

## Darkness 681

### Chapter 681 Following the Footsteps

Kahn stood stupefied as soon as the system informed him about something called a Divine Key after the burst of black aura from the center of his chest.

[System, what the hell is a divine key? How come you never told me anything about it?] he queried in an aghast tone.

[Information sealed temporarily as the host hasn't met a hidden prerequisite condition.] responded the system in a lifeless voice.

[What's the condition? And what does a divine key do?

The keyword is 'key'. So does it open a door or a path to something?] he asked again, his voice filled with curiosity.

[Information sealed temporarily.] replied the system again as if it didn't care about Kahn's query at all.

[What the fuck?! Why are you hiding something so crucial?!

I touched and absorbed his core without being able to stop or control the process. It's important for me to know this vital information.

And if his core is a divine key named Flamescion... What about my core? Is it a divine key as well? What's it called?] Kahn barraged the system with a plethora of questions because he was also shaken by this sudden revelation.

[The host's divine key hasn't been awakened yet.

The host must complete the prerequisite condition first.] replied the system again, giving Kahn only unclear answers.

[Then tell me what's the condition, you dimwit!!

That damn God of Darkness and Kravel didn't tell me anything and you're withholding this information from me as well.

How the hell am I supposed to survive like this?] nagged Kahn.

[Old bastard, do you know something?] asked Kahn to the peak saint in his soul.

[I don't know about the matters of Heroes and Gods.

I only killed those heroes who came in my way or tried to attack my empire back then.

I had no reason to get entangled in these matters because I had different priorities.] responded Rathnaar, his voice sounding as clueless as Kahn.

Ding!

Ding!

Ding!

But before Kahn could ask any more questions, a system notification resounded in his mind and Kahn's eyes widened in surprise as well as worry.

"All of you! Get away!" shouted Kahn in a hurry, confusing everyone.

Venessa and his subordinates quickly retreated in just a few seconds and stopped 12 Kilometers away in the air.

BOOM!!

A sudden burst of black and red aura filled with dense and terrifyingly destructive saint pressure suddenly exploded and spread across 10 kilometers in just a dozen seconds.

All of the stones, boulders, crevices and cracks in this already destroyed battlefield were razed down and turned to smithereens under this condensed and oppressive saint pressure while a 1 kilometer tall and half-a-kilometer wide pillar of darkness and fire element arose at the center of this terrifying saint pressure.

"Don't tell me..." spoke Venessa with an aghast expression.

"Master's entire aura is changing. It's as if..." spoke Ceril, the magic expert among the group.

"Not just his aura... his life force is also transforming." said Armin with an incredulous expression.

All of them had worried expressions because no one knew what the hell was happening at this moment.

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Meanwhile, in the capital Arkensan of the Vulcan empire...

Crack!

Crack!

Hetrax's massive statue in the main Church headquarters, situated in the capital Arkensan started cracking and a massive volcanic eruption of blood-red fire appeared from the statue and dozens of kilometers of sky was covered by the red light.

Millions of people from different races and species were taken aback, most of them cowering in fear because the aura released from this statue had spread within 100 kilometers radius and every living being in this range could feel the wrath and vengeful aura on their bodies.

Even high-ranked beings such as Saints were no exception to this. All of them concluded that something has angered their god Hetrax.

Something... FORBIDDEN.

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Unbeknownst to the citizen of the Vulcan empire... At this very moment, all the other Gods had sent their decree to their Empires that served them through the official spokespersons such as Popes and Monks because they sensed a familiar phenomenon that happened 300 years ago.

All the remaining Gods had declared to the world...

That the Hero of Fire was dead. And the one to kill him was the Hero of Darkness!

In their eyes, the new Hero of Darkness...

Was following the footsteps of his Predecessor.

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"ARRRGHHHHH!!!" roared Kahn who stood at the center of this massive pillar.

Crack!

Crack!

Every inch of his body felt like it was burning and getting incinerated while his bones felt like they'd crumble and turn into dust any moment.

