

Darkness 631

Chapter 631 On The Other Side

While Havi was entrapped in an ancient formation while being surrounded by four 7th stage saints in the desolate and barren lands of the northern plains, the middle of the eastern grasslands had a similar scenario where his children aka Hector and Venessa along with Kahn were surrounded by the 8 members of the Hero's Party.

The trio had anxious expressions as they were surrounded by enemies who did not hide their hostile intent from all sides.

"Take this. This will protect you in case a fight starts." spoke Venessa as he handed Kahn an artifact.

This exchange was noticed by Axel and his countenance turned furious but he quickly hid his malicious intent.

The very next moment, he took a golden cross-shaped artifact and quickly activated it.

A pillar of white and blue aura rose and ascended high in the sky at a rapid pace. Within just a few seconds, a massive dome that spread over 50 kilometers in radius came to be.

Before the trio could react to what just happened, this dome turned invisible.

"There's no point, princess. The space is sealed in 50 kilometers. Apart from me, the one who holds the artifact, no one else can leave.

Unless you kill me, there's no way you can escape." spoke Axel with a smug smile on his face as he folded both of his arms together.

"You're after us, right? He has nothing to do with it. Let him leave!" shouted Venessa.

"As if they will let a witness leave." said Kahn who stood a few meters behind her.

[System, is the space around here sealed?] he queried.

[Yes. Teleportation scrolls would not work under this dome. However...

With the host's attainment in the Dimensional Law divine ability and his current rank... the host can leave this place anytime he wishes using the dimension void crack.] reported the system.

[I see.]

If he willed it, Kahn could instantly leave using the dimensional void crack just with a thought. But that also meant risking his identity being exposed to the Hero's Party.

On top of it... he still didn't know why or how he got entangled in this.

Why was he added to the group of people to be kidnapped?

Before, Kahn thought that the Hero's Party or the Emperor possibly knew about his real identity. But from the looks of it... this was actually a plot to trap the imperial scions. As for the truth about his background... nobody seemed to have a single clue.

[Means there is another reason why I got caught in this situation.] he thought inwardly.

However, Kahn couldn't just leave. Because although he could escape using the true dimension, Venessa couldn't.

She was his friend and Kahn never left his allies to die whether it was other living people or even his own generals and Omega.

Thus, he decided to stay and also get a hint about the happenings he was completely unaware of.

Plus, the Hero's Party members seemed to be looking forward to a fight.

While Kahn was lost in thoughts... Axel receives a transmission through a communication artifact.

"Finally! They've trapped the Emperor. We're good to go." he declared with a content smile.

"What do you mean?" asked Hector who had his eyes wide open.

"Ha ha ha! It's just as you heard.

We let you live till now only because we wanted to make sure your father fell into our trap while trying to rescue you two. One could say that both of you were our bargaining chips.

And now that your father has been trapped. There is no reason to keep you alive." replied Axel as he snickered.

"Now!" spoke Venessa as she looked at Kahn.

He quickly activated the artifact given by her and a yellow-colored crystalline barrier instantly appeared around him, completely encapsulating his body.

BOOM!!

BOOM!!

With two loud bursts of aura, one yellow while the other being crimson red... Hector and Venessa took out their swords as they revealed their battle intent.

Hector nodded at Venessa as he revealed his rank of a 2nd stage saint. She nodded back and brandished her sword which instantly caught fire.

At this moment, both the imperial scions let go of their differences and formed a temporary alliance given the perilous situation.

Meanwhile, Kahn was forced back over a kilometer distance as he was protected from the shockwaves of the aura explosions full of saint pressure.

However, nobody paid attention to him as their targets were the imperial scions. To them, Kahn was only a Blacksmith with no fighting capabilities. And he couldn't even leave the barrier even if he wanted to. So nobody paid attention to this newborn chick.

All the figures suddenly ascended in the sky using their saint pressures and surrounded each other at reasonable distances of a couple of kilometers.

Unlike Havi, both of them were not under some sort of suppression barrier. And right before Kahn's eyes, a fight broke out between the members of the Hero's Party and the imperial scions.

Each one facing 3 members on their own.

Kahn then looked at the two individuals who still hadn't made a move.

Axel and the black armored trident user behind him... these two were the strongest members of the Hero's Party but only decided to watch from a distance for now.

A fierce battle between two melee class fighters and mages, tanks and archers took place in a 10 kilometers region.

But as time passed, both of them were suppressed because although they were strong, both the imperial scions were outnumbered.

"Looks like we have no choice." spoke Hector as he glanced at Venessa who was fighting on the other side.

With a loud bang, two large fire pillars rose in the sky and in just 20 seconds, two transformed figures appeared in front of everyone after the fire subsided.

"Holy shit!" Kahn couldn't hide his amazement as he was taken aback after seeing the bloodline transformations of the imperial family.

Hector's height was multiplied by twice while his waving fiery hair turned waistlength. The two horns coming out from the sides of his head elongated and they too caught fire. However, unlike his normal appearance, a third horn protruded out of his forehead. The current aura he emitted was of a 3rd stage saint, equally rivaling that of Axel in every sense.

The blade of his greatsword also caught fire and exuded a threatening pressure.

Before Kahn could get a glimpse at Venessa's transformation, Rathnaar spoke in Kahn's mind.

[Kid... you're in for a big show.]

Chapter 632 Imperial Bloodline

Kahn watched from afar how Hector's entire physique was now transformed as soon as he activated his imperial fireborne bloodline. He was now twice the original size and his oppressive aura already hinted that he was comparable to at least a peak 3rd stage saint.

And finally, Kahn got to see her transformation and he was quickly transfixed after looking at her form.

Flap!

Flap!

Two massive wings made of pure and searing hot fire like that of some divine bird appeared behind her back.

The burning sword in her hand had now transformed into a blood-red spear while leaking an intensely as well as terrifying aura.

This time, the previous white and green armor Venessa wore for the Blacksmithing Duel also transformed.

Her entire armor set revealed some parts of her skin such as belly button and a large portion of her thighs while many intrinsically designed golden and silver patterns stood out on her new appearance.

There was a golden tiara that covered her forehead while green and long skirts spread like drapes also gave her a sense of royalty in terms of appearance.

The Blacksmith in Kahn was appraising the quality of her armor using his senses.

[Quasi-Legendary! Her weapon and armor are all of quasi-legendary rank.] spoke Kahn inwardly.

Compared to her previous appearance when Venessa fought as a swordmaiden, the armor changed itself to aid her transformed style of a spearwoman. Even the gaps on her armor actually helped in rapid and flexible movements when fighting.

