

## **Darkness 601**

### Chapter 601 Reason Behind Existence

Venessa had her expression frozen after she heard the emperor declare that they'd kill Kahn if she kept associating with him. At this moment, she could not grasp what reasons caused such a great reaction from the emperor himself.

To her, Kahn was only her friend and nothing more. Even though they treated each other as equals and shared stories of their lives... their relationship never went past that barrier.

Soon, she mustered her courage and tried to stand up but still failed to raise her head and look her father in the eyes.

"Why? Why are you going as far as saying that you'll kill him?" she asked with a heavy expression after gathering all her strength just to speak normally while bearing the brunt of this leaden aura of an 8th stage saint.

"Because your fate has already been decided after your birth.

Any ties with others, especially a human should not happen. As my daughter and the princess of the empire... you have a part to play.

There's something only you can do and make our empire prosper in the future." he replied ambiguously.

"And what... what is that? Why am I not aware of what meaning my life has?

Have I not done enough already?"

At this moment... Venessa's voice suddenly turned sorrowful as if welled-up emotions were surging and trying to get out.

"Ever since childhood... I did everything to be worthy to get called as your daughter and became the rightful empress.

I have already proved myself many times already. You know that compared to Hector and Rogis... only I have enough strength, talent, potential and experience to become your successor.

But you would not declare me as the crown princess even after all this time." she spoke in a scornful voice.

What she said was indeed the fact. Her worth was proved a long time ago and by the rules of the imperial clan... she should've been declared as the crown princess a decade ago because she excelled in all the necessary qualities and checked all the boxes.

"Is it... is it because I'm a half-human?" she asked with a hateful voice.

**TREMBLE!**

As soon as her words reached the emperor's ears... his resolve shook and his domain started shaking.

The image of the burning throne hall started flickering and the fire subsided on its own as they returned to the previous environment of the throne hall... completely unharmed while looking exactly like it was when Venessa entered.

Havi closed his eyes, took a deep breath and replied in a thunderous voice.

"Yes. It is because you're part human.

Tainted blood can never sit on this throne."

The emperor had an emotionless expression as he revealed the reason why Venessa was denied what was her by birthright.

Venessa's eyes were wide open and soon, they were filled with fury as she tightly clenched his fists until blood seeped out of her nails.

She dedicated her entire life since young to becoming qualified and finally hold enough influence as well as the power to become the empress in the future.

"Do you know why I married your mother despite her being a human?" asked Havi in an uncaring tone.

Venessa's rage suddenly vanished and she looked at her father with a look of expectancy. It was one of the questions she had from decades.

"It was a political marriage. Something I agreed upon in order to save and stabilize the empire when I became the emperor." he clarified.

Although she had expected this answer... it still hurt to hear that her loving mother was nothing but a political alliance in eyes of her father.

But the following second, Venessa raised her voice as well and spoke...

"Then what about her death? Since you care so much about your position and authority... why didn't you do anything about her death?" she asked in a sarcastic tone while hiding many of her other emotions.

"What about it?" questioned Havi as he raised a brow.

"I know that it was Hector and Rogis' familial fireborne clans who killed my mother by slowly poisoning her over years...

And I also know that you are aware of the truth!" she exclaimed.

SHOCKED!!

The emperor was baffled and lost his calm composure.

Because the truth behind his third wife's murder was only known to him, his advisors and the two fireborne clan leaders.

To the rest of the empire... she died because of a terminal illness. Yet, his daughter somehow managed to find one of the most well-guarded secrets of the empire.

As for Venessa... her father's expression confirmed her suspicions and verified the truth she heard from the secret helpers who suddenly appeared a year ago and helped her take down Rogis as well as establish her side for the race to become the crown princess.

"You knew everything... and yet you did nothing!" she spoke loudly and gave a look of disgust to her father.

"You're a failure! As a husband... as a father..."

And as an Emperor... you're a joke!" Venessa bellowed without any restraints.

She didn't care if her words would offend the emperor and lead to capital punishment. Now that her entire life was already destined to not get what she worked hard for... she didn't bother hiding her true feelings anymore.

"Mind your tongue, girl!!" shouted the emperor as he released his aura again.

BOOM!!

This time, Venessa herself activated her bloodline and used it to stand firm against her sorry excuse of a father.

Her nose and eyes bled as she used every bit of strength in her body just to withstand this pressure.

"Do not forget your place. You're nothing but a chess piece since you were brought into this world.

Do you know why I have entertained your petty arguments till now?" he spoke in a contemptuous voice.

"Because your life has only one purpose. To serve the empire." he said in a grim tone.

Venessa's gaze turned even more hurt and vengeful at the same time.

Although she was confronting her father with every inch of her being... she was far away from even scratching the surface of his immense strength.

If her father willed it... he could kill her with just his saint pressure alone.

Soon... Havi Hos Sigfreed, the emperor and her father told Venessa what part she had to play for the sake of the empire and what fate awaited her.

Like a predetermined and predestined life... her future was already decided and there was nothing she could do to avoid it.

This very second, Venessa collapsed on the floor as her entire life was overthrown with a single sentence.

All of her life's efforts... her tirelessly training to become the empress... her will to survive and the revenge she wanted to exact after learning the truth about her mother's death...

All of it turned meaningless. As one would say... Venessa's whole life turned out to be a complete lie.

Now... nothing mattered to her and Venessa, in her mind was having an existential crisis.

All those feelings... all that pain and suffering that she had kept hidden inside her finally erupted and her mind was bombarded with a plethora of emotions one after another.

"Why did I work so hard? Why was I even born?"

Living a life like this... I won't accept it!" she shouted and quickly pulled out her sword from the scabbard.

She grabbed the hilt and pointed the tip of the blade towards her.

Stab!

Venessa quickly tried to stab her stomach with her own sword... the very sword her mother left behind and had been with her since childhood.

Because at this moment... this princess of the empire had completely broken down and wanted to end her life instead of suffering the misery that awaited her because of her position as the daughter of the fireborne sitting on the throne.

Shing!

But before the tip of the blade could even pierce her armor and her belly... an intangible force suddenly stopped her from moving.

Other than her head... her entire body was frozen... rather covered in a dense saint pressure that prohibited her from moving an inch.

Venessa looked at her father as streams of tears dropped from her eyes. This time... they were not only full of hatred but also unimaginable suffering and killing intent at the same time.

"Even wild monsters treat their children better than you!"

