

Darkness 581

Chapter 581 True Geniuses

While Kahn used his hack of using the doppelgangers to advance and perfect his fighting skills, magic, space law and blacksmithing skills at the same time. He had to pay greatly for it.

Since the original body, mind and soul was the main factor that linked all the doppelgangers... it was the one actually bearing the pressure of everything since the original Kahn was the anchor that connected them through the soul connection.

So in simple words... There were 16 Kahn existing at the same time. Each one doing their part and sharing the experience, knowledge, mastery, proficiency, physical movements and thought process.

And the original body was the one enduring all of it at the same time through sheer willpower alone.

Just imagine yourself hearing the thoughts, forcefully splitting your mind and focusing on different things at once while experiencing everything they were going through via a mind and body that wasn't your own.

And then imagine having 15 of such bodies and consciousness while you are the one enduring all of it at once...

This was the price Kahn had to pay for using this hack. A price that would drive other people completely mad if they were forced to experience it themselves.

But even so... Kahn knew that there was no perfect shortcut or an absolute hack without something to sacrifice.

In his case... he was sacrificing his sanity while suffering constant mental and physical pressure just to cover everything than leaving it for later.

All of that... to overcome his weaknesses and survive in a world that would kill him as soon as his existence became known to everyone.

Kahn was aware that other than his Eidetic Memory... he wasn't someone truly gifted with talent.

He wasn't a true sword prodigy like Rathnaar who could create Saint Rank skills while being a semi-saint. Someone who killed even Heroes of the Gods with Divine Abilities and that too when they were a rank or two higher than him

Neither did he achieve heaven-defying skills or an Ancient Rank job like Cassandra through her own talent and hard work alone.

He wasn't committed like Solomon who sacrificed a century of his life and strength just to study Space Law which decreased his mana and world energy, making him stay as a weak and low leveled semi-saint just so he could get Rathnaar's core and then ascend later.

In the case of the old man Albestros... he was someone who excelled in blacksmithing and artificing, both jobs that were extremely hard to achieve while having the disadvantage of being a human.

Even Throk was someone who rose to become one of the top 5 blacksmiths of the Vulcan empire while having no background, wealth, authority and connections. Even the master of his had to spend a century to achieve his current skills and reputation.

And lastly, he didn't have any innate abilities such as bloodlines or species advantage like Venessa who was already capable of fighting above 2 ranks.

All the 6 people he used as a benchmark were the prime example of true geniuses while he was someone who reached this point in this cruel world where power ruled everything only because of the Divine Abilities and Blessings given by God of Darkness and the War Deity respectively.

However... he wasn't ignorant to think that all six of these people achieved their success only because there were gifted. No... in the real world, even geniuses had to work hard to succeed.

Their latent talent and abilities only made the ride a bit smoother but the path had to be walked with their strength and endless hard work.

Although Kahn's cunning nature, wits and past life experiences played a part in his rise to strength... none of it would've become possible if not for his divine abilities and blessings.

And if Kahn wanted to surpass them and sit at the top even among these geniuses... he had to work many times harder than everybody, be smarter than them, and consume knowledge at a pace that surpassed everyone else.

Hence, he was trying his best to endure all of the hardship and burden that could break a person in a short time. To achieve his goals and aspirations because being a chosen Hero of a God wasn't going to be enough to help him ascend to the top. At this moment, Kahn was trying to find his place...

Among the True Geniuses.

Weeks passed as Kahn kept carrying the routine of vigorous training and noticed a considerable rise in his skills and understanding.

As he thought before, it was more about the experience than just hammering it down. The more he practiced forming different shapes and parts of armors and weapons... the more his understanding regarding the metal or alloy at hand rose and he could almost predict the optimal temperature for forging just by looking at the material at hand and feeling the heat through his skin.

Blackwall on the other hand was increasing his knowledge and proficiency even more than Kahn. Just that he didn't have a shortcut to directly learn these skills or increase his mastery through blessings unless Kahn gave them to him.

But his innate connection to metals and minerals was far better than Kahn and he could easily use the best way to forge the shapes, use a hammer or the punch on the piece at hand perfectly while maintaining the thickness and quality of the finished product.

Both Kahn and Blackwall were aware that once they perfected the tools and learned their way around all the tools, metals and could make any type of set... Throk would start the next step of their training.

Till now, they were only working on base-level armor and weapons. Their highest grade of work was a common rank armor set made from pure steel. They hadn't even touched the rare materials like Mythril, Adamantite or Orichalcum.

Just like this... Two months passed by ever since the Dwarven Council meeting.

But something changed in both of them.

Kahn and Blackwall no longer had the expression of someone forced to study something they didn't want to or doing it for the sake of it. And even now... all of this was just the beginning stage of their training.

A blissful smile appeared on their faces as they looked at the forge the next morning. Because finally...

They had truly accepted the Blacksmithing Craft.

Chapter 582 Blacksmithing Craft

Kahn had a different outlook on the entirety of Blacksmithing Craft now. Because before he started the real training 2 months ago... he only had respect for this profession from the perspective of an outsider or an onlooker.

But the past two months had greatly tested his mind, tenacity, commitment, perseverance and patience throughout his daily routine and continuous yet precise efforts to embed these skills and knowledge in his body and soul.

Unlike the time when he was focusing on weapons and combat techniques training or how he studied magic and space law... they all were done in order to ensure his survival and help him rise higher in ranks and strength.

Blacksmithing was something he chose on the accord of an opportunity showing up when he saw Throk's predicament back then and he wanted to save his future wealth on making his weapons and armors by himself.

This wasn't something he felt the urgency to learn, just something that was on a bucket list. He had Alchemy, Magic Formations and Runes in his list too. But none of these were a necessity for him.

However, now that he had spent the past two months learning the ins and outs of this craft, even though they were only a form of basic training... Kahn had a completely different mindset about it now.

The craft itself wasn't about just making armors and weapons for the sake of battle or killing your enemy. Instead, the fundamental concept that gave birth to it was...

Creation.

Yes, the blacksmithing craft presented a branch of creativity that came out of your mind. You spent blood, sweat, hard work along with hundreds of hours of intense forging process just to create a piece stemmed out of your imagination and taking a real appearance and body.