Only a skilled craftsman like Kahn could instantly notice these changes.

[So beautiful.] said Jugram in a worshipping tone after sensing the purity of Fire expelled out of those wings on Venessa's back.

[She doesn't disappoint. Her control over the fire element is still the best I've seen yet.] spoke Rudra in an affirmative voice.

Both of them sounded as if they were this close to start worshipping Venessa.

[Pay attention kid... her Fireborne bloodline is twice as effective compared to Hector despite having the same father.] said Rathnaar as he too noticed these changes in her aura.

To the first emperor's words, Kahn replied calmly.

[Well, it's because her mother was a human.

After her birth, Venessa only had the appearance of a human but her fireborne bloodline was a more prominent factor in her physiology. It kept becoming stronger as she grew up and hence, it's purer compared to her stepbrother without a doubt.]

But the next moment, Rathnaar snickered and spoke in a conniving voice...

[Kid... try to win her heart if you can.

Although that Mikealson clan girlfriend of yours is a one-in-a-billion gem... this Venessa isn't bad either.

Plus she's a princess. Who knows she might turn into a useful chess piece later.] said Rathnaar, cunningness exuding from his tone as he shamelessly suggested this notion.

[Shut the fuck up, old bastard! She's my friend. And I'm sure you're just trying to use her in case you somehow gain control over my body later. Do you think I'm a fool to blindly believe you?] retorted Kahn.

[Plus I'm already committed.] he iterated.

[Tch! So obstinate. What's wrong with adding powerful women to your harem?

Even I had 3 wives and 6 concubines when I was alive. Don't think about this matter so seriously. It's normal here unlike your previous world.] said Rathnaar without a shred of guilt.

[Tch! That's one of the genres I hate the most. No thanks... I'm a one-woman type of guy.] said Kahn as they focused on the battle instead.

Unlike the last time Kahn and the company saw Venessa fight at the southern border of the Vulcan empire where she could only summon a hundred meter tall dragon head when she roasted a legendary rank Jatvuarym monster alive...Venessa could now summon 3 long dragons similar to the Asian culture mythologies Kahn used to read in the novels.

All three of these long dragons had short legs and no wings but were at least 200 meters in total length while their bodies were made from condensed and scalding hot crimson red fire.

Hector on the other had 4 summoned greatswords, each one was 50 meters in height that attacked enemies from long distances and also defended his blind spots when he was fighting against multiple enemies. These greatswords infused with his bloodline completely made up for his disadvantage of a melee clan warrior as they covered both range and defense at the same time.

Compared to Venessa, Hector appeared stronger than her because his aura was comparable to a 3rd stage saint while Venessa's own saint pressure appeared to be that of a 2nd stage saint...

However, Hector's expression was full of amazement as he noticed Venessa greatly suppressing her three opponents as she fended off their attacks and even forced them to retreat few kilometers back.

[She's only using one-third of the bloodline while I'm using all of it. Yet she's already this strong.

No way... has she even surpassed father in terms of potential?] he thought inwardly.

ROARRR!!!

Windstorms made with scorching fire appeared in the middle of the battlefield as Venessa's dragons attacked her enemies and burned every place they struck. Whether it was the ground filled with wild grass or the tall trees... everywhere these dragons passed through instantly caught fire and smoke filled the surroundings as the battlefield went ablaze.

Even Venessa herself was fighting like a truly seasoned spearwoman and wantonly beat the hell out of Tamak, Edna and Mikeala... the three members of the hero's party.

Previously, Venessa was on the backfoot because all of them were 1st stage saints. But now that she was using one-third of her bloodline... she easily turned the tables on them.

Forget a princess... Venessa now looked like a Warrior Queen who could obliterate an entire army on her own.

Even someone with great battle experience with powerful people during his life, Rathnaar praised her fighting techniques and the way she was in control of the entire battle without leaving the smallest opening for her enemies.

STAB!!

But just when the situation seemed like it was getting under control... a sudden calamity struck.

Even Kahn failed to see this sneak attack and had his eyes wide open in disbelief.

Out of nowhere, a sword had pierced a tall fireborne's chest from behind. This sword belonged to none other than Axel who struck when his target was engaged in a fierce battle while fending close range attacks of three enemies at once.

Before Kahn and Venessa could even grasp the situation... Like a cold-blooded murderer...

Axel killed Hector.

Chapter 633 Battle of Saints

A grim atmosphere ensued and Kahn, as well as Venessa, were too stunned to speak as both were rooted on the spot after Axel stealthily appeared behind Hector who was engaged in a fierce battle with 3 enemies at once. Before the first prince of the Vulcan empire could even react, the Hero of Fire plunged a sword into his back.

Both of them were equally matched in terms of strength and saint rank already. But because Hector was distracted, Axel landed a decisive killshot without any resistance.

Kahn quickly understood that this was the reason why Axel and the other saint beside him hadn't engaged in the battle. And now, only he and Venessa remained, surrounded by enemies from all sides.

Kahn's gaze then landed on Azerog who was recording the whole scene using an artifact.

[What the hell are they planning? Recording the murder of a prince... what's their angle?] he wondered.

BOOM!!

At the very next moment, Venessa attacked from the other side, instantly reaching towards Hector while Axel disappeared from the location.

Hector's body fell from the sky but was quickly grabbed by Venessa. The third princess noticed a horrified and indignant expression on Hector's face, his body as lifeless as it could be.

"Dammit!" cursed Venessa and looked towards the surrounding members of the Hero's Party. However, she was thinking with a clear mind and wasn't affected by her stepbrother's death.

What worried her most was the death of an ally during the battle and now, it was one against eight people.

She then looked in Kahn's direction who was still standing on the ground under the crystalline barrier.

[If I'm defeated, they will kill him too. I need to protect both of us and stall for time.

But I don't even know if there will be any reinforcements coming. They must have taken every precaution beforehand.] thought Venessa as he quickly assessed the situation.

Among all the three imperial scions, Venessa had the most experience in terms of large-scale battles and fighting multiple enemies. Hector was more of a politics guy and not a warrior. Thus he failed to see through the sneak attack and fell in battle.

[Dammit! If he makes a move on Venessa, I'll step in. All of you be ready.

This battle will be ugly and might expose us.] said Kahn to his subordinates.

Because now, their situation was bleaker than before with no certainty of life.

"Send it." spoke Axel who appeared beside Azerog, the 4th stage saint fireborne.

"It will take some time since it will go from many channels and finally reach them.