They raise them to get strong enough to survive on their own no matter the cost.

You on the other hand... you trade them for power and keep your so-called reign and this pretentious pride of the imperial family intact." spoke Venessa with a scornful gaze and spat on the ground.

Because just minutes ago... she heard what her father said and realized how her entire existence had only one purpose that she did not even get to decide for herself from the very day she was born.

Venessa recalled the Emperor's words that destroyed her life's meaning in mere seconds...

"You were born... only to get married to the Hero of Fire."

Chapter 602 Face Unknown

After Venessa cried her heart out while cursing her father, the emperor... she eventually exhausted herself. And because of the immense psychological blow she received... it became hard for her to maintain consciousness and thus, Venessa ended up fainting.

But despite all of her curses and badmouthing... Havi's temperament was also so strong that he did not give to her profanities or made a wrong move.

Before Venessa fainted, her willpower was drained to the bottom and Havi placed a seal on her body just by raising his palm.

Venessa had studied about this seal while she was educating herself about warfare.

This seal placed a restriction on the target's body... prohibiting them from taking their own lives or physically harming themselves to the point of no return.

In the Vulcan empire, this seal was often used on prisoners of high value or spies from the other empires during investigations. But only a fifth stage saint or above could use this because leaving an imprint on someone's soul needed a lot of word energy and precise handling.

But still, it was a very effective method to get useful intel from enemies of the empire.

And now... she, the princess herself was treated like one.

After Venessa fainted, their image flickered and the next moment, she was lying on her bed while a wave of burgundy-colored aura encapsulated her body.

"Heal well. And..." spoke Havi before and left only two words behind before he disappeared into thin air.

"I'm sorry."

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A few minutes later... the emperor arrived on a secretly guarded floor that was under the protection of 2 imperial guards.

"Your majesty!" said the guards loudly and instantly kneeled.

"Leave the chamber and let no one inside till I'm done." said the emperor and entered through the door without sparing a glance at the guards.

Both the guards quickly disappeared from the room while leaving the aura of first stage saints themselves.

As soon as the door closed, Havi ordered his armor to disappear and the following second, he was wearing tight black clothes.

Soon, hundreds of archaic runes and magic formations appeared and layers after layers covered the entire hall.

In truth, this was the last protection hall of the imperial family in case there was a coup or someone tried to kill them. A hall made by the best dwarven blacksmiths hundreds of years ago that could even withstand an attack from a 9th stage saint.

This was the last resort to protect the imperial family members and only the reigning emperor or empress had the right to open or close this hall.

However... the expression on his face went from calm to that of an enraged man real quick.

"Even now... I'm still failing to keep my promise." he spoke to himself as his voice reverberated in this quiet hall.

Howl!

Howl!

Strong winds suddenly appeared from his body and howled in the surrounding atmosphere.

BOOM!!

The very next moment, Havi released all of his saint pressure to the full extent and even the small dust particles in the air completely froze.

If he had revealed this aura before... forget being unable to move; Venessa would've been reduced to small atoms as this pressure was thousands of times higher and stronger than what she experienced in the throne hall.

But unlike his domineering aura... a teardrop suddenly dropped from his left cheek and the cruel and emotionless emperor who didn't even bother comforting his crying daughter was nowhere to be seen.

Instead... a face of a lost and helpless man came into sight.

BOOM!!

BOOM!!

Like an active volcano, one after another... massive explosions and bursts of saint pressure filled this vast hall.

Hundreds of defensive barriers, runes and magic formations that were placed to protect this place activated all at once and tried to subdue this insurmountable and unbearable saint pressure.

If Rathnaar was present here... he would be able to quantify how destructive this saint pressure was. Because he too had been on this level of strength once.

Even someone like Kahn could guess that this terrifying aura was enough to destroy over 500 kilometers of area and incinerate everything in that radius.

The temperature of the room itself was no less than that of sizzling molten lava and even with the Magma Drake's abilities... Kahn would be turned into ash in just a couple of seconds.

"Aaaaaaeerrrrrgggghhh!!!!" screamed Havi as if he was suffering from excruciating pain.

His screams consistently created shockwaves and sent ripples that barged against the runes and protection barriers inside the hall.

This walking-talking nuclear warhead called Havi Hos Sigfreed was letting out all of the anger and bloodlust he had held inside of him.

This rage and killing intent wasn't directed at anyone else but himself!

"What's the point of being the emperor if I have to sell my daughter just to maintain peace?" he asked himself as both of his eyes let out more tears of regret.

But they instantly evaporated because of the temperature of the room.

"Father... Brother... I wish you two were here.

I don't know how long can I carry this on..." said Havi as he curled down and started bawling in sorrow.

No one would be able to believe that the strongest person of the entire Vulcan empire... the emperor who ruled over billions with an iron will was now crying like a helpless child.

This was a face completely opposite of the cruel, merciless and indifferent emperor that everyone including his own children had never seen.

Havi pulled back his saint pressure and in just a minute, the room returned to its original temperature as the runes and formations splendidly did their job.

Havi summoned a photo frame from his space as his tears appeared again and started rolling down like a river.

He sniffed and wiped off his tears... a futile attempt that didn't stop his grief in any way.

As he stared at the image in the frame... his countenance turned unsightly because another wave of regret and sense of loss hit the emperor.

The most prestigious and powerful person in this empire now looked like a beggar cursing the world for his fate.

His crimson and floating hair that were ablaze like a violent fire dimmed and stopped moving.

Havi then looked at the person inside the photo frame.

A human woman in her mid-30s. Long black hair and a refreshing expression on her face.

Her eyes had green iris and her overall appearance gave a feeling of kindness and compassion.

The resemblance between this woman and Venessa was uncanny. Even Havi looked at her photo with a sense of unending yearning as he spoke in a defeated voice...

"I have failed our daughter again... Freyja."

#### Chapter 603 Burden of the Throne

As the emperor cried while weeping tears of helplessness... the atmosphere of the room was filled with pain and suffering. At this moment when no one was watching him letting his sorrow out... Havi reminisced about the happenings of 38 years ago.

His father was the only child of the former empress who married a worthy fireborne warrior even though he didn't belong to any of the six fireborne clans.

And his father also followed the same tradition because no matter how loyal these clans were... in the end, they just needed an opportunity or an excuse to usurp the reigning emperor or an empress if they were not strong enough or didn't possess a scheming mind.