Like how an artist brought his imagination, feelings and creativity together to make a painting that was the culmination of everything that inspired him...

Like how a math genius spent years creating formulas and equations to quantify and solve the problem at hand... ending up setting a standard that would help future generations.

Like how a scientist spent decades to solve mysteries of the world and nature or how an architect spent years to build a building that became a monument of inspiration and hope to the people of their country.

In Kahn's eyes... Blacksmithing was the same; making you bring your ideas, creativity, aspirations, emotions and hard labor into a physical form.

Let it be an eloquent sword to a crude and terrifying-looking battleaxe... to a blacksmith, all of them were beautiful and praiseworthy creations.

And now... Kahn wasn't in a hurry like before.

Because he was multitasking using the doppelgangers, which was already a huge burden on his kind while soaking in a lot of knowledge and experience at the same time through his daily training.

And even if he was learning and unlocking skills by himself through hard effort... it was going to take him a long time than directly absorbing skills from someone.

He didn't plan to kill some innocent blacksmith just to get their skills. Unless someone tried to kill him, he wouldn't go looking for blood by himself.

This was a land where he couldn't get away with killing anyone since his identity was already in the limelight and he was certain many people... whether they belonged to Hector or Venessa's faction; whether they were from the Church of Hetrax, imperial family or even the Dwarven Council... he was aware that there were many eyes on them.

But none of these hidden spies provoked them so Kahn and the gang also had no reason to pick a bone with them since they all planned to lay low in this empire from the very beginning.

And one day...

Kahn was completely immersed in forging an armor set and dual-wielding swords under Throk's supervision. However... he was lost in his thoughts while quenching the hot sword's blade but suddenly, his steps stopped.

Kahn had his eyes wide open yet he couldn't see anything in front of him. The forge was full of scalding heat yet he couldn't feel anything on his skin.

The hot blade that Kahn held by using tongs was leaking vapors, yet he didn't move an inch from his.

To Kahn, the whole world around him had turned into background while he entered a space existing in a different plane.

This plane of existence was nothing but a combination of black and crimson red.

Every building, every object regardless of their shape and size in this plane was made of these two colors while he was completely naked and barefooted.

Ting!

Ting!

Ting!

All he could hear was the loud sound of metals and tools clanging against each other by themselves while no people were performing these repeated movements.

He turned around and saw an enormous black and red castle behind him that appeared like it was made around a ginormous mountain.

Ting!

Clang!

The sound of metals and hammers never stopped but Kahn suddenly felt like there was some invisible force calling out to him. As if telling him to enter through this endless castle's main door and venture inside.

Kahn was puzzled yet he seemed to have lost his ability to think or question anything. And without a second thought... he started walking towards this castle where the floor was made of sizzling stones.

Yet Kahn kept walking towards this castle and followed behind the echoes of these noises as if he wanted to find any answers... he'd only get them inside.

Suddenly in the real world, Throk shouted...

"What the hell are you doing brat?!"

"Who said you could space out during your training?" exclaimed the dwarf blacksmith and walked towards Kahn.

But suddenly... he was completely shocked because at the same time...

He saw Blackwall in the same state as Kahn.

Both of them were frozen on the spot as if they didn't exist in this place and were lost in time.

"Impossible! How can that be? And both of them at the same time?" asked Throk to himself with a completely flabbergasted expression.

This was something he had read and heard about once. And there was no mistaking it... Both Kahn and Blackwall, who had entered a state of trance, were going through...

An Enlightenment!

Chapter 583 Two Dwarves

Kahn kept walking barefooted while the scorching heat in the atmosphere surrounding his body while his legs were burning as he stepped on the scalding hot tiles of the road that led towards the inner parts of this ginormous castle whose end he could not see.

Unlike the buildings outside that were the normal-sized as any other settlement in the Vulcan empire... Even the entrance door of this castle itself was a couple of kilometers wide and the tiny Kahn akin to the size of an ant in front of these massive constructs could only see their ends.

Hours and then days passed but Kahn tirelessly kept walking inside this castle that seemed to be the residence of unfathomable beings from the words he could hear.

His haggard and dispirited expression were enough to understand how much pressure he was going through but still... his steps didn't stop at all.

BOOM!

BOOM!

The previously clanging noises of the hammering and quenching had turned too loud and he could feel shockwaves traveling through the air and the ground.

And finally one day... Kahn reached a wide and flattened ground with two ends placed only one kilometer away from each other and his gaze landed on two gigantic figures.

In reality, Kahn was only standing at the entrance of a small door. And in front of him, were two gigantic dwarves busy forging.

Based on his estimations, each one of the dwarves was 1 kilometer tall. Even the massive hammers and equipment they held in their hands were 200 to 300 meters long.

And only after seeing these two individuals... Kahn finally regained his full consciousness and came to understand the situation around him.

He quickly tried to exude his saint pressure but nothing came out of his body. His clothes, weapons, the space ring... he had none of them on his personnel.

"Huh?"

How is this possible? After so many years?" spoke one of the dwarves who was donned in shining silver armor, two horns came out of his helmet and he held a hammer in his left hand while a long poleaxe in his right one.

This titanic dwarf had a white braided beard while lightning ran across his armored body here and there as if it was something very natural.

But the aura this dwarf gave... it was something unexplainable to Kahn. Something he had felt before but couldn't remember exactly where or when.

"Two of them at the same time?" said the other dwarf who adorned a brown and green armor with two yellow wings on his helmet.

This second gigantic dwarf held a golden warhammer in his hand while having a book strapped to his waist.

The long and braided brown beard and white woolen cape differentiated his appearance from the former.

"This has never happened before." said the first dwarf as he gave a look of surprise to the other one.

"It's been more than 12 thousand years since a human appeared here. I guess they're not a lost cause at all." said the second ginormous dwarf.

Kahn, who had broken through his trance finally got a hold of his thought process.

[Two?]

Just then, he looked to his left.

And on the left and opposite side of this door that he entered from was... Blackwall.

Blackwall was also discombobulated and regained control over his body just now. And he too was completely nude just like Kahn.

[Blackwall, can you hear me?] asked Kahn through their telepathy link.

[Master, where are you?] asked Blackwall in surprise.

[On your right.] replied Kahn.