What do we do about the princess till then?" iterated and asked Azerog.

"We stick to the plan, of course. We will capture her first. And then..." said Axel as he grinned while looking at Venessa. Next, his gaze landed on Kahn who was looking at the whole scene.

"I'll deal with him myself."

Meanwhile in the northern plains, a heaven-shaking battle ensued as four 7th stage saints, who were just as strong as the three faction leaders of the noble factions in Rakos Empire were now engaged in a gruesome battle with the Emperor.

Havi was now surrounded from four different sides while getting incessantly attacked by all four enemies while his strength was suppressed to the level of a sixth-stage saint.

With the three fighter class opponents, he was already in a dire situation. But after the pope himself was revealed to be a 7th stage saint as well... he was only able to fend off while avoiding life-threatening attacks.

Shwwoommm!!

Havi quickly dodged and 300 meters long violet-colored windblade that cleaved through 10 kilometers of barren lands in just a few seconds. The speed of the attack was impossible to even comprehend for someone like Kahn who was but a 1st stage saint.

Havi quickly appeared 2 kilometers away as he evaded the attack launched by Donatello, the dual-bladed spear user.

But suddenly, a ginormous fist made with condensed world energy that sized around 100 meters in height launched from above as Raphael, the brawler class saint attacked Havi.

BOOM!!

5 kilometers of area was instantly turned into smithereens and nothing but a deep and endless pit remained in the ground.

Huff!

Huff!

Havi barely managed to escape at the last moment and appeared 7 kilometers away from the point of impact.

The burst of the attack made from world energy on a whole different level than normal saints could ever imagine. And on top of it, this wasn't even 10% of the real battle strength of a 7th stage saint.

Swoosh!!

Swoosh!!

Clang!!

Clang!!

More than 10 thousand blistering red swords and a massive 2 kilometer tall metallic gray color launched them together at Havi was already on backfoot. And this time, there was no way for him to dodge this attack move made by Leonardo, the Knight fireborne.

[Dammit!] cursed Havi and quickly launched his own attacks.

Soon, his legendary rank burgundy red spear made a thrusting movement towards these thousands of swords that sized 100 meters each, more than 20 thousand blazing and highly condensed spears that were even longer appeared and faced the attack head-on.

Hundreds of shockwaves appeared and broke through the sound barrier in succession as the two sides clashed and Havi's figure was flung across and crashed on the ground until he finally adjusted his stance after getting thrown 10 kilometers away.

Although it looked like these saints were trying to harm Havi... in reality, they were just tiring him out.

"Havi! I have good news." spoke Demiurge and quickly activated a projection artifact.

A massive holographic screen appeared and soon showed a particular scenario of a battle.

"NNNNNOOOOO!!!" Havi's agonizing cry filled with grief resounded in the 20 kilometers of radius, instantly shattering nearby terrain.

"I'll kill!! I'll kill every single one of you!! And that bastard... I don't care if even Hetrax turns against me... I'll kill that fucker with my bare hands!" shouted Havi as he finally lost his sanity.

The next moment... he thought about Venessa who was still facing the Hero's Party by herself.

As her father, Havi no longer cared and thought in his mind...

[If I use it... I won't live for long. But I must save her at all cost.] he spoke to himself and took a drastic measure that would cost him greatly. But at this moment... he stopped thinking about the consequences.

He spoke in a grim voice filled with absolute wrath that sent shivers to all the seventh stage saints...

"None of you are leaving out of here alive!"

Chapter 634 First Transformation

Havi let out the most threatening aura as his voice filled with bloodlust resounded across the battlefield. Just now, the Pope showed him the scene of Axel killing Hector, Havi's firstborn and eldest son. This revelation instantly made him lose his calm and he revealed his enraged face.

Havi did not stand the ceremony any longer and forcefully activated his bloodline powers. The backlash was too great and under the Flame Killer formation, his body was no different than someone falling deep inside the sea, unable to bear the water pressure.

However, as soon as he saw Hector's death... Havi lost his voice of reason and went berserk.

BOOM!!

RUMBLE!!

RUMBLE!!

The clouds in the sky parted ways as a massive explosion of scalding fire destroyed everything in the 20 kilometers radius and even the thousand kilometer wide suppression formation flickered for a while.

In the middle of the sky, a 1 kilometer tall figure was suddenly revealed in the center of the explosion as the scorching flames subsided.

[I won't be able to keep using the forced bloodline transformations for long. I must find Venessa as soon as I can.] he spoke to him.

As for the four 7th stage saints... their expressions turned gloomy after seeing Havi's transformed figure.

[How?! Didn't the Flame Killer formation seal his abilities to use the bloodline?!] shouted Leonardo.

[Impossible! This shouldn't be happening. How the hell is using his imperial bloodline?] spoke Raphael because they all could sense that Havi's rank suddenly rose to 7th stage saint rank despite the restraints of the suppression barrier.

[This... the ancient records never mentioned anything. Could it be... he's using some sort of forbidden technique?

Yes, that should be it!] thought Demiurges.

[But it doesn't matter. He won't be able to maintain it for long. We will wear him down and then kill him when he's suffering from. The backlash.] suggested the pope.

Finally, the flames completely dispersed and Havi's figure became clear to all four of them.

Havi was now a kilometer tall white-haired giant with 6 horns coming out of his head.

Previously, he had only two horns coming out from sideways but now, two small horns protruded from his forehead while two long ones grew up in the middle of the head.

Havi's entire body was covered in a blazing red flesh-like armor made of white bones as his hands grew long black nails. Even his eyes turned dark red with no iris in them while on his back, 4 gigantic white wings made of bones that spanned 500 meters each spread around him while revealing his full killing intent.

The very next moment, Havi summoned more than 100 blood-red spears, each one sizing 300 meters in length, made of those very flames that previously dispersed and Havi divided them into a group of 25 as they attacked all four opponents with lightning speed.

For the first time since their onslaught against the emperor started, all four of the 7th stage saints felt a sense of dread now that he transformed himself into this form.

Crackle!

Whoosh!

BANG!!

Each of the spears filled with densely condensed world energy targeted the enemies like homing missiles covering the distance of 20 kilometers in just a few seconds as they left only sonic booms and shockwaves in their wake.

Havi was no longer playing around, going straight for the kill in his enraged state.

Soon, the tide of the battle turned completely and the seventh stage saints who were previously suppressing him were forced to retreat at least a hundred kilometers away while constantly dodging the spear attacks while using their own techniques and skills to fend them off.

Their speed was so fast that even their afterimages formed a couple of seconds later after they passed through an area.