But one day, his father, who was a seventh stage saint himself, passed away out of the blue because of some sickness no one was aware of.

After that, Havi's elder brother Vili, who was also the crown prince at that time took command and became the new emperor. He was someone with great qualities of a ruler.

But as if the calamities had no end... His elder brother died in a skirmish against the Zivot empire, one that served God of Life and was ruled by the Elven race.

Back then, Havi was only 24 years old. A young lad who had no interest in politics or becoming an emperor.

He aspired to become the number one spearman in the empire and had been relentlessly training and roaming through the empire to improve his skills while hiding his real identity.

But after he heard of his brother and father's death... he had to return as the burden of the throne befell on his shoulders. Freewebnovel.com.

And at that time, everyone including the loyal fireborne clans, his relatives who were in the line of succession after him and some of the loyal aides of his father... all of them coveted the throne.

Because in their eyes, Havi lacked every single quality and was nothing but a useless and undeserving heir to handle such a great position and reign the empire. All of which was indeed true.

He was but an inexperienced and helpless young man who had different priorities and very few people he could trust. Back then, the only people he knew well were some people who had great talent but were nothing compared to top powers and influential figures... Throk Oakenshield being one of them.

Thus, after he rightfully ascended the throne... there were many people who had qualms about him becoming the emperor and tried to create problems one way or another.

And finally... Havi was forced to make a hard decision.

Before things escalated... he made a proposition to the six fireborne clans who held most of the power after the imperial clan.

That he would marry the heiresses of the two of the strongest fireborne clans.

This in a way... opened a new door for them at the same time.

Because even if these Fireborne clans served the throne; none of them were allied or saw an eye to eye. For them, their benefits came before others and even joining hands with other clans would eventually end up as a loss.

All of the leaders of the clans were aware that if their forces started a coup, not only would the other fireborne clans use that as an excuse to oppress them... and if things came to the worst situation... their entire clan of a hundred million people would be eradicated to set an example.

Everyone was a Villain but they liked to portray themselves as righteous Hero.

Also, there would be too much bloodshed with no guarantee of success and gaining control over the empire either.

The losses were not worth the hefty price.



But in this proposition by Havi... they at least had a chance to get their clan's heirs to compete for the throne with a full claim that couldn't be opposed in any aspect.

Thus, Havi married the two heiresses of the two of the strongest fireborne clans to stop their advances and avoid a calamity. A sacrifice he made to keep his family and its prestige intact.

To the fireborne clans... Havi was someone who could be oppressed easily in the future since he was only a 1st stage saint despite being the emperor. Thus, helping him solidify his rule also worked to their benefit.

And with their support, the Emperor managed to subjugate any potential rise of traitors and uprisings planned by those who wanted to benefit in times of crisis.

But while doing so... the elven empire saw that the Vulcan empire was currently unstable and started a full-scale invasion.

And the Vulcan empire with a shaky structure was having a hard time since not all the forces were unified and still, some people would rather let enemies create chaos in their empire and use it to dethrone Havi than save their motherland.

For power-hungry people... there were no morals or sense of responsibility towards their motherland.

Thus, Havi had to rely on one of the neighboring empires that had signed a treaty to help each other in times of need when his grandmother was the Empress of the empire.

But even so... they tried to back down from their previous agreement. So as a form of reassurance to hold an oath of support...

The emperor married their princess who was the second child of their emperor and her brother was the crown prince. In a way, this was a purely political alliance that would benefit the future of both empires.

This was already a very good deal in every way for them.

Thus, with another empire's military help and unified manpower... Havi managed to save the empire, stabilize it and soon he succeeded in bringing peace and order.

Using those times... he established himself firmly over the years and while everyone was looking down on him for being weak and always relying on others for help... he started his real plan.

To raise his strength quietly and become so strong that no one would ever dare look down on him or try to oppress him in any way.

The once naive prince was gone and this experience reformed him completely to make Havi understand the truth of being an emperor...

Heavy is the head that wears the Crown.

Chapter 604 Biding For Time

Havi kept thinking about what happened in the past which led to his current predicament and made his own daughter hate him while he couldn't even control her in any way and had to force her to a fate she would rather die than living it.

In his youth... he learned the real price one had to pay to hold such a big position as emperor.

The throne had too many knives and thorns and whoever sat on it must possess enough strength to endure and overcome these obstacles.

After bringing peace and order to the Vulcan empire... With his resolution, he started advancing through saint ranks using his bloodline and hard effort while being surrounded by enemies in every direction.

In the meantime, he had fathered two children with the two empresses as a formality because that would shut up and control the fireborne clans.

The other two... they had to unwillingly marry him just like he did. There was no love or sense of attachment even if they had to appear as his partners in front of the whole empire.

As for his third wife... while he was suffering alone and bearing the burden of keeping the empire safe and the imperial clan intact... his human wife stayed by his side.

While he was bearing the burden of responsibilities of billions of lives on his shoulder... Freyja comforted him, consoled him and unlike the others... she saw the real him. She became the friend he needed the most when he was at his lowest.

As years passed... Pure love bloomed between the two and soon, their bond deepened from a political marriage to that of a real husband and wife.

Havi could still vividly remember the day Venessa was born. It was the happiest moment of his life.

But Venessa's birth also indicated a great obstacle for the fireborne clans at the same time. Because rightfully... She too had a claim to the throne.

Soon, they planted their spies among Freyja's loyal servants and started poisoning her food and even the water she drank in extremely small dosages so that it couldn't be tracked.

And after 8 years... Freyja started falling ill because of the consumption of this untraceable poison and her body had lost its ability to function.

Their assassination plan was so perfect that even the experts failed to detect the real cause and called it a terminal illness.

Some even said that because empress Freyja was a normal human with no ability to use world energy and magic. Thus, giving birth to Venessa who possessed the imperial fireborne bloodline took a toll on her and hollowed her body from the inside.

And in just a couple of months... Havi saw the love of his life die as he could only watch from the side helplessly in her final moments.

Only a couple of years later, the emperor found out the truth via the Church of Hetrax about how the two fireborne clans meticulously planned Freyja's death.

He almost went berserk and wanted to wipe out the two fireborne clans for this treachery.

But his 4 advisors stopped him, telling him to think about the consequences and chaos it would bring if he were to exact his revenge.

Their subordinacy also came under an oath that was agreed upon since ancient times.