Compared to the two gigantic figures, their bodies every like small sand grains.

BOOM!!

The next moment, Blackwall's body let out a massive burst of brown aura and his entire figure started transforming.

And in just a minute... Blackwall returned to his original Kronos form and turned into a primordial titan as his height also rose 1 kilometer tall and matched the two dwarves.

"Oh, this one... he isn't a human.

Well... he isn't a true living being. A creation... a titan's bloodline, abilities and a Knight's skills.

How odd." said the first dwarf.

But without wasting any more time, the titan general quickly moved and picked up Kahn while plunging his hand into the ground as he used his innate abilities and pulled out a battleaxe from the ground.

He placed Kahn on his shoulder and took a defensive stance against the two dwarves, both of their minds alert and wary of these two gigantic figures.

Just then, the second dwarf squinted his eyes and focused his gaze on Kahn and just a moment later, they were left wide open.

Brother, for the first time... we have a chosen Hero entering our realm!" he joyfully exclaimed.

"What?" asked the first dwarf and he too focused his attention on Kahn and had his mouth wide open after he too judged Kahn's characteristics.

"Wait! They're connected by a soul chain.

This Titan lad is that chosen Hero's creation." continued the first dwarf donned in silver armor.

"How rare and amazing at the same time." spoke the second dwarf, who seemed to be the brother of the first one based on his words.

"Who are you? And what is this place?" Kahn asked in a befuddled voice because he had no idea what was going on.

All he remembered that he was lost in thoughts while performing quenching and suddenly, he lost his consciousness and the world around him turned blank.

"Who are we? You're asking that question right inside our castle." said the second brother with a little laugh.

Both Blackwall and Kahn were currently defenseless and if not for the Abyss Knight general, they wouldn't even be able to speak to these gigantic figures on equal height.

Hence, they were prepared to tackle any type of attack if the situation arose.

However, instead of showing any hostility towards these new uninvited guests, the dwarven brothers had no misgivings.

"My name is Brokkr." introduced the first dwarf in silver armor and with a hammer.

"My name is Eitri." spoke the second dwarf in brown and green armor with a golden warhammer in hand.

"You can call us..."

They both let out a smug smile and spoke in unison.

"Deities of Blacksmithing."

Chapter 584 The Deities

Kahn and Blackwall were too stunned and perplexed to speak a single word. If what they heard and experienced so far was indeed the truth... then they were conversing with two living Deities.

Seeing their shocked expression... Brokkr and Eitri gave them a moment of respite and didn't speak anything until their guests managed to digest the fact.

As for Kahn himself... Other than meeting Kravel, he never experienced meeting deities by himself. And even at that time, God of Darkness was present so he had very little interaction with the Deity.

Back in Verlassen fiefdom... Ceril and Oliver had received gifts from Velsharoon, the Deity of Necromancy and Indra, the Sky Deity respectively. But they never spoke about it or revealed any information about their encounter with those deities as if their lips were sealed and speaking about the deities was a taboo.

"Which god's hero are you... wait... that aura.

To see that the new Hero of Darkness entered our realm." said Eitri as he instantly scanned Kahn's entire body.

"Deities..." spoke Kahn as he just managed to come to his senses. And he wasn't a fool to question this situation either as this place was completely different from anything he had seen before.

"What is this place?" he asked.

"Our home. This is also the place where we forge our weapons and armors. Sometimes, the other Deities also hire our services." replied Brokkr.

"Even other Deities... does that mean..." he quickly tried to ask but before more words came out of his mouth, Eitri spoke in a calm voice.

"Yes. We also forged all the Divine Weapons of the Heroes."

Brokkr on the other end spoke with an indignant expression.

"He doesn't have his Divine Weapon with him. Otherwise, it would also be brought here through their soul link."

"Easy brother... this lad is a different case, remember." Eitri intervened.

"Wait... can you tell me what kind of Divine Weapon I have?"

"I don't have any knowledge about it or information about its whereabouts." spoke Kahn with a pleading expression.

If these Deities were the ones to forge his divine weapon, then there was a high chance that they could help him locate it.

"Don't ask questions related to your mission and we won't tell you anything related to the matters of deities and gods either."

"This is prohibited and just by speaking to you, we're already putting ourselves at risk." said Brokkr in a discontent tone.

"That is something you'll have to do on your own. The reason you're here is unrelated to your divine weapon." he continued in a stern tone.

"You don't want us to tell other deities and gods about you not having your divine weapon in possession, do you?" asked Eitri in a playful tone.

[Fuck! They're right!] thought Kahn as he immediately understood how precarious his situation was.

This was a great opportunity for Kahn to ask some important questions but after hearing their response, he understood how big of a risk it was.

Forget a divine weapon... he didn't even have an Ancient Rank weapon or one made from the body of a Royal Dragon. The only ones that could stand toe to toe against a divine weapon in a fight if a chosen hero didn't have his or her own.

"Even if you're dwarves... you're too big." said Blackwall out of the blue.

"What? This is our normal height!" shouted Eitri as if this was some serious issue for him.

"You should see other Demi-Gods, for example that bastard called Jotnar.

That giant titan is over a hundred times taller than us." said Brokkr with a hateful look.

But as soon as Blackwall heard the word 'Titan'... he got more curious.

"Jotnar? What kind of Demi-God is he?" asked the Kronos general out of curiosity as the fire from their forge glistened his mineral body and inbuilt armor-like body parts.

"You know nothing about your history? Ah, I forgot... you're just a creation and not a natural birth." said Eitri and then continued.

"Jotnar... is the Founding Titan."

Eitri then continued in a well-mannered tone as if he was reading scripture.

"The first natural titan who was born in Vantrea. He lived there for millions of years until he finally learned how to become a Demi-God.

And after he managed to become one and ascended to become a deity... he destroyed his body into hundreds of different pieces, spreading them all over different corners of Vantrea.

The body parts later reformed themselves and took physical appearance and had different elements to them.

And thus... they became what you call Primordial Titans." informed Eitri about the myth of the world.

"You only have a small portion of Jotnar's bloodline. But if you manage to find other titans and get their bloodline... maybe you have a chance to become someone like Jotnar.

Although we don't like that brute... he is one of the strongest among all the deities." revealed Brokkr.