Everywhere these fire spears passed through, the black and reddish soil was melting because of the heat exuded by each of them.

Even a Priest class individual such as the Pope himself was having a hard time fending off these attacks and providing support for the other fighters at the same time.

All of them understood that their previous tactic of hit and run or chipping out Havi's defenses would no longer work. And given their experience, all four of them became aware that if they didn't go all out soon, Havi will take them down one by one before his transformed state ended.

And in the end, it will be his victory and their 100 year old plan would completely fail.

On the western side of the battlefield, Havi quickly appeared in front of Leonardo, with his original legendary rank spear that was also transformed at this point and grew in size. To him, Leonardo in his normal size now appeared like a small mosquito, waiting to be killed.

SLASH!!

Without even giving the former a chance to react, he made a vertical slash.

Shatter!!

A 400 meter wide crevice formed on the ground after the Havi made the splashing attack and cleaved open the surroundings while trying to kill the knight saint.

Swoosh!!

Leonardo barely escaped in a nick of time and had a haggard expression. If that beam of energy had hit him, he would've received a grave injury. And even if he managed to fend it off, his own armor and weapon would be greatly damaged.

If Blackwall were to be present here in his titan form, he instantly would've been incinerated after getting hit by those flames.

Terrifying battle noises filled the northern plains as the fight between these mighty saints destroyed dozens of kilometers of ground in seconds. The clouds in the sky changed their directions from time to time just from the aftershocks of these attacks.

In just an hour, all 7th stage saints were in a miserable state. If not for Demiurge, the pope healing them from time to time and granting them defensive buffs... at least two of them would be dead by now.

"Dammit!! It should be him in our position. Why are we being oppressed by him instead?" said Raphael.

All of them were now working together in a team formation because fighting individually would not help in protecting themselves from Havi.

"What do you all say... should we use that Ancient Relic?" asked the Pope.

All three of them instantly agreed as if they knew what Demiurge was talking about.

"Although it will halt our rank as saints for a century... it's still better than dying." said Donatello.

"Alright then. Together, we will use the..."

The pope spoke with an aghast expression now that their hands were forced...

"Pandora's Box."

Chapter 635 Source of Power

After being forced to retreat and gather in a formation to defend themselves as the transformed Havi thwarted their plans to kill the emperor in a battle of attrition. Now, the Pope suggested a way to get out of their predicament and evade certain death.

Because as things stood, the 100 kilometers of the battlefield was no different than a pit of fire because of Havi's constant attacks even though his rank was similar to theirs. Forget about him getting weakened over time... it will be all of them who would fall in battle first.

But as soon as the Pope suggested using one of the church's most prized relics that was handed down from one Pope to another... they all agreed despite the repercussions of being unable to rank up for the next hundred years.

Firebornes lived around 200 years on average. Even more if one was a high-ranked saint. And all of them were 7th stage saints, 3 of whom purposely faked their deaths while the 4th one had been patiently hiding his new rank up for the past few years.

Waiting for another century after they took over the Vulcan empire was still a pretty sweet deal. But to do so, one had to stay alive.

Thus, without even discussing for long, all of them instantly agreed.

"I was saving Pandora's Box for the Hero of Fire to use after he became a Peak Saint. It could help him cross that final threshold and help him become a Demi-God.

But none of it will be possible if we're also dead." spoke Demiurge with a gloomy countenance.

His expression showcasing his unwillingness but none of them seemed to have any choice.

"This power is enough to help in becoming a Demi-God. But since four of us will be using it... it will help us raise our ranks only by one.

Still... it should be enough for us to kill him before he uses 100% of his bloodline ability." spoke Leonardo, the oldest one among the four 7th stage saints as his 1 kilometer tall shield specter defended against Havi's furious attacks.

All of them were aware that Havi was forcefully using only 50% of his bloodline. And if he wasn't suppressed because of the Flamer Killer formation, every single one of them would already be dead.

Without further adieu, Demiurge quickly summoned a massive treasure box with ancient insignias and archaic formations and all four of them opened it together.

SHRILL!!

A high-pitched and terrifying noise filled the vicinity and Havi, who was already a 1 kilometer tall titanic figure... was forced to step back.

"Too much! So this is what a Demi-God is like.

We are lucky that we're sharing it... otherwise even a 9th stage saint would've easily died because this power is simply too much for anyone below peak saint." spoke Raphael as all of their bodies were quickly encapsulated in divine golden auras.

This was one of the biggest assets of the church and kept hidden from over 700 years and now it was finally being used.

An invisible barrier protected these four 7th stage saints and even Havi couldn't break it with all its might.

[Not good! I need to kill them before their rank rises!] thought Havi. He was an 8th stage saint originally, obviously he could tell the strength and density of world energy rising in them just by feeling it.

DHAAAANGGGGG!!!

A sky-devouring explosion occurred like a nuclear bomb going haywire and even Havi in his transformed state was forced to retreat 50 kilometers away.

And finally when the battlefield settled after a minute... 4 massive figures that were four times bigger than his own appeared in the region.

All of the four assailants had transformed into monstrous beings that gave off the auras of 8th stage saints on their own.

Donatello turned into a 4 kilometer tall demonic figure with a skull for a head and had four black horns; two slanting downwards while two upwards. On his back, two bat-like wings that spanned half a kilometer each spread wide while a long serpent-like tail was revealed behind his waist.

The middle of his chest glowed red as if a river of blood was running under it and his entire body possessed the appearance of rotten flesh.

His double-bladed spear also transformed into a massive 2 kilometer long spear and glowed violet.

On the other side, Raphael aka the pugilist saint turned into a large red monster with no eyes but had four oversized arms while a lot of bone spikes appeared around the corners of his arms and shoulders. He too grew a tail akin to that of a lizard.

Leonardo, the Knight saint was not averse to such terrifying transformation either.

The shield he held transformed into a force field shield that had scalding fire in its core and appeared like it had demonic eyes in the center. The sword in right hand also became a 500 meter weapon that was made out of pure magma.

Leonardo's entire body transformed into pure fire with no bones or any physical outlines but instead, he had become one with the armor and the helmet he was wearing. He was now a walking-talking volcano himself.

And finally, Demiurge also achieved a unique transformation by turning into a green-colored creature whose upper body was solid and looked humanoid in structure but the rest of his lower half turned into a combination of pure fire and black fog as if he was born from these two separate existences combined.

Every single one of them was now as tall as many mountains on earth and their strength and ranks also rose by one.

