jugram looked at him with suspicious eyes, wondering when their master managed to charm another beautiful woman within just a couple of months ever since they entered the Vulcan empire.

"He's the disciple of master Oakenshield. How dare you mongrels release your killing intent on him?!"

Do you know who you're all messing with?!" shouted Venessa again as her sword suddenly lit on fire as she kept increasing her saint pressure.

The entire hero's party, however... had nothing to speak in return.

At this moment, they all felt thoroughly insulted. Because first, it was Omega who said that they were nothing but weak losers who needed their clan's support to do anything. He didn't care if they were the hero's party or were affiliated with the church.

And now, Venessa called the trash dumpsters and mongrels as if their identity as the biggest talents of the young generation of the whole Vulcan empire was nothing but a joke.

Yet, there was nothing they could do to retort because the one to berate them was the princess of the empire herself.

A single defying word spoken against the imperial family was enough to get them beheaded under a guillotine.

"Should I report this to your clans? Or should I get the imperial authorities directly involved in this matter?"

Looks like you lot have grown bolder because people praise you for the things you didn't even achieve by yourself." spoke Venessa as she gave them all deathly stares.

Forget getting angry... everyone including the 4th stage fireborne saint was scared because she was imperial blood and their families and clans all served the imperial family in the end.

Maybe the Hero of Fire would be spared... but the rest of them would surely be killed if they did something wrong in her presence.

"It's a misunderstanding, princess Venessa." spoke Axel as he tried to calm down the mood with a benign smile.

Which in reality, wasn't. He didn't care about Kahn at all because he was a weak nobody.

[Here he goes like a lovestruck bird again. Whenever he sees the princess, he turns into a completely different person.] said Tamak to Edna.

"It isn't." spoke Omega suddenly. THIS CHAPTER IS UPDATE BY . COM.

"They disrespected master Oakenshield who couldn't come to greet them because he is working on legendary rank weapons.

They tried to attack the building entrance just because they felt like they weren't shown enough respect.

And then they forced Kahn to kneel just because their fake pride needs others to worship them like gods." said Omega in a fearless tone as he told Venessa what happened.

"Lies! He's lying! We did no such thing." rebuked Mikaela.

"Is that so? We have hundreds of witnesses here. Besides..." spoke Omega and the next moment...

Jugram, who stood beside him activated a recording artifact and displayed a holographic video of the whole thing ever since he came to greet the new arrivals.

This was one of the backup strategies Rathnaar had them prepared for in case things got ugly and they had to prove their innocence.

However, this recording did not show any of the insults or berating done by Omega at all since Jugram recorded only the selective moments.

"You ignorant pricks! You dare show that kind of behavior in front of someone who is backed by me..." said Venessa in an exasperated voice.

"Let's see what happens when I release this recording to the whole empire. I would like to see what people will think after watching your real faces.

I wonder if even the church or the imperial clan would support this kind of conduct." threatened Venessa.

Everyone from the hero's party suddenly felt a dreary pressure on their minds and were left rooted on the spot.

If it was someone else... the church or the imperial authorities would've taken care of it. But if it was the princess herself who was to release and spread this footage... they all would be scrutinized by the whole empire.

Even Axel wouldn't be spared from this.

"Get lost! These people are under my protection.

If I see you troubling the company or Kahn ever again... you'll have me as your enemy.

And I don't care if you're the hero's party or whatnot." warned Vanessa.

She picked up Kahn, grabbed by the shoulder and dragged him towards the entrance door of the building.

"Princess, we should maintain some distance. People will get a bad impression." whispered Kahn.

Venessa quickly handed him an artifact and conversed telepathically.

[Play along. I want to avoid that bastard. He keeps acting all friendly and chummy with me every time I meet him.

Can't he get a hint that I'm not into him?

Let's get out of their sight first. Then we can talk later.] ordered Venessa as she dragged him along.

Kahn, for the first time in both of his lives... was getting manhandled by a woman.

[Who's that human? What's her relationship with him?] asked Axel with an irked expression.

[Seriously, we just got humiliated so badly and he's worried about her relationship with that human?] spoke the wolfkin to the rest of the group.

Axel didn't show it on his face but he was annoyed by Kahn who was walking too close to Venessa.

"Let's go. We're not welcome here." he commanded the rest of the group before things got out of hand again.

After they finally left with their warship, Kahn and Venessa had entered the main office of the company and finally decided to speak freely.

"Princess..." he said.

"What?" she asked with a curious gaze.

"What did you mean back then?" asked Kahn in a serious tone.

"About what? I only saved you from them." she replied.

"Well... I think your words were kind of..." said Kahn as he averted his gaze from Venessa and spoke in a soft tone.

"Misleading."

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"About what? I only saved you from them." she replied.

"Well... I think your words were kind of..." said Kahn as he averted his gaze from Venessa and spoke in a soft tone.

"Misleading."

Chapter 570 Misleading Words

Kahn and Venessa finally had a moment to relax and talk among themselves without having to worry about anyone else. She sat on a luxurious chair while Kahn leaned against the wooden wall after getting out of the situation.

However, Kahn started questioning the meaning behind her words as to him... they appeared very misleading.