Both of the guests had a look of disbelief. Because this information was something even Kahn's system didn't know about.

Previously, they thought that Primordial Titans were the peak. But now they learned that they were just a small portion of Jotnar's body.

Blackwall on the other end had a fiery look on his face as if he was raring to fight this Jotnar they spoke of.

"Alright then... let's get to the main topic at hand." spoke Kahn and broke the conversation that was drifting away from the important discussion they needed to have first.

"Can you tell us why we're here?" he asked with a yearning expression.

To his question, both the dwarven deities chuckled as if they found Kahn's query very obvious.

"You two were suddenly summoned into a realm of deities.

The deities who deal in the same craft both of you are learning and trying to improve your mastery in.

What does that tell you?" said Brokkr.

"Huh? What do you mean?" wondered Kahn. Because he was still unaware that he had received enlightenment back in the real world.

Just then, Eitri spoke and relayed their intentions to both Kahn and Blackwall in an authoritative tone.

"You two have gained our acknowledgment. In simple words..." he said and like a habit, both brothers completed the sentence together.

"You're now our Apostles."

Chapter 585 The Trial

Kahn and Blackwall were stupefied again as soon as both the deities spoke their true intentions and declared that they wanted the two of them to become their Apostles of Blacksmithing.

"What kind of nonsense is that? Why? And what qualifications do we have?" asked Kahn with an ashen expression.

Instead of becoming glad or feeling lucky... he was getting a sense of the approaching storm based on his past experiences.

"Because you both received enlightenment about the Blacksmithing Craft.

This isn't something that happens every day." informed Brokkr.

"You both somehow gained enlightenment at the same time and met one of our prerequisites, making you worthy enough to enter our realm.

But the main reason why we have made this decision is because you both are actually standing in this room in front of us." revealed Eitri.

"And does that make us some kind of special case?" asked Kahn in return because he found that reason implausible.

"Ha ha ha! Don't think too hard, child.

There were thousands of others from different empires, races, origins and eras in the past thousands of years who came before you after they received enlightenment and entered our realm in the annals of history.

But there have been less than 10 beings who managed to reach this room.

This is a form of testament in itself." he simplified.

"Elaborate. I still understand your logic." said Kahn casually as he looked at these two ginormous dwarves while standing on Blackwall's shoulder.

Compared to them... he was smaller than an ant's leg. But based on their approachable demeanor... Kahn had already assessed that both of them weren't the usual overbearing kind or expected others to worship them.

In a way... they embodied the true spirits of blacksmiths who didn't care about prestige, acknowledgement or wealth. They only cared about losing themselves in their craft.

And so far... they hadn't even leaked the slightest aura of Deities. Even Kahn could tell that if they did so... his soul would be destroyed completely just from the pressure alone.

"What do you remember before you came to this room and regained your consciousness?" asked Brokkr to both of them.

"I... I don't remember anything. I was just performing quenching and was about to place the piece under work to cool off in another pot." spoke Kahn.

"And I was busy finishing a chest plate piece and was about to put the whole set together." replied Blackwall in his voice that sent shockwaves after shockwaves since he was in his true primordial titan form.

"And what were you both thinking about at that time?" asked Eitri with a coy smile on his face.

To this question... both Kahn and Blackwall suddenly widened their eyes and spoke at the same time.

"The true meaning behind the Blacksmithing Craft's existence!"

To their collective response, both the deities only let out an elated smile and nodded in affirmation.

Kahn was shocked and completely lost his composure as he asked...

"How is that enough to qualify? I'm not even a Saint Blacksmith yet and neither is he.

Are you telling me that amateurs like us who didn't even train for 2 months properly, barely have any good skills and don't even have any experience with forging high-quality materials and complicated methods are somehow worthy to be your Apostle?

What kind of stupid and forced logic is that?"

Kahn complained since this whole situation still didn't seem realistic to him.

The next moment, Blackwall also chimed in and spoke in a stern voice.

"Even our master is extremely knowledgeable. He has spent over a century working in this craft and can tell the material as well as its characteristics and physical composition just by looking at it.

And there are even more experienced people than him who even exceed him in terms of knowledge, experience and techniques... I'm certain that there are people in the world who even surpass the ones I mentioned.

Are you saying that those figures... that the whole empire acknowledged and branded as the top of the top are not worthy compared to us?

I apologize but I too find it hard to believe." rebuked the titan general.

To their rebuttals, the Deity brothers responded...

"Ranks, levels, years of experience and mastery over the craft are irrelevant when it comes to enlightenment.

They only represent the capabilities of the body. The mind and soul work differently." spoke Eitri as he rested his warhammer close to the sweltering furnace.

Unlike what one would expect... These deities weren't using traditional equipment but weapons that looked no lesser than Ancient Rank.

Yes, the Ancient Rank weapons that were heard of only in legends and myths in Vantrea were actually used only as hammers and tools for forging by these two deities.

But after hearing their words... Kahn suddenly remembered something that proved their words to be true.

So far, he received enlightenment a total of 3 times. One during his magic training while twice when he was studying space law in Verlassen.

And in case of all three incidents... he was neither skilled, experienced nor had a high level of mastery. Rather... His thought process and mindset were completely out of the box.

His understanding was simply unconventional and radical. Thus he could unveil some truths and concepts that others failed to see.

So in a way... the words of these two deities made sense to him.

"If you're here... means you saw a glimmer of truth about blacksmithing craft.

This can't be gained or understood even with centuries of experience and knowledge unless it comes from within yourself and your understanding of the craft or a profession." spoke Brokkr as he noticed the changes in Kahn's expression.

"However... That part was only enough to let you enter this realm. But definitely not the factor that made us think highly of you two." suddenly, Eitri decided to reveal their main reason.

"Once someone enters our realm... their mind, body and soul are tested first. They're put in a state where they completely lose control over their soul, consciousness and instincts. And at the end... they're called out towards this room." he revealed.

"And we call it..." spoke Brokkr again but Eitri completed the sentence.

"Trial of Verdr."

Chapter 586 Laws of Creation

The two deities informed Kahn and Blackwall about what they both underwent to reach this room and stand in front of them. Although they only had vague information about their arrival here even now, finally they felt like they were getting closer to the truth.