In the Vulcan empire, only the imperial family had the ability to transform into such grand and terrifying beings. But now, the four saints of the Church of Hetrax also managed to achieve that feat albeit at a great cost.

Havi, who was already running out of time had a countenance of trepidation. The whole flow of winning just changed sides and there was still no way to get out of this inconspicuous barrier.

This was probably going to be the last battle of his life. He spoke in a tyrannical voice instead of cowering in fear, his tone completely firm and resolute...

"Looks like I have no choice but to go all in."

Chapter 636 The Primordial

After their incredibly enormous transformation that turned each of the seventh stage saints into a being akin to a world calamity, Havi stood stupefied and also facing mental pressure.

But he understood that he no longer had a choice. And now... his hands were forced to make a hard decision that could make or break his entire life and decide the outcome of this dreary battle at the same time.

Because if he did not... these enemies who now were comparable to 8th stage saints each, Havi would die a gruesome death and soon, the Church would take over.

And his biggest fear was that Venessa's life would be destroyed if he allowed the church to succeed. He did not wish to see the same fate as those innocent women who turned into Axel's victims befall his own daughter.

Before, Havi was using a forbidden technique mentioned in the imperial clan's ancient records that forcefully allowed him to activate his bloodline even under the suppression of the Flame Killer formation.

But the downside of this technique was that the backlash from the suppression was destroying his body from the inside as his bloodline was getting burned up forcefully.

He was already putting himself at great risk by accessing 50% of his bloodline in this state but the possible outcomes in case he didn't... were far more severe than just losing.

Finally, Havi let go of his spear and ascended high in the sky, only after reaching over 10 kilometers did he stop.

"What's he trying to do?" asked Leonardo.

"No! He's trying to activate his full bloodline!" bellowed Demiurge, his new fire and mist form sending tremors in the surroundings as he spoke.

SCREECH!!

An ear-deafening screech of a monster suddenly permeated the 100 kilometers, just the shockwaves that reached the ground instantly flattened the already destroyed battlefield.

But as a result... even the Flame Killer formation was consistently flickering due to aftershocks. Hundreds of those massive 15 kilometers tall white pillars started flickering and fading as if being destroyed from the atomic level.

Even the four ginormous 8th stage saints were thrown off 20 kilometers far like cannonballs, unable to bear the brunt of this aura expelled by Havi.

If this battle was happening in a populated zone, dozens of millions would've already died and hundreds of kilometers of living zones would've been razed down just from these shockwaves alone.

Finally after the dust settled... even these ginormous saints felt like they were still not under the control of the battlefield.

They already used their biggest trump card in the history of the church's existence. But Havi just pulled one over them again.

"He really did it... he achieved the perfect transformation..." spoke the Pope in a bewildered tone.

"Even the formation is unable to suppress him for long. If we don't kill him soon, it might get destroyed in the process." spoke Leonardo as he took the front in order to defend their team.

"Impossible! He really turned into one of the 3 primordial creatures." said Raphael as he revealed the name of the archaic creature that even the Godbeast Roc was said to be a direct descendent of...

"Simurgh."

SCREECH!!!

Another soul-shattering battlecry resounded in the surroundings and Havi's final primordial creature transformation was clear as day to everyone.

High in the sky, an 8 kilometers tall bird that was even a bigger world calamity based on its size flapped its 4 kilometers wide wings. Havi was now even taller than the frigging Mount Everest.

This primordial bird creature had 2 heads, two wide wings and two legs with 300 meter long talons. But its body was divided into two regions.

The left side of the body was a combination of golden yellow and red. While the Eagle-like head had a beak breathing out red fire. Even the eyes of this head expelled fire similar to a Blacksmith's furnace that could melt solid metal.

The right side of the body was a combination of blue and gray while emitting a dark blue fire from this portion of the body. And unlike the left side, this side of its body was expelling ice and clouds of it as if they were being created on its own whim.

Havi, who had now completely transformed into an extinct species of the world, gazed at his opponents while emitting absolute and tyrannical killing intent.

"Don't tell me... he's now a 9th stage saint!" shouted Demiurge in complete disbelief as all of them sensed Havi's transformed aura.

Soon, another heaven-shaking battle occurred. A plethora of unique and decisive battle skills were used by the 8th stage saints with impeccable teamwork.

Hundreds of kilometers of space was devastated and destroyed during the battle no matter which side attacked.

Havi not only had the advantage of rank, but the transformed form gave him too many powers. He now understood why Godbeasts had the word 'God' in them. And he had transformed into something that even exceeded their level.

As the fierce battle continued for a couple of hours, Havi adapted to the enemy side's skills, formation tactics and carefully created openings using his new skills.

Tornadoes and blades made of blue fire that not only burned everything to cinders but also corroded everything it touched in few seconds gradually started depleting all the mana and world energy these enemies had.

Even a brawler class like Raphael couldn't directly engage in a head-on battle against Havi. Leonardo's defensive skills wearing down because of the red fire that was superior to his own and turned his skills against him after gaining control over the fire emitted from his body itself.

As for Demiurge, there was no smug expression on his face. Because his transformed form after using the Pandora's Box was half made of fire and the red fire was greatly leeching off his own powers and using it against himself.

The blue fire on the other end messed with the mist properties of his body and started corroding him from the inside.

And finally, this whole situation led to what Havi wanted to see the most...

An opening in the formation.

BOOM!!

SHRILL!!

Without giving them a chance to react, Havi landed in between their battle formation as he gave a domineering look to all the four saints. Finally...

It was time to kill.

Chapter 637 The Final Strike

Havi in his Simurgh form was a terrifyingly titanic and monstrous bird-like creature. And even the four 8th stage saints now couldn't defend themselves against his onslaught.

If this was an open-scale battle between two empires, just the aftershocks were enough to kill tens of millions of people. Havi himself was capable enough to raze and pulverize thousands of kilometers of area and kill over a billion enemies easily after his transformation.

And because of his primordial bloodline made him a being comparable to a 9th stage saint while forcefully gaining that much power against the suppression of the Flame Killer formation...

Havi finally found an opening to make a decisive strike as soon as he landed in the middle of their battle formation.

All four of the enemies were 4 kilometers tall in size, half compared to his own. But that also made them an easy target.

Havi was now covered in blue corrosive flames controlled by the right side and the right head of his body while the golden fire expelled under the command of the left head was stealing strength from Demiurge and Leonardo who had become the creatures of fire after using the Pandora's Box.

For the first attack, Havi flapped his wings and attacked Raphael, the brawler saint who stood 10 kilometers away from him. This great distance was crossed by him in mere seconds as the world energy reserves in his body were tremendously vast and overpowering.