That the six clans should never harm the imperial blood and the reigning emperor or empress should never punish them for unjustifiable reasons.

And technically, Freyja wasn't the imperial blood and nor did have solid evidence that it was the two clans who planned her death.

Also, the other fireborne clans would definitely retaliate knowing that the emperor could come for them next.

Because these clans had more than 800 million people themselves...Havi was forced to control his rage so he could avoid war and not let innocent people get dragged into it and die and keep the empire running.

These six clans were also the six pillars of the empire at the same time.

On the other side, the Church of Hetrax was already full of foxes.

They'd disassociate themselves from any war or an uprising since they only cared about maintaining their institute regardless of who ruled the empire as part of the ancient pact.

Havi, who was only a 3rd stage saint at that time, felt like he didn't hold enough strength even if he was the emperor.

He couldn't kill the people who killed the love of his life because he needed them to keep the legacy of his family intact and had to avoid a war that would cause bloodshed so big that it would break the entire empire's foundation itself.

And the only way he could come close to exacting his revenge was to silently become strong until he became an absolutely terrifying force that could make everyone pay while scaring others to the point when no one would even think about retaliating.

And to make everyone not have any suspicions about him trying to exact his revenge and pose a threat to them...

Havi appeared as a cold and uncaring person as if he never loved Freyja.

It was then Havi made an imperial decree and placed those restrictions on the human race.

All that just to unify the empire by giving them a common point to hate. He had to become a cold-blooded tyrant and his decree made thousands of humans suffer a cruel fate while being ostracized and treated like animals in the Vulcan empire for the past 3 decades.

To bide for time and reach his goals... he condemned an entire race to damnation even if it meant going against everything he stood for as a ruler.

Soon, he cut off his ties with Venessa to make everyone think that he didn't care for her at all. To the six clans, it became evident that Havi was never going to make Venessa his successor either.

This was the only way he could use so they'd not see her as a threat to their plans and target her like Freyja for the time being.

"Freja... my love. I've failed you... and I have destroyed our daughter's life." spoke Havi as he wallowed, his appearance looking as miserable as it could be.

Because while Venessa was enduring and struggling, giving her best effort to become the empress... there was only one way Havi could protect Venessa's life and ensure her safe future. Thus, he made a deal...

A deal with the Pope.

Chapter 605 Lonely At The Top

Havi finally reached the end of the story he was reminiscing by himself. To ensure his daughter's safety and avoid a civil war... he had turned into a villain in her eyes while becoming a cold and ruthless ruler to the human race of the empire.

But every step he took was done out of absolute necessity and give him enough time to cement his rule for the sake of his family and his children...

Because although Venessa was a half-human, she had more of his pure bloodline as it was the dominant part of her body.

But the small portion from her mother's side gave her the appearance of a real human and nothing that of a halfbreed or a hybrid between two different species.

But due to that phenomenon, the fireborne bloodline grew stronger and denser as Venessa grew.

At this point... Havi was aware that Venessa had the potential to even surpass him if she ever became an 8th stage saint in the future.

Her being half-human was a curse to her claim to the throne. But it was also the biggest blessing in her journey to strength.

Yet... Venessa's fate even if she became the empress was limited. The bigger threat she became, the more risk of her getting killed rose before she became strong enough to defend herself.

Although she had proved her worth till this point... Venessa hadn't really seen what horrors awaited even if she became the ruler one day.

Because sooner or later... she would have to marry one of the heirs of the fireborne clans to carry the imperial bloodline even if she became the empress.

Marrying some prince of the other empires for the empress was already prohibited if she held that position.

And the one to marry her would naturally have their clan control the fate of the empire unofficially.

The price was too great to pay... something that broke even once a righteous and straightforward man like him to become a ruthless leader who even condemned the entire human race just to keep order and his authority intact even if he didn't inherently hate humans.

And finally... there was only one way he could protect her from the same fate as her mother.

The only way to completely subjugate and restrict the six fireborne clans while keeping the imperial clan as the ruling power even if he went against their leaders to take his revenge. And that was...

Unifying the Imperial Clan and the Church of Hetrax.

Because if these two forces joined hands... even the six pillars of the empire couldn't do anything. Even the smallest kind of retaliation would be treated as treason and Havi could use it as an excuse to punish them.

If his clan and the church worked together, the two fireborne clans couldn't do any significant damage to the empire and naturally, the other four clans would also change their stand to not get eradicated in the process.

Thus, Havi had made an agreement with the Pope, Demiurges Val Arhlem.

That since the chosen Hero they were going to summon after 2 decades would be a human by default like in the past, and if it was a man... then they'd arrange the marriage between that Hero and Venessa.

This deal was made when Venessa was only 10 years old. Havi had already made his moves more than 20 years ago.

This way, she won't get dragged into their political warfare and also help solidify the imperial clan's rule. With church fully backing them while him leading the imperial clan and gaining strength in the years to come...

Havi would get everything he want while also securing the future of the empire without causing millions of innocent deaths.

As for Venessa herself... she would be safe and will have time to grow in the future.

To him... he was ready to accept her hatred and would suffer her anger for the rest of his life as long as he could protect his daughter even if it meant becoming the villain in her eyes.

Because little did anyone know that Strength wasn't always the solution to overcome all of the problems in the world.

Sometimes... one had to even sacrifice themselves for the greater good and maintain peace.

To Havi... this was the bitter truth that he had come to learn the hard way.

To everyone, the emperor was the strongest person in the whole empire... yet in reality, he was the most helpless.

Bound by his duties and his heritage... paying the price of being the emperor at the cost of his sanity and his integrity.

While his daughter hated him... his sons only coveted his position... he was sacrificing his soul.

Despite standing on the summit of the mountain...

He was lonely at the top.

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Meanwhile, there was one particular who was unaware of how many problems his involvement with Venessa had caused as he was fully engrossed with his Artificing training.

Just two days ago, Kahn stopped other doppelgangers and put a pause on his weapons training, combat techniques training with different kinds of weapons.

On the side, the doppelgangers also stopped studying magic and space law. And all of the 15 copies of himself along with the original him... they kept practicing and increasing his efficiency in the study of rune and magic formations.

Just like how Calligraphy needed years of experience and perfect control over one's body, particularly the movement of their hands... Runes and Engravings also demanded profound control and understanding of this craft.

But after the gifts from Brokkr and Eitri along with his hacks called the Doppelgangers... Kahn's mastery rose 15 times than it normally should've in the past one month alone.