Being tested for their mind, body and soul strength and only those worthy of being able to enter this room...

This was indeed what happened with Kahn and Blackwall as soon as they entered this realm albeit at different starting points.

"Only those with a strong soul, an ironclad consciousness and indomitable willpower that can overthrow any adversity they faced whether in a battle or while crafting can reach till this room." iterated Brokkr and then gazed directly at Kahn.

"Just look at yourself, child." he said.

Only then did Kahn notice something odd about himself and quickly took a look around.

Both of his legs were burnt to the point they looked completely charred.

Many cracks on his skin were leaking blood profusely and it was still dripping from his hands and nails.

He then remembered that when he saw Blackwall, the latter was the same. Just that his consciousness hadn't recovered enough to register these signals at first and make sense of them.

And then... Kahn looked behind him, outside of the room.

Unlike the scene in front of him, the whole path and surroundings till this room were only made up of two colors namely Black and Red.

Some objects and walls had black as the prominent color with red borders while others had vice-versa. But only the room where they stood had a normal color scheme on everything.

So in other words... they both had gone through this Trial of Verdr these two deities spoke of.

"This trial was to differentiate between the worthy ones who had the true potential to become our Apostles rather than just those who only worked hard to master these skills their entire lives.

Those who lacked in any of the sectors we mentioned would be sent back to the real world after their souls and minds lost their way during the journey.

Only the ones who managed to come here would be worth even talking to." explained Eitri as he let out a cheerful smile.

[Don't tell me... it's because of that...] thought Kahn as another realization struck his mind.

He just realized that because he was multitasking and carrying his mind while living and bearing the brunt of 16 different consciousnesses and bodies at the same time...

In a way, it reformed his willpower and completely changed his mental capacity by manyfolds than it already was.

If it was before he made that hard choice and paid the hefty price to use those doppelgangers... maybe he wouldn't have qualified to even enter this room.

Kahn didn't even realize how strong his willpower, consciousness and soul had become until the deities mentioned it.

As for Blackwall... he was just like his species... A titan in willpower.

Well, even before he ranked up to Legendary rank... Blackwall was someone who never backed down, persevered through every adverse situation when he acted as the tank of the group, and wasn't afraid to die in order to serve his master.

His mind and heart never wavered even when facing certain death.

So in terms of tenacity and willpower... he was probably the strongest one among all of Kahn's subordinates. Just that he never had the time to shine and show these qualities openly for an extended period, unlike the others.

And while Kahn was lost in thoughts again...

"So let us ask you a few questions before we officially begin the ceremony and turn you into our Apostles." spoke Brokkr.

"And do give us your honest opinion and truthful answers that come from your heart." said Eitri.

"Tell me what is Blacksmithing?" asked the former among the two.

The following moment, Blackwall in his titan form spoke in a vehement tone as an expression of yearning appeared on his face.

"It isn't just a craft... in my opinion, it's a part of the law of reality.

Something that deals with the laws of creation." he said in a firm tone, indicating that his resolve was firm while expressing his opinion. . com

"Correct!" said Brok and continued in an approving tone...

"It is based on a branch of the Laws of Creation.

Law of Transformation to be precise."

On the Titan's shoulder, Kahn spoke in a thoughtful voice.

"It's not about just shaping objects or forging them.

But reforming the creation of nature. Like how water can be turned into ice or steam.

And then condensed again to return to its initial form. Later, it can be turned into steam again by heating or into ice by cooling." he said and continued.

"From a small needle to a giantsword... from a living being to an inanimate object... they're all part of the creation."

To Kahn's firm and elaborated answer, it was Eitri who responded.

"Bravo!" said the dwarven deity with a brown beard.

"Anything can be reformed, broken down, undone and yet... it can be rebuilt even if they changed their forms or shape or state of matter.

Whether it is living beings, inanimate objects, mana, world energy or even the soul of a being...

You just need to know the correct method to change the state.

Whether you want to build or you want to destroy... Nothing is an exception to this law of creation." he iterated again and shared his profound thoughts.

Soon, the two deities asked a few more questions to both the candidates like a job interview and were overjoyed after receiving the answers and opinions of the two.

Compared to Kahn, Blackwall spoke fewer words but someone with wisdom could easily understand the profoundness in them.

He seemed to have some sort of inkling to the Blacksmithing Craft itself that couldn't be explained with words.

And finally, the room quieted down and both the deities decided that they had indeed found worthy candidates.

Brokkr then gave a nod to Eitri and declared...

"Both of you... have passed the final test."

Chapter 587 Final Test

Deities of Blacksmithing suddenly talked about a final test, that Kahn and Blackwall were oblivious to. The latter side had their ears perked up and asked...

"But didn't you already say we were going to be your Apostle?"

"A white lie. To make you think that you were already going to be chosen." responded Eitri in an unapologetic tone.

"You don't treat Blacksmithing as just some craft but a part of existence.

You don't wish to master some skills for the sake of your pride or achievements to create a future.

But you think of it as an integral part of reality. That kind of mindset... even many of the most legendary blacksmiths in the world failed to achieve that in the past.

Just by that outlook you both have on this craft shows the premise of your future potential." said Eitri.

The furnace in the middle of the room then dimmed down as if receiving some sort of instruction.

This time, Brokkr continued with a somber expression.

"On top of it... you both have Mineral Transmutation skill. We can sense it.

This is something only the primordial titans were blessed with but none of them ever chose this profession.

Means the future prospects you two have... it's simply unimaginable." he said in his rustic voice.

"The more your abilities rank up and the more wisdom you two gain... it's something worth investing in.

Taking all things into account... both of you are the best choices for us to represent our will in the real world." revealed Eitri in his sharp voice.

"Even those who spent hundreds of years fail to understand this. That it's not about increasing your grasp or mastery of the skill. But understanding the intent behind it while making the best product with what you have on hand.

This law is also shared in the study of many other things in the world.

Receiving enlightenment is just an eye-opener for a being to come close to the truth of the world." spoke Brokkr as he was completely firm on his decision about making the two candidates their Apostles now.

"But I've received enlightenment in Magic and Space Law before.

And yet, I didn't meet any deity." just then, Kahn spoke out of the blue as he queried about one of his doubts.

"That depends on the deities and gods.