"What do you mean? I just saved you from whatever trouble they were causing.

I called you one of my people." explained Venessa with a coy smile on her face.

In reality, Venessa acted the way she did to make Kahn indebted to her. A necessary step to sway his decision and get him to join her side if she could.

And then exact her so-called revenge when the right time came.

"But the way you worded it... It sounded like you claimed me to be your... partner." spoke Kahn with a hesitant voice.

"Partner... partner in what?" asked Venessa in a clueless voice.

"As in... your lover." replied Kahn with a grin.

Stunned!

Venessa's eyes widened and suddenly she was frozen on the spot.

And now that she was completely calmed down... she recalled the events again and then judged her own words with a sane mind.

"What in the name of eternal flames have I done?!" exclaimed Venessa as soon as she understood how everyone took her words.

She again misspoke her real intentions and chose the wrong words in her enraged state just like a week ago in front of her retainers.

"No! It's not what I meant!!" shouted Venessa in a high-pitched tone as a flustered expression appeared on her face.

[So she's a short fuse kind. Totally losing control of her brain when she's angry.] thought Kahn.

"You... don't you dare have any funny ideas.

I have no such feelings or intentions towards you!" she explained.

"Alright, alright, alright."

Kahn then tried to salvage the situation.

"Hmph! Why would I even like you?

The only thing good about you is your looks.

Other than that, you're as weak as a newborn birkyala.

I'd never fall for a guy who isn't stronger than me!" she over-explained herself while comparing Kahn to one of the famous pet animals in the Vulcan empire.

"Yeah, yeah. I get it... you don't have to convince me.

But now that you said it..." spoke Kahn as a wicked smile appeared on his face.

"The Hero of Fire looks like a perfect match for you.

He has good looks, backing from both church and imperial clan.

And he also meets the condition of being stronger than you since he's a third stage saint.

Not just me but everyone in the empire would think of you two as a match made in heaven." said Kahn

as he outright teased Venessa.

"Akthooo!!"

Venessa faked spitting out and looked at Kahn with an irritated expression.

"Do you want to die? Should I throw you to the hero's party again?" she questioned with a sharp gaze.

"Think about it. He suddenly turned very respectful as soon as you showed up. And you said he's always friendly.

Take it from a handsome and charming man like myself... I think he likes you." he joked again.

"Tch! And why would that be?" asked Venessa as she rolled her eyes.

"Maybe he thinks you're very beautiful." responded Kahn as he laid back on the main chair of the company head.

"Oh, is that so? Then what about you?"

Do you also think I'm very beautiful?" she asked with squinted eyes.

"Urm... Yes." said Kahn reluctantly.

Because if he said no... he was basically asking for a beating from the princess and there was nothing he'd be able to do.

"Then why don't you join me? You can bask and worship my beauty everyday then." spoke Venessa with a coy grin.

"Those are completely different matters.

Thanks for the help today but that's not going to make me join you." said Kahn with a poker face.

"Tch! What a heartless and foolish guy.

I guess you don't know how many suitors I have lined up for me. Including some princes and to be emperors from other empires.

You're lucky that I'm even talking to you." said Venessa as she posed herself revealing some sort of intangible angelic aura.

"Still not interested." he replied with a straight face.

Soon, another conversation between them started as Venessa kept nagging him to join her group while

he kept declining politely.

Later in the night, inside the main headquarters of the Church of Hetrax... was a man in red and black armor, standing in front of an old fireborne in a red and golden cassock.

Axel Lobethrox, the Hero of Fire, finished reporting the whole incident to Demiurge Val Arhelm, the Pope himself.

Axel empathized on how Princess herself appeared as soon as things were about to get bloody and there were too many saints.

"If not for the Princess and the secret recording they took that could've implicated the whole party... we would've been able to do a thorough job." said Axel.

"I see. So the imperial family is indeed involved in this matter after all.

panda novel They hired outsiders to guard the blacksmith so no one could say that the imperial clan was directly involved.

At best, one would think that it's either the prince or the princess who are backing the dwarf." spoke Demiurge with a stern expression.

"Given how cunning he is... the emperor is planning something big.

We need to get into the game as well then." said the pope.

"At this point, if we don't show our open support to Oakenshield... Many of our devotees will assume that we don't care about our followers and won't bother to help or support them in the upcoming future.

And our claims to treat humans as equals are also a lie." he spoke with a thoughtful expression as he tried to see through the emperor's plans.

"I get it! That's his plan!" suddenly the pope shouted as if a light bulb lightened up over his head.

"Maybe the emperor wishes to achieve something through that dwarf and his human disciple through the challenge he accepted.

I think he wishes to get the dwarven race completely on his side and raise his support...

It will isolate the church in the future if the dwarven race completely allies themselves with the imperial clan." he hypothesized.

"That bastard is trying to make us powerless by taking away all of our support after he already crippled us using the imperial punishment as an excuse." said Demiurge.

In reality... everything was turning into a big misunderstanding... the empire-level misunderstanding just because Venessa showed up on the scene.

Demiurges then summoned the official spokespersons of the church and in front of Axel, he declared in a hasty voice...

"Relay my orders... we're announcing our full support to Throk Oakenshield!"