He managed to raise most of the skills and his knowledge as well as experience in Runes and Magic formations to SS Rank in such a short time.

And finally... just when the Blacksmithing Duel was only one week away... he heard a notification in his mind.

[Congratulations to the host for becoming a Semi-Saint Artificer!]

Chapter 606 Learendarv Sets

Kahn now stood in Throk's secret forge where the old dwarf worked on extremely important commissions of weapons and armors. So far, only Kahn and his subordinates were aware of this place.

Kahn even spent some time here during his initial training period but later, he and Blackwall were ordered to work in the production line to actually increase their crafting speed and efficiency while improving their skills since mass production of goods demanded skilled craftsmanship.

And just 5 days after he became a semi-saint Artificer by training 16 times harder and faster for the past 1 month to meet enough requirements... The saint blacksmith summoned all of them together here for the 2nd time.

Kahn and the crew looked around the forge. After Kahn was done with completely absorbing the remaining darkness attribute and elemental aura in the body, he gave the remaining half of the body as well.

But now, there wasn't a single trace left of the ginormous dragon that was guarding the final barrier in Verlassen fiefdom when Kahn and the group went there to acquire the tablet of Arcana.

"As I promised... they're all done." said Throk as he played with his grizzly white and unkempt beard and had a prideful as well as a content smirk on his face.

Swoosh!!

A white light suddenly flashed out of nowhere and quickly in front of Kahn and the Six Generals... a set of Armor and Weapons for all of them appeared respectively.

Only Omega was the one left out here.

And the aura... even Kahn and Blackwall who were now knowledgeable and on par with the majority of famous blacksmiths of the empire were simply too stunned.

Other subordinates didn't understand how incredibly fantastic and top-notch quality work this was but both of them just couldn't help admiring these with a look of worshipping.

Every single one of these armor sets was made with the dragon's body parts and all the weapons were forged using the dragon's horns; which was the sturdiest and hardest part to process while forging.

Even when Kahn and Blackwall were frozen due to their enlightenment, Throk hadn't stopped forging these even for a day and just like their agreement, he was finally done after 1 and a half year.

Kahn first looked at the newly upgraded Drakos Armor.

This Drakos Armor that was made by Albestros Winston using the Magma Drake's body was no longer Black and Red in color but rather Black with Violet outlines.

Kahn understood this new appearance came to be because of the guardian dragon whose body they used for reforging had only black and violet scales, claws and horns.

Previously, the armor was sturdy yet bulky. Like that of a Tank or a Knight. But after Throk reforged it while keeping the base and mixing it with the higher quality materials of the Lesser Dragon's body... the result was completely out of Kahn's expectations.

Because now... it was lightweight, compact and had no excess of design flaws in any part of the armor. Forget a warrior... it looked more like armor made for an Assassin from the overall look with even a hood made of dragon's hide.

But at the same time, Kahn could feel that it was sturdier and the defense was 3 times higher compared to the time after Drakos Armor was upgraded to Legendary Rank after Kahn himself became a Saint.

Kahn used Mimir's Eyes and Prometheus' Forethought. Two of the gifts given by the Blacksmithing Deities aka Brokkr and Eitri.

And after he and Blackwall inspected and hidden runes that were intrinsically carved and perfectly hidden under the layers of furnishings... both of them were left speechless again.

This was a major upgrade instead of just adding some extra look and designs because these runes were the top-grade Dwarven and Elven runes mixed to form the perfect balance.

Both of them were now Semi-Saint Artificers... so they couldn't instantly tell how greatly these archaic runes would enhance and buff these armors during a battle.

"Listen brats. I wanted to use the Dragon's hide for your normal clothes too. But your normal attires are made from the Invimarak skin.

Among all the legendary monsters... Only the Invimarak doesn't have any specific element attached to its body.

So these are still the best for defense and agility when you lot are going about your normal lives." he said in a thoughtful tone.

Blackwall nodded in response but it was indeed the fact.

"But whenever any of you equip these armors...

The Dragon's Aura will naturally leak and it will be noticeable. Although I made it so that no one other than you guys can use them... it's better to avoid the greedy eyes of the people.

Anything made of a dragon's body is considered a treasure trove even for the Imperial Clan.

So I'd advise you to use them only when you're in a pinch and not for just any casual fights you are confident in winning." he explained.

All of them understood his worries because even they could feel this oppressing aura filled with Regality oozing out of the armors and their respective weapons.

[And I'm sure this won't be the end effect.] thought Kahn.

He was certain that System would give him good news after scanning the armor and the Draconian Bloodline effect kicked in.

Even with only 5% Draconian Bloodline purity, Drakos Armor was already better than many Epic Rank armors. And now that Kahn possessed 35% purity... once the bloodline effect was applied during a fight... his battle prowess was going to rise by a lot.

Hell, he felt like even fighting a 3rd stage saint while using the new Drakos Armor would be enough to even the playing field. And that too without using the Asura Mode or Berserk God Mode.

This was much more than what they had initially expected.

So overall, what Throk made for Kahn is already the best of the best with the type of materials he gave him to reforge their armor sets that Albestros previously made for them in the Rakos empire. Every single one of them was now at the Legendary rank thanks to his master's skills.

While everyone rejoiced, there was one member of the crew who hadn't received anything.

"As for you, lad..."

Throk spoke and then looked at Omega with a grin.

"I have made something very special."

Chapter 607 The Complete Set

Throk glanced at Omega, the only one among Kahn's subordinates who didn't get an armor made for himself from the guardian dragon's body. And the main reason being Omega himself asked the old blacksmith to not make him one.



Throk however, gave him a new set of gears such as gauntlets, pants, waistband and straps for his hands that he normally wore. This was actually the spare set Albestros built for him back in Verlassen and now Throk improved its quality to legendary as well.

As for why Omega didn't want a new armor made for him?

Because the Moonlight Armor & Twilight Armor that he acquired after gaining the Fenrir bloodline from Skoll and Hati along with the remnant Will they both imparted to Omega... there was no need for him to rely on any other armors even if they were made by using a legitimate dragon.

The Moonlight Armor gave Omega a 4 times boost in speed and 2 times in precision/accuracy while equipped. The Twilight Armor on the other side greatly enhanced his total damage output and firepower by 3 times while increasing his defense by 2 times.