How many enlightenments do you need before that Deity or a God acknowledges you... it's a matter of their choice." informed Eitri.

"Other than that, some deities need only one or two enlightenments at most while some Gods demand three to four before one becomes worthy of their acknowledgement." revealed Brokkr as they both always talked in turns.

"But gaining the acknowledgement of a True God is the hardest. We both needed over 2 thousand years ourselves even though blacksmithing was in our blood.

And the last one to naturally earn an acknowledgement of a God was the War Deity.

After him, no new deity has been born in recent history." revealed Eitri.

Again... Kahn heard about Kravel. The man whose blessings he received but had very superficial knowledge about. Someone who even Rathnaar worshipped as his idol.

"I see. Then can you tell me how one can become a Demi-God or a Deity?" asked Kahn.

"Daring today, aren't we?"

Brokkr replied and shook his head in refusal.

"That is something you need to figure out by yourself. We deities are prohibited to reveal that information even to our Apostles." said Eitri.

[Well, at least I tried.] thought Kahn.

Suddenly, his eyes gave a look of conflict and asked the two deities in front of him...

"But still... wouldn't choosing us become problematic for you? Don't you both serve the God Hetrax?"

Technically... we're from the rival group." queried Kahn.

Ever since both the deities introduced themselves, Kahn didn't show too much of a surprise after knowing their identities.

And the main reason being he was already somewhat informed about their existence.

Because among the 9 Deities who served Hetrax and were titled as the Nine Eternal Flames in the Vulcan empire... Brokkr and Eitri were indeed in the list and had many monasteries spread across the empire, especially worshipped by the dwarven race.

To his query about this delicate topic...

"Our will and the God we are associated with aren't related.

Maybe if you become a Deity one day like us... you'll understand how matters of the deities and gods are unrelated to beings of the living world." replied Brokkr in a stern tone.

[I see. No wonder the Sky Deity still gave his gifts to Oliver despite him being my creation... a subordinate of a chosen Hero of another God than the one it served.] spoke Kahn inwardly.

"Alright... we don't have all day. We need to get back to forging this divine weapon for another deity.

It's already been a few decades and we're working around the clock." said Brokkr.

"We will give each of you 3 gifts related to blacksmithing craft since you're both our Apostles now.

Make good use of it." said Eitri and soon, 3 massive orbs shrouded under formations, runes and signs of a language even Kahn couldn't understand or read came to be in his right palm.

Brokkr also summoned three orbs in his right palm, matching the appearance and colors of the ones summoned by his brother.

These three orbs had Blue, Yellow and Red colors and for someone like Kahn, they were as big as a mountain.

"Do mind that these are only Gifts.

Maybe if you achieve another enlightenment along your journey one day as you learn new things and exceed yourself...

We will see each other again and might offer you our Blessings.

For now, this is as far as we will go." revealed Eitri and soon, the orbs reduced their size and quickly entered Kahn's body.

Same happened to Blackwall who absorbed the gifts offered by Brokkr.

A sudden feeling of fulfillment and elation appeared on both of their faces as if a surge of energy had run across their entire bodies.

"These gifts..." spoke Kahn as if he had some sort of epiphany and continued with a perplexed expression...

"They're too precious!"

Chapter 588 Parting Gift

Kahn and Blackwall were left asunder because of the gifts they just received from these two Deities of Blacksmithing. Each being one of a kind and unparalleled.

And the important thing was that these were just gifts. Not the blessings given by Brokkr and Eitri. Yet, the effects they would be able to achieve using these gifts had put their mind in a frenzy because they were no different than cheat codes from their perspective.

Kahn didn't bother going into the details of these 3 gifts at this moment. Because too many questions arose in his mind related to the blacksmithing craft after receiving them.

Soon, Blackwall and Kahn started discussing a few things related to craft which opened up a new world to both of them after hearing answers from both the brothers.

Obviously, this knowledge wasn't in any books and records or even someone like Throk wasn't aware of them.

And finally, after they both felt a sense of satisfaction...

"Alright. I think it's about time we leave." spoke Kahn.

"Wait... we must give a parting gift to this titan lad." said Brokkr hurriedly.

"Huh? Didn't you already give us gifts? There's more?" asked Kahn with a befuddled expression.

"For him, not you." spoke Eitri and continued.

"You're a chosen hero... one in a very precarious situation at that.

If you were to die... he will die too since he's your creation and his entire existence is bound to you as he's not a natural birth of the world.

And we don't want all of our representatives to die.

It is important to us that at least one should be present in Vantrea." spoke Eitri with a complex expression on his face.

As if he wanted to explain more but couldn't because of some unspeakable rule or restriction.

"What do you plan to do?" asked Blackwall in a serious voice as he gazed at both the dwarven deities, his face having concern displayed all over it.

But the brothers didn't explain anything and quickly appeared in front of Blackwall who was of the same height as them in his titan form.

And before he could even react, they both placed their right and left palm respectively on his chest at the same time as a bright white aura was released from their bodies and encapsulated inside Blackwall through their palms.

Blackwall's titanic figure shuddered and stumbled for a second but he quickly adjusted his footing.

Eitri then opened the book that was hanged on his waist and started chanting some sort of archaic spell and hundreds of magic formations appeared around Blackwall's body.

And the bright white light that was surrounding the abyss knight general started dispersing and got absorbed by Blackwall's body until it completely disappeared.

But the next moment... his eyes were full of shock and disbelief as he uttered in a stuttering voice.

"Master... I... I..."

"What did you do?!" asked Kahn with an alarmed expression to both the deities.

But instead of replying to him, both brothers revealed a light smile.

Instead of the brothers, it was Blackwall who answered him in a flabbergasted tone...

"I have a Soul."

A couple of minutes passed but not a single word was spoken by anyone. Kahn was dumbfounded while Blackwall was bamboozled as he could feel something new about himself.

As if he just received something he was missing all along ever since he was created by Kahn. And now, he found the final piece of the puzzle that made him whole.

"It's not entirely a true soul but a Pseudo-Soul.

Once he becomes a being comparable to a Godbeast, it'll transmute and become a true soul." said Eitri.

"His existence is no longer solely bound to you. Although that soul connection that you have with him still exists... he won't die automatically after your demise." spoke Brokkr as he folded his arms.