Before Raphael could even attempt to retreat, both of Havi's talons grab Raphael's lower arms while the two beaks of respective heads plunged themselves into both his shoulders.

"Arrrghrrrrrr!!!" wailed Raphael, the two different kinds of fires were burning him alive and the same time while the talons and the heads were pulling him apart with immense might.

As for the others... Forget attacking or helping their ally, no one could even come close in 2 kilometers proximity because of the firestorm covering his body.

And right before everyone's eyes, Havi tore Raphael into two from the middle as he screamed, dying a horrifying death.

Shock!!

Dread!!

The remaining saints were dumbstruck and had an aghast expression of fear.

"Dammit!! We can't even leave. Otherwise, this barrier will break apart by itself. This bastard is even more terrifying than his grandmother." said Leonardo, who was the Holy Champion from the era when Havi's grandmother was the Empress of the Vulcan empire.

But because of his words, one of Havi's heads turned to his the knight saint's side and locked his killing intent of the saint standing 12 kilometers away.

In just a few seconds, Havi shot himself like a bullet and appeared right next to Leonardo as if he directly teleported in front of him. The following second, the golden head plunges itself into Leonardo's chest and started sucking in all the fire his body was made of.

Even the once best warrior of the church of hextrax didn't get a chance to react in time

In the end, nothing but a colossal skeleton spine remained with no flesh or blood around it. Havi's golden head from the left side of his body could absorb and control fire itself. Hence, Leonardo couldn't even resist as he watched his entire existence being absorbed by Havi in dozens of seconds and died a helpless as well as pitiful death.

Without even sparing a glance at the fallen enemy, Havi soared in the sky and now targeted the demonic creature with bat-like wings aka Donatello.

Donatello's attacks made from his world energy that looked like violet windblades were quickly repelled by Havi just with a flap of his ginormous wings, he didn't waste any time and used both unique flames of his to simultaneously burns down Donatello's rotten flesh.

"No!! Spare me!! Aeh!! Arrr!!!" an agonizing scream assisted with a plead for mercy.

But Havi didn't even flinch as he granted Donatello a gruesome and terrifying death while the latter's wails resound in the battlefield.

With this, all the three fighter class enemies, who were the big trump cards set by the church to kill him, were now massacred brutally.

And finally, his furious eyes landed on Demiurge, the Pope who himself played the biggest role in destroying Havi's life and killing his family.

With a flap of the 4 kilometer wide left golden wing, 8 different fire typhoons appeared and soon surrounded the Demiurges from all different sides. And because of the ability of this golden fire to eat up fire and control it... Demiurge, who was now partly in green fire and mist form was restricted from moving, stuck at the same spot.

[You killed my elder brother by selling him out to the enemy empire.

You killed my father and my wife by destroying them from the inside using that poison. Now your death shall be the same.] he transmitted his thoughts to Demiurge who was bewildered and fear-stricken to his core.

Havi appeared in front of the Pope, he forced the corrosive blue fire and started roasting the pope alive.

ROAR!!

Demiurge roared like a wild beast under the extensive pain as the emperor burned his body to cinders slowly. In his final attempt to escape, the pope launched a terrifying attack...

BOOM!!

Havi's left golden head exploded from the attack but the Simurgh form kept incinerating the pope under the command of the right blue head.

Even though he felt unimaginable pain, his anger and hatred kept him going as he was exacting revenge for the death of his father, brother and wife.

The most agonizing and excruciatingly painful torture took place despite Havi losing a head. But soon, Demiurge stopped moving as he helplessly watched his own body turn into dust from the inside.

Just like that... the pope who wanted the church to reign supreme in the Vulcan empire, planning everything since over a century, finally lost his life at the hands of the emperor.

Crack!!

Crack!!

Thousands of cracks were heard in the northern plains like the crisp sound of glass shattering...

Havi quickly noticed that the Flame Killer formation was breaking apart as soon as he killed Demiurge who seemed to be the one controlling it since the beginning.

However, Havi felt no sense of contentment or victory. Because there were more urgent things to do.

Without wasting another moment, Havi with his remaining head ascended high in the sky and spread his wings wide open as he flew in the direction of the eastern grasslands.

[Hang in there Venessa... I'm coming for you!]

Chapter 638 No Choice

Havi finally managed to kill off his enemies and turned out victorious at the expense of sacrificing his bloodline and life force as he turned into one of the primordial creatures named Simurgh. But even after

avenging his family... he was still more worried about his daughter who was surrounded by enemies and hence, he quickly departed for the Eastern Grasslands of the Vulcan empire.

THREE HOURS AGO.

Inside the 50 kilometers wide isolation barrier that sealed Kahn, Venessa and now deceased Hector along with the Hero's Party... was a decimated and burning battlefield.

BOOM!!

CRACKLE!!

The six members of the hero's party were riddled with wounds and hard 2nd-degree burn marks while seeping blood from many injuries. All of them were being healed using health and Stamina recovery potions while a massive and flickering protection barrier was constantly getting bombarded by massive meteor-like fireballs, each big enough to destroy a group of thousand soldiers instantly.

The loud noises of the bombarding fireballs resounded and sent tremors in the 15 kilometer range, hundreds of massive crevices formed in the ground while thousands of trees and plants set ablaze as a gigantic flying creature hovered in the sky, creating and launching these fireballs at the hero's party incessantly.

Kahn also gazed at this enormous creature that was even twice larger than Oliver in his Thunderbird form.

[Kahn! Run away, you idiot! Their target is me. But they will kill you for certain if you stay.

I will create an opening for you. Use it and leave because I can't maintain this form for long.] this bird creature transmitted its thoughts to Kahn.

An hour ago, after Axel sneakily killed Hector and sent the recording Venessa used 100% of her bloodline and transformed into a one kilometer tall bird creature.

Her head looked like that of a swan with a sharp and pointy yellow beak. Two rainbow-like ginormous wings that spanned 400 meters were fully spread across the battlefield. A 200 meter long red feathery tail and an overall iridescent blue and green plumage body akin to a peacock now flew high in the sky.

On the border of the wings and the chest area was a thick layer of golden armor, part of Venessa's original armor that too had transformed along with her.

But even so... this form was not a fully developed form since the transformation had no legs or talons as Venessa was only a 1st stage saint originally.

After this transformation she achieved by using her imperial primordial bloodline, her strength and aura were comparable to a peak 3rd stage saint while she gained the ability to summon massive fireballs and firestorms constantly with her newfound abilities.