In other words, these two armors were basically tailor-made armors for him and they will keep improving their strengths and usefulness as Omega's rank rose along with his Fenrir bloodline purity. Hence, using Draconian armor would greatly hinder his fighting capacity instead.

But this wasn't the end...

Throk handed him the reforged Raijin, the first Katana he had that was also made by Albestros back when they all lived in capital Rathna. This Katana specialized in lightning and wind elemental attacks and after Albestros made improvements upon it using the Invimarak tusk, it was already the best of best I'm Epic Rank weapons category.

"Invimarak tusk is still the best option that could conduct and help you use lightning and wind elemental attacks efficiently without holding you back. So I didn't reforge Raijin completely and only added some runes to elevate its rank to legendary rank." spoke Throk.

Yet for some reason, Throk still had that coy smirk as he snickered.

Woosh!!

And the next moment, he summoned a weapon and everyone else present in this massive 3 kilometer wide forge was agape in shock.

A pitch-black Katana that leaked an oppressive aura while the edges on its blade let out a glowing red light came to be.

This was also a legendary rank weapon but completely made out of the dragon's horn.

"This blade is my own version of a Katana.

That human blacksmith made you Raijin while not even being a saint blacksmith... so there's no way I would take credit for his work just because I made some improvements.

This one however... is created using the dragon's heart." he said.

To this statement... even Kahn stood stupefied on the spot. Because he had already absorbed the dragon's core which resided in its heart. But the rest of it had no use.

"What kind of effect does it give?" asked Omega with excitement on his face.

"You're a magic swordsman, right? Try infusing fire element in it." said Throk with a grin.

Omega nodded and grabbed the Katana which had a similar design as Raijin but looked completely different. One was a glimmering white blade like the moon at night while the other was a black blade with the red glow of a volcano.

SIZZLE!

SIZZLE!

Sizzling noises filled the grand forge halls as this new katana quickly released scalding heat and soon, the temperature of the room instantly rose by 50 degrees.

If a normal human was present in this room, they wouldn't be able to stand this heat at all but since all of them were saints, everyone was left unaffected.

"Do you feel it?" asked Throk.

Omega nodded and spoke with a tone filled with gratitude.

"Thank you, master Oakenshield. I shall forever cherish this weapon."

Omega bowed in respect but didn't tell others what kind of effects this new weapon had as if this type of information should be revealed only in a serious battle.

"Master... a name." he looked at Kahn who stood at the end of the line.

The last time Albestros made his first katana... Omega had asked Kahn to name it and now, it was called Raijin.

Thus, this new katana also deserved a name of its own.

Kahn walked forth and looked at the katana, the coiling veins over the glowing red edge... the pitch-black body with a sturdy yet extremely well-balanced blade.

"Full of unending and inexhaustible scorching fire..." spoke Kahn with a thoughtful expression as he ransacked his mind for a fitting name.

Then, he went through his knowledge of a specific country's cultural lore and mythologies as he tried to remember a fitting name, the same as he did when he named Raijin.

"From now on, this new katana should be called..." spoke Kahn as his voice reverberated in the entire forge.

"Kojin."

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Omega kept glancing at his new katana and started testing out its balance by making attacking moves in a corner.

With this new weapon... Omega finally had two legendary rank katanas for himself.

He had a Dual Swords Samurai legendary class now. Although he had 4 katanas before, only Raijin was noteworthy while the rest were just normal epic rank ones.

But with Raijin and Kojin in his hand, he would be able to invoke his DSS class-specific effect that increased his total attack stats by twice and dexterity by one and half times.

Finally, Omega was a proper dual sword samurai.

"I did my best. Since I had the second horn you gave me, instead of using the claws and the skin for the weapons...

Now, all the dragon's claws and hide have been used since for armors and robes." spoke Throk as he felt a great weight lifted off from his chest.

But Throk then smiled again as if he wasn't done with showing off his great craftsmanship skills.

"Now, let me show you why I am called one of the top 5 saint blacksmiths."

Throk then took out something and displayed it in front of everyone.

At this very moment, a loud voice rang in Kahn's head.

Rudra, the Basilisk subordinate, loudly shouted as soon as he saw what Throk revealed...

[Human, I want this weapon!]

#### Chapter 608 The Weapon

Kahn and everyone were stunned and dumbstruck as soon as Throk took out another weapon which even riled up Rudra who preferred to stay quiet all the time.

Because at this moment... all of them felt an insurmountable and familiar aura filled with killing intent towards all of them. This was something all of them remembered vividly because they faced and barely managed to escape alive from the owner of this grim and terrifying aura.

If not for Kahn being a special case and a chosen Hero, none of them would've managed to live till this point. Because right now, the aura exuding from this new weapon that instantly put them on edge belonged to...

The Guardian Dragon!

To everyone's reaction... Throk kept smirking as if he was expecting the scene in front of him. One of the reasons why he chose to reveal this weapon at the very end.

"Unlike the other weapons, this one took the most effort.

I concentrated and infused the blood that I managed to extract from the dragon's heart in this weapon. It contains a trace of its bloodline and some remnant will of the Dragon when it was alive since it was a mythical rank dragon who lived for more than 300 years.

Hence it is more overbearing compared to the others." explained Throk with a prideful expression on his face.

Kahn and Blackwall were speechless and dumbfounded again. Because by now... they already had an idea about how hard it was to directly infuse a bloodline inside a weapon.

Not only was this technique extremely hard... there was only one in a hundred chance for success. Plus, concentrating a bloodline of a mythical rank monster was a complicated method.

Because the amount of blood needed was too much and also filtering the purest part of the blood with the highest density was very difficult.

Even a saint blacksmith without decades of experience in this forging technique would definitely fail, much less noobs like them.

Another sense of respect emerged in their hearts towards their master.

Although Throk had a short temper most of the time and did things out of rage... he had more than enough skills to back up his prideful manners.

"However, because of this... both dragon horns are used since you asked me to use them to make weapons for these guys.

As for you, I could only reforge your sword and make some extra weapons that you asked me to." he said to Kahn while still gloating.

The look on his face screamed 'praise me more, you plebeians' type of feeling as he spoke in enthusiasm.

Kahn nodded since he understood how hard it was to process the horn of a dragon. A lot of it would eventually get wasted in sweltering and processing like any other metal while forging a weapon.

It wasn't some metal that could be liquified and reused again and again for forging.