Kahn on the other hand was still having a hard time digesting this revelation.

First, it was Ceril and now Blackwall. Both received a Pseudo-Soul from the deities they met that made their existence free from Kahn in a way. Although they were still bound to him via the Synthesis Divine Ability, they wouldn't cease to exist in case Kahn died.

Finally after some time, he calmed down and accepted this fact.

He then told the brothers about Oliver who also received gifts from a Deity but didn't receive a pseudo-soul.

"This means Indra has already chosen an Apostle who is still alive in Vantrea.

Unless that one dies, the Sky Deity wouldn't go as far as giving a pseudo-soul to this Oliver you speak of." said Brokkr as he answered Kahn's questions.

Kahn also nodded as he thanked the deity for clearing this doubt.

This reason also explained why Velsharoon gave a pseudo-soul to Ceril since he had no representatives alive just like Brokkr and Eitri.

Even these two gave Blackwall a pseudo-soul for their personal reasons.

They didn't speak out loud but Kahn understood that these two dwarven deities were aware of his situation and knew that he might get killed one day.

Thus, they chose to do this for Blackwall.

And given how other deities like Indra were reserved about this sort of exchange... Kahn felt like there was some sort of price these 3 deities would have to pay for granting those pseudo-souls.

"Do not mention meeting us to anyone else other than you two and those who are bound to your soul. Otherwise, we will take back our gifts." forewarned Eitri in an authoritative tone.

Only now did Kahn understand why Ceril and Oliver only mentioned meeting the deities but didn't go into details about exactly what happened during their encounter even if they were linked through soul connection.

Their silence was kept in order to keep those gifts by the deities.

And now, Kahn could only tell his subordinates, the system and even Rathnaar about this because they were all linked to his soul.

But mentioning exactly what happened during their interactions with the deities with anyone else was a strict no-go for him.

Both Kahn and Blackwall then thanked the deities for everything that happened and the gifts they received.

Under the will of the Deities, both the Apostles disappeared from the room.

A few minutes later... Eitri spoke to his brother Brokkr.

"What do you think brother? Will he be able to handle it?" asked Eitri.

"Who knows. It's not like the other ones we made.

Even his predecessors couldn't tap into its full potential.

Well... we'll see if this child can surprise us." responded Brokkr with a serious countenance as if he was looking forward to something.

"If he does manage to do so... he might as well become the strongest of the new generation of summoned heroes.

Because among all the divine weapons we made for the chosen heroes..." spoke Eitri in an excited tone.

Brokkr also nodded and both the brothers spoke in unison with a look of anticipation.

"His Divine Weapon is our best creation."

Chapter 589 Return From The Dead

In a secured room inside the Oakenshield company... a living quarter was currently under tight security and no one was present in this whole wing.

A ray of morning sunshine entered the main bedroom of this quarter and shone brightly upon two statues that had been well maintained and cleaned from time to time.

But unlike any other exquisite or applaudable piece of sculpture... these two statues had very odd positions.

One looked like it was holding and carrying something in front of it while the other had its right hand raised in the air as if it was about to strike something placed before it.

But the appearance of these statues made them look like they weren't objects but real living beings.

Crack!

Crack!

Soon, cracking noises were released from both of them and suddenly, these two statues aka Kahn and Blackwall finally moved.

Thud!

Both their bodies lost balance and fell on the wooden floor as soon as they regained consciousness.

Quickly, a black figure appeared in front of them out of thin air and extended his hands to pick them up.

"You're finally awake, master. And you too, bull." spoke Ronin as he pulled them up.

Kahn dusted off his clothes and looked around the room.

"What happened?" asked Kahn as he remembered that they were in the main forging room before receiving enlightenment about the blacksmithing profession.

But now, they were in his living quarters inside the company grounds, indicating that it has been quite some time.

Swoosh!

Swoosh!

Swoosh!

One by one, Omega and the remaining generals showed up in the room as soon as they sensed Kahn and Blackwall's aura.

Ronin, the Spirit Assassin general who was in charge of guarding them all this time, responded in a serious tone...

"Master, it has been quite some time since both of you went to trance.

Even your bodies were frozen like solid rocks. So we had no choice but to safeguard you both here."

Then Armin interjected as he grasped both their palms and tried to sense their vitals.

"Both of you started losing your mana and world energy after some time. We all had a lot of worries because it seemed like both of you and us would soon die." he revealed with a caring tone.

"Thanks to the Life Force Restoration skill I gained after you merged me with that Ashokvatika monster in Verlassen; I managed to save both of you and have been sharing the life force with you two daily.

If not for that... all of us except this skull and bones here would be dead." he iterated in a stern tone.

"What? Was it that serious?" asked Blackwall and noticed changes in his body and soon, he was shocked as well.

At this moment, their bodies barely had enough mana and world energy to keep them alive.

Kahn also noticed these changes and quickly activated Dimensional Domain. He took a large amount of SS Rank cores and ores from his stash.

Both he and Blackwall quickly used the Energy Plunderer skill and started absorbing these high-grade cores to replenish their mana reserves.

Then they placed their hands on Rathnaar's core and started absorbing World Energy from it directly through physical contact.

[You're very lucky, boy. If not for that variant healer subordinate of yours... you wouldn't have managed to live.

Even your natural mana and world energy recovery were stopped ever since you both underwent that enlightenment thing.] suddenly, Rathnaar spoke in Kahn's mind.

[Human... next time, make sure to free me from your bounds first.

You can die by yourself, leave me out of this.] said Rudra in a disapproving tone.

An hour passed and finally, both of them recovered enough to move around and Kahn deactivated the domain.

"Phew! I guess we dodged a bullet." he said.

And now, both their auras were back to normal and they could exert their saint pressure.

Clang!

Clang!

In the hidden real forge under the main company building... Throk was suddenly shocked as he sensed both of his students' auras and presence.

Ceril quickly created an isolation barrier and all the subordinates asked Kahn and Blackwall about what happened.

Kahn told everyone about the enlightenment and meeting the Deities of Blacksmithing. The approval and gifts they received... he told Omega, the generals, Rudra, Rathnaar and the system about what happened after they regained consciousness in that realm inside the room.