Kahn was suffering under immeasurably excruciating pain, far more agonizing than when he sacrificed a part of his soul back in Verlassen.

BANG!!!

Another explosion occurred and this time... the previously exuded aura and saint pressure was thrown off and all of it started disappearing at a rapid pace.

Sizzle!!

Sizzle!!

A 500 meters wide crater was formed on the ground, filled with sizzling sand and stones while streams of molten lava appeared here and there.

[Congratulations to the host!!

Divine Key : Flamescion has been successfully absorbed and merged with the host's own divine key.

Host's body has been transformed and gained perfect immunity against the Fire element.] reported the system.

Kahn on the other end, was completely naked in the massive crater as his clothes were burnt to crisp despite having a top-notch defense against many elements including fire.

All the burn marks were completely healed as if nothing ever happened and he wasn't burnt to cinders just a few minutes ago.

Kahn took a deep breath while sensing that his body felt a bit different than before. But the system sent another notification.

[Congratulations to the host!!

The host now has ownership of the divine weapon Amaterasu!

The host must awaken his own Divine Key to gain full access to this Divine Weapon.]

"What the..." before Kahn could even react in disbelief...

[Congratulations to the host for becoming...]

The system gave another mind-boggling notification, making Kahn too stunned to speak.

[Second Stage Saint!!]

Chapter 682 Unexpected Arrival

Not only Kahn but also all of his subordinates along with Venessa were taken aback after the massive explosion of saint pressure. The system then notified that Kahn had become a 2nd Stage Saint after a one and half year gap.

Kahn quickly summoned his dark gray longcoat attire again, looking exactly like the way he was when the Hero's Party brought him here. In the following moments, he absorbed this information and recounted the moments that occurred a few minutes ago.

Kahn was already Level 296 and during the battle when he absorbed the world energy from Kagutsuchi, the Fire Deity by using the Energy Plunderer skill, the system notified him that he met the condition to ascend to a 2nd stage saint already.

But he purposely delayed his breakthrough because they were in a battle and he'd be vulnerable during the process since it couldn't be abruptly stopped and Kahn couldn't move during the breakthrough. But right after he inadvertently absorbed Axel's core aka the Divine Key : Flamescion, the system forcefully made this breakthrough and now informed him.

"Tell me my levels." ordered Kahn.

[The host is currently at level 387.] informed the system.

"That much already? I guess a 3rd stage saint's core is indeed powerful.

And I still feel that I haven't absorbed or converted all the world energy from Axel's core and Kagutsuchi yet. Means my levels will rise soon as soon as my body becomes ready for another breakthrough." he said and clenched his fists, making a Mission Accomplished pose.

At this moment, Kahn could finally tell the difference that he was 5 times stronger than before, unlike the time when his mind was in a hazy state due to the sudden breakthrough.

In the following moments, Kahn's expression turned curious.

"If by absorbing another Hero's Divine Key, you could get ownership of their divine weapon...

Is that why the previous Hero of Darkness killed all the other heroes?" wondered Kahn with a clueless expression.

Because as per his knowledge, divine abilities were tied to the soul. And divine weapons consumed Soul Essence to attack.

But binding a divine weapon to the soul would be too much of a burden on it since they were already carrying divine abilities. It'd do more harm than good, especially with Heroes & Heroines with more than 3 divine abilities.

So that left only their Core as the most suitable conduit to form that link with the owner and the weapon; like Albestros and Throk used the Blood-bind ritual to link their weapon and armors.

Means as long as a chosen Hero could get a divine key from another hero, he or she could also use their divine weapon.

"Maybe because he wanted their Divine Keys and gain access to their Divine Weapons as well as rise in ranks rapidly; he killed them one by one because of his greed for power..." hypothesized Kahn.

This seemed like the only plausible reason to Kahn since he knew nothing about the history of the events that happened 300 years ago.