And since the guardian dragon himself was 1 kilometer tall even when he normally sat on the two forelegs and hindlegs... many parts of its body were too big.

But even with that much quantity... just the fact that Throk managed to make out all of their weapons, armors and reinforce them by forming layers of the same material again and again, then create this long weapon that carried the guardian dragon's bloodline and the remnant will was already a feat worthy of a standing ovation.

Their master was simply flexing on them and they could only be awed.

[Brat... that it is indeed one of the best weapons I have seen. Even my sword made with the Elder Dragon's horn wasn't able to carry the bloodline and its remnant will.

This is a matter of skill and experience. This Throk Oakenshield is indeed worthy of his title as one of the top 5 blacksmiths of the empire.] said Rathnaar, the Peak Saint.

[Even many Heroes that I fought didn't have this quality of gear. Even their legendary rank armors would pale in front of the ones placed in front of you.] he praised the work wholeheartedly.

To Kahn, it was obvious already. Because not everyone could kill a dragon and even Ymir Whitlock, Rathnaar's descendant from 200 years ago, who was an 8th stage saint magician could only secretly enter the Dragon Empire and only subdue a mythical rank Lesser Dragon that was only past level 300.

Fighting a Superior or Royal Dragon would've caused a great commotion. Plus he didn't need that high-ranked dragon to use for the formation he set up in order to protect the Tablet of Arcana in Verlassen.

While Kahn dwelled and accepted the fact about how lucky they were...

Rudra spoke in his mind again.

[Human, you guys can have everything else. But that weapon only belongs to me.] he said like an impatient child who desperately wanted a toy.

[Because it can use the dragon bloodline better? Is that why you want it?] asked Kahn in return.

[Ha ha ha! Ha ha ha!

Ignorant as always.] admonished the basilisk subordinate.

[This is why I can't help but look down on you idiots. None of you know how to make use of your bloodlines properly even now.] Rudra berated Kahn and everyone else through their inner mind connection.

[Alright, you legless and wingless lizard... enlighten us.] said Ceril in a retorting voice as he took that statement personally.

[Hmph! At best... you lot can harness the bloodline in a battle with great effort. But since none of you possess the Draconian bloodline like me and the human... you will never be able to utilize it properly.] scoffed off Rudra and continued...

[But since this idiot human of ours doesn't know anything about bloodlines even now... it's given that this weapon should go to me.] he iterated.

[Hmm... What kind of logic is this? I have more draconian bloodline purity than you.] rebuked Kahn.

[You don't understand. Although this weapon is created using the dragon's blood and its horn... I can sense that it has the capacity to do more.

As for why it should be me who uses this weapon... it should be pretty obvious.] he said in a prideful voice and continued in an overbearing tone.

[Because not only can I use the dragon bloodlines better than any of you...] he stated and declared the reason why he should be wielding this weapon.

[But I can also infuse my Basilisk bloodline.]

## Chapter 609 The Fitting Name

As soon as Rudra declared what he could do with the new weapon that Throk displayed in front of them... everyone including Kahn gasped in shock.

Because by that logic... this weapon was not only extremely powerful already... but Rudra could even make it stronger by mixing the Basilisk bloodline.

Who were the Basilisks? In ancient history, out of all the Godbeasts... only the Basilisks were strong enough to stand toe to toe against the Dragon race. Many records even said that there was a time when both species nearly went extinct because of each other.

Although Rudra had a 50% Basilisk bloodline... even he wasn't a true Basilisk but only a Variant that Kahn created using the Synthesis divine ability.

Yet, he had the advantage of being able to absorb and purify both these bloodlines. An oddity that never existed before.

On top of it... if he could use this weapon with Dragon's bloodline and add Basilisk's on top of it...

It's like the exam was of 100 marks. But Rudra would be able to score 150 marks instead. Breaking all the rules of the examination system.

[But you're not even in a human form yet even though you're done absorbing the Jatvuarym's mythical rank metamorphosis bloodline.] spoke Kahn.

Because for some reason, Rudra still hadn't managed to gain a human form even after he was done with completely eating and absorbing the Jatvuarym's body in the past year.

To his words, the variant replied in an indignant tone.

[I need a strong bloodline to incorporate Basilisk and Dragon bloodline together. Your human bloodline is simply too weak to help me take a humanoid form that can sustain and balance both of them at once.

I need a better specimen or a body to absorb.] said the bloodline expert of their crew, shifting all the blame on Kahn instead for not being able to take a human form.

[He is correct, boy. There have been hybrids of both bloodlines in the past. But in both cases, a strong bloodline capable of bearing the pressure of these two species was needed.

A Lion may be able to breed with a Tiger. But it's not the same case with a rabbit.] said Rathnaar.

[Fine. I don't know how to fight using this weapon either. I will keep it reserved for you.] said Kahn.

All of this conversation took only 10 seconds in real-time of the world since all of them were saints and above while possessing minds that were dozens of times faster and stronger than normal people.

"Give it a name." said Throk.

Kahn then walked close and grabbed this weapon.

[This is a weapon worthy of a King. Give it a fitting name, human.] Rudra chimed in again.

Kahn gave it a thought as he looked at the long weapon in hand.

Three black and sharp-edged prongs, the one in the middle being the longest. All three ends had pointed ends that could easily stab and tear apart anything whether it was an armor, a weapon or a living being. And the design of these prongs was robust yet elegant at the same time.

Just a single swing and it would be able to overpower an enemy with its momentum alone.

The black and violet color combination gave it a sense of mysteriousness and also represented Destruction just at the first glance.

The weapon Kahn held in his hand was a...

Trident.

"A weapon fitting for a king that represents regality, dominance and destruction... I guess I do know a perfect name for it." said Kahn as he looked at the majestic trident that exuded the aura of the guardian dragon.

"Atlan."

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Kahn let out a sigh and inwardly... he was extremely elated. Because all the trouble he went through to make the deal with Throk nearly a year and a half ago finally bore fruit, a very juicy and rewarding one at that.

None of them even tried these weapons and armors but they were already certain how amazing they would fare in a life and death battle.

All the time they invested in helping Throk to get out of his predicament because of the second prince, then help Oakenshield company get the support of the first prince as well as the third princess, having a confrontation against the hero's party which led to the Church also getting involved. Lastly, Kahn accepting this blacksmithing challenge between Oakenshield and Tawerik in the Dwarven Council... all of it had greatly benefitted him.