Other than directly mentioning Brokkr and Eitri's names, Kahn was allowed to tell everything else since all of them were bound to his soul.

SHRILL!!

A heavy saint pressure appeared in the room suddenly and Ceril deactivated the barrier as soon as he sensed a new arrival in this room.

Step!

Step!

"What the hell happened, boy?!" asked Throk as he charge into the room with a worried but also furious countenance.

"If not for both of you being saints and this healer lad... you two would've died long ago!" admonished the dwarf blacksmith.

"Do you know how worried we were?"

What if both of you died? Forget the competition... people would've said that I killed you to avoid appearing in the challenge.

Also, do you know how hard it has been for me to keep your condition a secret from the outside world?!" he yelled at both of his disciples.

"Yes, master. There have been instances where people asked about your whereabouts. Even I had to change and turn my appearance into yours and appear in front of people of the company and some important figures." said Ronin with a somber expression.

"Even Princess Venessa, Prince Hector and people from the Dwarven Council came to meet you." revealed Omega.

"But we couldn't reveal your situation to anyone. Master Oakenshield said that you're busy in important training for the faceoff and couldn't be disturbed, using that as an excuse to risk leaking your condition to others." said Jugram in a helpless tone.

"What do you mean? It couldn't be that bad right..." said Kahn with a befuddled voice.

For some reason, everyone around him and Blackwall seemed to be making a big issue after they received enlightenment.

"Listen brats. The gap between the time since you both received enlightenment and to this day..." spoke Throk in a serious voice and revealed why everyone was so worked up...

"It's been 8 months."

Chapter 590 Three Gifts

Again... the duo was left dumbfounded after learning the fact that both of them were in a trance and frozen like statues for straight-up 8 months while receiving enlightenment about the blacksmithing craft.

Kahn and Blackwall were speechless at this moment since they still couldn't accept this unbelievable fact since it went beyond their understanding that how what felt like hours to them were actually months in the real world of Vantrea.

Although they got some amazing and extremely handy gifts from the two deities of Blacksmithing and also learned a few things about other deities and how few things worked... they also paid the price of losing 8 months of their lives. Something that they were already running short on because of the upcoming face-off Kahn had against Helsi.

And to make things even more unfavorable, it was going to be displayed around the whole empire while Throk's entire company was at stake. By no means was their current predicament any good in any way.

Finally after a few minutes, Kahn calmed himself and started thinking about the facts while trying to make sense of what happened.

Kahn heard the word 'realm' often from the dwarven brothers and how everything aside from the forging room was only a contrast of black and red... Means that place was definitely not in Vantrea. Thus, he hypnotized that since it was a different realm...

Time and Space relativity worked differently between the realm where Kahn and Blackwall went against the normal time in Vantrea altogether.

Also, he was unaware about how long did he spend just to reach the forging room before he regained his consciousness and control over the body.

So there were very few logical explanations he could find about what caused this huge loss of time and created more trouble for them in due process.

Meanwhile, Throk noticed this expression on Kahn's face and saw how bewildered Blackwall was... so he decided to console his students.

"In my case, the enlightenment only lasted 2 months. Even someone like master Ivaldi took 4 months. So don't think that you've already lost the war.

Who knows if it could benefit you a lot in the future."

"What? You received enlightenment too?" asked Blackwall with his mouth agape.

"Yes. When I was only a semi-saint blacksmith 60 years ago.

That enlightenment was what helped me become a saint blacksmith.

All the top 5 saint blacksmiths of the empire have received it one way or another.

But I don't remember what happened to be honest.

But after I woke up, my skills improved greatly and my understanding rose by leaps and bounds in a couple of years." revealed Throk with a prideful expression.

[Master, I think the old dwarf and others did enter that realm too but failed during the journey to that room.

Maybe that's why they can't remember it.

If our master also received any blessings, he would not be able to mention this at all. Means he only had some gains but unlike us, he didn't get to meet the two deities.] said Blackwall as he made sense of everything from Throk's words.

[You're right. Because even if someone had the knowledge and wisdom for it... they may be lacking physical strength and mental tenacity.

Brokkr & Eitri did say that those who excelled in all three aspects would be able to reach the final room. Otherwise, they'd be sent back to the real world after failing in any of the criterias.] responded Kahn as he too quickly judged the situation quickly.

Again, after seeing their jarring expressions... Throk felt like both of them had lost their will to fight. With this mindset, no way in hell would Kahn be able to compete against Helsi in the challenge.

"Cheer up lads. Although we're short on time... let's make use of whatever you gained from the enlightenment.

Now, we can't waste any more time. We barely have 6 months left." he said and a fired-up battle intent was revealed in his eyes.

Kahn agreed. He said that he needed some time to recover completely and would continue their training from the next morning. taking a bath and having a scrumptious dinner, he lay down on the bed and commanded...

"System, give me the details."

He ordered the system that was dormant in his body from the last 8 months while his soul was in a different realm.

[Following are the Gifts received by the host from the Deities of Necromancy :

Blacksmiths' Intent (Saint Rank) (Passive) :

Allows the host and the subordinate named Blackwall to figure out the characteristics of a metal or material, the optimal temperature to forge them to create the best output and ways to refine the product at hand.

Mimir's Eyes (Saint Rank) (Active) :

Allows the caster to appraise any metal, alloy and material to be forged and determine by their quality. Thus, helping the user to maximize the chance to create higher-grade weapons, equipments and artifacts.

Current activation time limit : 1 hour per day.

Prometheus' Forethought (Saint Rank) (Active) :

Based on the rank of the Blacksmithing skills and abilities the host is in possession of, this skill can allow the user to predict the final outcome of the finished product and results while forging any weapon or armor.

Current activation time limit : 3 Hours

And the host can not hide or limit his strength as well as rank while using this skill as a lower realm.

Means it can only use it while revealing the host's full prowess as this ability will exert a great burden on the caster's mind, mana, physique and world energy at the same time.] reported the system in its lifeless voice.

Kahn didn't bother overthinking the benefits of these skills. They were too obvious and simply a big game-changer in many aspects, truly worthy of being the gifts from Deities.

And now... he had only one objective in his mind as he planned to make up for the lost time and overcome his dire situation.

"Let's fucking win this challenge."