[The moment I try to retreat, they will target me instead. And then you will be forced into taking a defensive stance instead of attacking them.

It will give them opportunities to attack you. In the end, you will also lose your chance to kill them and it will change the direction of the battle.] replied Kahn as he analyzed the situation.

[Huh... how does he know of battle tactics so well?] thought Venessa.

All she heard from Kahn was indeed the case. The moment she was distracted and lost the prerogative, they will turn into the losing side.

Venessa aimed to break this barrier and destroy the cross Axel held in his hands which was the very thing keeping this barrier active. Otherwise, there was no way for them to escape.

[Other than me, Jugram and Rudra, possibly Blackwall... no one can stand this type of heat.] thought Kahn to himself after seeing the intensity of the fire released from Venessa's attacks.

As for him leaving... he could easily do so but a Blacksmith using a Space Law ability would risk revealing his identity. On top of it, Venessa would be stuck here, left at the mercy of the hero's party after her transformation period ended.

At this moment, because Axel and Azerog, who were a peak 3rd stage and 4th stage saints respectively; had taken the lead... Venessa was unable to suppress the enemy side and destroy the barrier completely.

She also hadn't developed her primordial form properly yet and could only exert strength up to peak 3rd stage saint so even her biggest trump card couldn't turn the tide of the battle.

Kahn on the other end didn't intervene directly because from his understanding of the battle so far, their intention seemed to capture Venessa without hurting her and not kill her like they killed Hector whose corpse was placed on the other side of the battlefield.

Although he could help using his dimensional law skills, none of it would go unnoticed by any parties because there were no weaklings here and the enemy side had fighters who were above by 2 to 3 stages.

On top of it, Kahn still hadn't seen Axel use any of his Divine Abilities or the Divine Weapon.

He didn't want to waltz into the battlefield like an idiot, thinking he could win just because he had a plethora of skills. In the end, knowing your enemy's moves could help you dictate the flow of the battle while overestimating yourself will lead you to certain death.

Because of these reasons, Kahn still hadn't acted out and patiently waited to gauge the enemy side's battle prowess, all of their skills and abilities while deciding who would be the best to use against them.

Another hour passed and finally, Venessa lost her ability to maintain the form. The ginormous body started shrinking and a massive cloud of smoke formed around her body.

"Go! Capture her!" shouted Axel and the party members quickly surrounded Venessa who was completely weakened, barely able to fly in the sky as her world energy reserves were almost depleted.

The party members activated 6 identical artifacts and trapped Venessa, whose face was full of sweat under a one kilometer wide suppression barrier again.

BOOM!!

CRACK!!

But as soon as it was formed, a massive 500 meter greatsword composed of six different elements suddenly appeared in the air out of nowhere and quickly struck the suppression barrier, instantly breaking it apart.

"Looks like no reinforcements are coming in the end." a loud voice suddenly resounded in the air and a man adorning a dark gray longcoat appeared next to Venessa.

"Let's not drag the fight than it already has." said this man and a black greatsword suddenly appeared in his hand.

He looked around at the baffled expressions of everyone including Axel and spoke in a domineering voice...

"Alright, boys... let's get to work!"

Chapter 639 Stepping In

In front of the weakened and out-of-breath third princess of the Vulcan empire, hovered a man with a gray longcoat, white shirt, black undercoat, a black tie and open-finger gloves. His hairs combed from the right side of the head while his gaze was firm as his entire body emitted an aura of reality and dominance.

In his right hand was a pitch-black greatsword that gave off a terrifyingly oppressive aura, instantly putting everyone from the enemy side on alert mode.

Lucifer had now completely transformed after Throk reforged it using the guardian dragon's horn. Unlike before, it was no longer just a pitch black greatsword with sharp edges and red magma veins spread across it.

Now, there were multiple vibrant red outlines on both edges of the blade while two small dragon heads were carved on the hilt, each of them appearing as if they were trying to come outside of the sword itself.

The triangular-shaped edge of the sword was enough to quickly stab through anything but what made Lucifer more terrifying was the two extra small blades following right behind it.

If someone were to be stabbed with this greatsword now... not only will their blood follow after the blade was pulled out; but so will their flesh and bones with it.

As for the central region, the design was intrinsically enhanced with dragon scales while a visible stream of magma appeared in the middle of the blade and the guard. The two small dragons had their mouths opened and leaked some of the blistering fire of this magma.

And finally, the hilt itself appeared as if it was made of pure magma as it glowed crimson red but didn't harm the user in the slightest while the pommel also leaked a bit of scorching fire.

This was Lucifer in its Legendary Rank Weapon form.

And just by pulling it out, Kahn had warred off the hero's party from making any unnecessary moves as soon as the greatsword revealed its aura. Because this aura was actually a pure dragon's pressure.

Previously when Kahn used the now perfected Dragon Strike attack, the strength in it was doubled just because Lucifer itself had upgraded and Kahn didn't feel any burden on his body in the slightest.

Compared to when he was only a semi-saint in Rakos Empire, Kahn had allocated 5 doppelgangers to master his upgraded battle skills and techniques. One of them was tasked with completely mastering and perfecting Dragon Strike.

And now it was no longer an amalgamation of different elements forcefully put together but a perfectly balanced and blended version of 6 different elements such as fire, water, lightning, wood, earth and wind in perfect sync as if they were all in a harmonious relationship while incorporating with each other as part of a single being.

Added with Lucifer's upgrade and Kahn's own world energy, the Dragon Strike made a statement and instantly deterred the enemies from making a move.

"Alright, boys... let's get to work!"

Axel and all the other members of the hero's party had no time to react or counterattack.

Swoosh!

Swoosh!!

First, it was Kahn who suddenly appeared in their battle unlike the time when he was only watching the whole battle from afar like a weakling with no powers or abilities to fight.

And now... 7 more figures suddenly appeared out of nowhere, instantly forming a battle formation around Kahn and Omega.

BOOM!!

BOOM!!

Loud Sonic shocks filled the 30 kilometers of the surroundings as all of them revealed their dreary and oppressive auras in succession.

All of these new arrivals were fully armed and equipped in their previous armors and gears they had since their time in Verlassen. It was the extra set Albestros had made for each of them using the Invimarak's body.

Blackwall floated in the sky at the front, creating the first line of defense as he fearlessly appeared between their group and the hero's party.

Omega and Jugram appeared a few hundred meters behind him on the right and left sides respectively.