Although he was not even worth mentioning in the same line as his master... Kahn knew that he indeed had the solid foundation of a great blacksmith. Just that needed more time, experimentation with different types of weapons and perfecting these different skills taught by Throk.

He wasn't an ignorant idiot who would think that he was already the best blacksmith in the world because of his sudden rise in the Blacksmithing and Artificing profession.

He had the advantage of being taught by one of the best blacksmiths of the empire. And the Weapon Mastery blessing given by the War Deity helped him increase his efficiency by a hundred folds.

On top of it, the Gifts he received from the Blacksmithing Deities Eitri and Brokkr played a vital role in his skills and techniques greatly advancing in a short time.

Nonetheless, although he was using all these cheat codes along with his Doppelgangers... the fact also remained that Kahn too worked himself to the bone while bearing the mental pressure of 16 different consciousnesses at the same time.

The Blacksmithing Duel... even if he lost, it could not take away this rich experience and knowledge he painstakingly earned in the past 18 months.

Now all he had to do was continue his training and accumulate real experience in the future to come and maybe one day, he would be able to surpass both Albestros and Throk in his lifetime.

All the effort and risks they took till this point were indeed worth it. And the best part of it was that...

It was just the beginning.

Chapter 610 The Epic Feature

While Kahn's pleased expression was noticeable to everyone as he thought about how all the risk and efforts were worth it after getting his armors and weapons made by Throk... the latter decided to speak up...

"Do you think that was the end? Are you looking down on me?" asked the old dwarf with a wicked grin.

"There's more?" asked Omega with his eyes wide open.

The other subordinates also had a similar expression as they were all taken aback. Throk smirked and then revealed in a prideful manner.

"Although I couldn't use the dragon's blood on all the other armors and weapons since it was limited... I used the ancient dwarven techniques to make them superior as well. They're no less powerful than the trident or the katana. Also, if they're all equipped at the same time... they will grant additional powers to the users." he revealed.

"What kind of powers?" questioned Kahn as he felt like there were bound to be even more surprises.

"Although they're made from a dragon's body... I noticed that the body itself didn't have any particular elemental affinity to it." he said.

Kahn nodded.

Since he had already absorbed every bit of darkness element in the body and kept extracting the remaining residue while the dragon was kept inside the Dimensional Domain... the body itself had no element left to it when he handed it to Throk.

"And due to that fact... I was able to make some improvements on them and add additional features." he said and then activated a red orb-like artifact and soon, all the armors and weapons emitted a faint yellow as the runes imprinted on them glowed under Throk's command.

Kahn and Blackwall had a baffled expressions again because they knew what these articulate and varying runes represented.

"Yes. These runes you see... They will allow the armors and the weapons to absorb and gain additional elemental attributes based on the user's preferred and most compatible element with their bodies.

Gasp!

Dumbstruck!

The group couldn't help but reveal shock collectively after this revelation. As for why they were so stunned? Because it was indeed a big deal.



This was something even Albestros couldn't do back in Aesir when he gifted all of them with gears made from the Invimarak's body.

Back then, their gears only allowed them to directly summon and unsummon them while having a very good elemental affinity. They could even change the colors of their gear based on will.

But one thing still remained that the Invimarak monster itself didn't have any element attached to its body. So these gears were like a neutral elemental in nature and even with the old man Albestros' impeccable work... there was a limited type of effects they could gain in a battle.

Even Kahn's old Drakos Armor had Magma and Fire leaking out of it despite both not being his element. But since the Magma Drake was a being of that nature, Albestros couldn't help but make the armor in that fashion.

But after Throk reforged those very armors with the guardian dragon's body... they basically had a clean slate and could imbue their particular elements in their respective gears. For normal people, it didn't matter much but for variant monsters like them... it meant a lot.

Because although they looked like humans and hybrids... their elements were different.

Blackwall was a Titan with Earth element but in the future, he'd get new elements if he found and absorbed the bloodlines of other titans.

Jugram was a higher and upgraded version of True Demon species with Chaos element. On the surface, it resembled fire but even the fire Jugram summoned was actually Hellfire. So there weren't any suitable armors for him either.

Ceril was an Undead Necromancer with Darkness element affinity. Even now, he had no suitable gear that catered to his element perfectly or helped him increase the attack and efficiency of spells and skills.

The same situation was the case for Ronin who had Venom and now a Spirit element that thrived on the souls of the enemies.

Armin still didn't have a perfect set that matched his wood elemental and life force healing skills.

As for Oliver... other than the epic rank bow... he didn't even have a noteworthy archer set that could increase his lightning and wind elemental attacks perfectly.

But because of these weapons Throk made for them, they would finally be able to get past this biggest setback that hindered their potential and growth in the future. Hence, all of them were caught off guard by Throk's statement.

A newfound sense of respect rose in their minds towards Throk because till now, only Kahn and Blackwall admired him because they were his disciples.

But now, Omega and the remainder of the Generals finally had a reason to admire the old blacksmith.

"Alright, all of you touch and inject your armors and weapons with mana, world energy and elements you're compatible with.

The subordinates followed his commands and one by one started infusing their elements, mana and world energy.

Jugram's berserker armor turned black and fiery red. Blackwall's tank armor turned dark gray as if it was made from earthly metals and minerals. Ronin's light assassin gear turned black and yellow. Armin's robes for healers that were mostly made from the dragon's hide with turned green because of the wood elemental affinity.

Oliver on the other end, had very few parts since archers needed more speed and flexibility just like the assassins and soon, his armor turned into a combination of blue and golden parts.

Ceril declined with an excuse that he'll do it later as he wanted to study his mage robes and scepter first.

Kahn also did the same because both of them had a Darkness element and Dark Magic affinity. This was something they couldn't risk revealing in front of Throk.

Omega didn't have armor made by Throk... because he didn't need one. He was already very happy with Kojin so there was no problem from his end.

Finally, after the armors gained their particular element, the five of the generals could feel the weapons and armors resonating with their minds. As if they weren't external objects but part of their bodies. It was the same connection Kahn felt whenever he used Lucifer or the Drakos Armor.

Throk smiled as he saw the gang admiring his craftsmanship that was indeed deserving of every single praise. He glanced at Kahn and spoke in a joyous tone.

"Brat... every single weapon and armor here is worthy and is of a Legendary Rank. So it's a given..."

Before he finished his sentence, Kahn nodded in an understanding manner as he said...

"Time to name them all."