Ceril and Armin appeared in the middle, the Magician instantly cast a protection barrier on Venessa while the Healer encompassed her body in a green aura, giving his best to heal her injuries and close the long and deep wounds she received during battle.

Finally, Ronin and Oliver protected their backs as they appeared at the very end. The human and the Hawkman instantly brandished their daggers and bow respectively.

Everyone from the enemy side was also flabbergasted, giving them an incredulous look as these people appeared out of thin air.

As for Venessa... Kahn floated in front of her while the princess still had her eyes wide open and mouth agape.

Among these people, she had only seen and knew of Omega and Jugram as saints before. Although saints were rare, the top 3 saint blacksmiths had 2 to 3 of them hired. So she was never suspicious about their origins.

But now, there were a total of seven saints.

And top of it... Kahn was also floating in the air and probably made that tremendously terrifying sword attack that instantly broke the suppression barrier in just a single strike.

Means he too was a saint and not a semi-saint as she imagined after the blacksmithing duel.

However, Omega and Jugram were a bit familiar to them because they met before when the church sent them to create a scene in front of Throk's main company building.

"Aren't these the outsiders hired to protect Oakenshield by the imperial clan?" asked Tamak, the 3 meter tall orc battleaxe warrior.

"The space is already sealed here... no teleportation scroll should work.

So how and when the hell did they get here?" asked Edna, the succubus enchantress member.

[Oh, looks like they really don't know my real identity as Hero of Darkness.] thought Kahn because they all associated his subordinates with the perfect cover of hired bodyguards they made for the company a year ago.

But the main question still lingered in his mind as he asked himself..

[Then why the fuck was I kidnapped?!]

Chapter 640 Testing Waters

While everyone was taken aback by the arrival of 8 new saints on the scene... Kahn was still perplexed after showing his real rank because even after running a few simulations in his software aka the brain, he still couldn't find a valid reason about why he was brought along with Venessa and Hector here.

[What am I missing? Should I try to extract more information from them?] he thought calmly.

"All of you! Be ready! There's only one 3rd stage saint.

Rest of them are only 1st stage saints including that blacksmith guy.

"We can still kill them and capture the princess!" ordered Axel who quickly recovered from his shock and brought back his team's attention to the present moment.

"Kahn... when did you become a saint?" asked Venessa, her tone expressing her curiosity and worries together.

"No time. I'll explain everything later.

First, we need to get you out of this place." spoke Kahn.

The enemy side didn't know his real identity even now. So he didn't need to intentionally reveal it either.

[Dammit! I have so many abilities to escape from here unscathed and without engaging in a battle. But I can't get her out without destroying that artifact Hero of Fire is holding.] he thought to himself.

As for why Kahn suddenly decided to reveal his rank and decided to intervene at this point?

Although he could wait it out... there was a risk of Venessa getting captured even if he hadn't exposed his hand.

He wasn't willing to bet on her staying unharmed after that. Because many artifacts could seal her powers completely after Venessa was captured by the hero's party. Who knew what other plans they had?

Even so, there was another reason that made him decide to step into the battlefield...

That whilst in the time of peril, when Venessa was running out of strength and was on her last straw... she still tried to create an opening to help Kahn escape without caring for her own well-being.

Kahn wasn't the kind of guy to leave his trusted people behind, especially in times like these when they tried to protect him by risking their lives while having absolutely no reason to.

Unlike those who only called themselves as Friends only when things were advantageous and favorable for them... Venessa had proved her worth as a true friend when the calamity struck, someone really trustworthy and reliable in the time of need.

Kahn always repaid kindness and loyalty 10 times as one of his mottos. And it wasn't going to suddenly change because the enemy side had two stronger fighters.

Besides, he had already seen enough of the opposition side to know how to take care of them...

As for Axel and Azerog... he had his own means even if the situation became unfavorable for him.

"Let's test the waters first." said Kahn and commanded all the generals and Omega.

Shing!!

BANG!!

Without wasting a single moment, all of them excluding Armin, was healing Venessa charged at the enemy sides.

Clang!!

Omega directly clashed against Azerog, the 4th stage saint and pushed him behind instantly, stopping only after they created a distance of a couple of kilometers between them and the rest of the hero's party. Omega was so quick that even Axel only saw an afterimage a moment later after the dual swords samurai passed around him and struck against Azerog.

Sparkle!

Sparkle!

Shrilling noises filled as Omega oppressed the fourth stage saint who barely reacted in time, completely forced to backfoot because he hadn't expected Omega to attack head-on.

"Defeating you like this... has no meaning." said Omega as he forced down Raijin against Azerog's trident and sparks appeared in between the two weapons.

"Be fully prepared, fireborne. After that, we'll settle the matter." spoke the right-hand man and kicked Azerog, throwing him off a hundred meters in air just with a simple kick.

[What the hell! How is he so fast? And why does he already have a physique as strong as a 4th stage saint?] wondered Azerog and recovered his stance. He was the strongest guy in the room based on the logic of ranks and levels, yet he was the one getting his ass slapped.

Jugram on the other end engaged with the orc called Tamak. A giantsword and a massive battleaxe clashed against each other and both of them instantly engaged in fierce combat of pure strength.

Clang! Clang!

Shing!

Crisp sounds resounded in the air as both sides equally exchanged moves with their respective opponents.

Kahn also directly engaged in a battle against Axel who used an epic rank sword.

"Nice sword. But I could've made it even better." said Kahn in a mocking tone with a smile.

This was neither Axel's Divine Weapon nor was it something noteworthy in his eyes. Kahn could instantly tell that Axel didn't even use it often because of the crappy fighting skills he displayed while being pushed around by just a 1st stage saint.

The Hero of Fire had his jaw dropped on because of surprise. This guy he thought of as a weak ant turned out to be someone capable of standing toe to toe in terms of physical strength despite being only a 1st stage saint.

For the next 10 minutes, all of them fought their own battles and retreated to the center.

[So what do you all think?] he asked them telepathically.

"They're equally matched." said Ceril.

"They're good. Worthy to be called the best-talented people of the young generation. They're really strong... but the thing is..." spoke Jugram.

"We're stronger if we lift the restriction on our bodies." replied Omega instead.

Because in reality, all the subordinates had their 20 levels and stats according to their ranks lowered when they were in their human forms. Thus during this exchange, most of them couldn't fight at their peak, just more than enough to play on even terms because they were not in their true forms.

"I guess we have no choice but to get involved in this fight even though we have been dragged into a war we know nothing about."

And finally, Kahn gave them a command to equip their armors and weapons as he spoke with a diabolical smirk...

"Let's show them who's the real boss here."