But any theories he had based on the little superficial information at hand would often reach a completely different verdict than the actual truth.

Thus, Kahn didn't want to form an opinion based on just some guesswork.

SHING!!

However, Kahn's entire body froze at the very next second as an unbearably tyrannical and horrifying saint pressure dropped on him. His entire body was forced to lay down on the ground under this leaden pressure.

[Kid, run! A powerful saint is targeting you from 200 hundred kilometers away!!] suddenly, Rathnaar shouted in Kahn's mind.

[Dammit! This must be the people from the Church of Hetrax!

I don't have any space force left to escape either.] cursed Kahn in his mind.

He had already expended all the space force during the fight against Axel and he didn't have any other skill that could work against this mountainous saint pressure that was enough to kill him just with a thought.

Everyone except Venessa was forced into the same situation under this insurmountable killing intent while the princess was also bamboozled as she could tell who this saint pressure belonged to.

SKRAAA!!!

An ear-deafening cry of a monstrous creature resounded in the air, the origin being so loud that all of them could hear from 50 kilometers away.

Flap!!

Flap!!

A massive and unimaginable long bird-like monster suddenly appeared 15 kilometers away high in the sky, its ginormous figure was so big that even they could see it from this far distance.

[An aura of a 9th stage saint and that double-headed body...] said Rathnaar as he tried to remember something from a distant memory.

"Impossible... what the hell is that thing?!" clamored Kahn as he still struggled to move an inch of his body.

[That... so the legend was true. Look carefully boy...

That's one of the three Primordial Creatures of this world. The beings that came before all the other species of the world and even someone like an Elder Dragon or an Archangel couldn't be compared to when it reaches the peak of its strength.] replied Rathnaar in a grim voice as he stated the name...

[The Simurgh.]

Kahn and the group had an incredulous as well as jarring expression. Because they had no idea who this new arrival was.

SKRAA!!

Another wave of bird cry filled the surroundings and right before everyone's eyes...

The 8 kilometer tall creature started transforming and shrinking. In just a couple of minutes, the massive bird no longer existed. However, he turned into a humanoid figure with two long red horns and fiery red hair that floated in the air.

"The Emperor!" exclaimed Kahn in disbelief.

Havi Hos Sigfreed, the emperor of the Vulcan Empire had finally arrived.

Venessa too had an aghast expression. This was the first time she had seen her father's primordial creature form. But what surprised her even more was the current state of the emperor himself.

Havi had lost his left eye, his body was riddled with lacerations and deep wounds from head to toe as he bled excessively.

The mighty emperor who was an 8th stage saint was gravely injured to the point he looked like a man...

On the verge of Death.

Chapter 683 Meeting the Emperor

Kahn and the group were terrified at this point. Because the strongest being in the entire Vulcan empire had shown up at the site of battle while looking like he had been in a life and death battle.

Neither Kahn nor any of his subordinates could move a muscle under Havi's tyrannical saint pressure. To him, it felt like drowning at the bottom of the deepest ocean in the world; every second feeling like he had died horribly due to suffocation as Kahn couldn't even breathe at this moment.

Swoosh!!

Suddenly, Venessa showed up in front of Kahn since she wasn't targeted by Havi.

"Lord Father, hear me out first!" clamored Venessa because she felt like Kahn would die any second.

She widened her arms, acting like a human wall to protect Kahn from the Emperor's rage.

Her indomitable and resolved gaze surprised Havi because he had assumed Kahn and his group to be part of the Church's people because the moment he came here, Venessa was surrounded by many saints.

Havi then instantly lifted off his saint pressure and looked around the battlefield.

On his left... he saw Hector's corpse under a protection barrier that was actually cast by Ceril under Kahn's orders.

Havi clenched his fist tightly, his expression turning that of loss and suffering at the same time.

He had used the forbidden ability of their bloodline in order to kill the four 8th stage saints that included the 3 Holy Champions and the Pope.

By doing so... he had basically thrown away his life to protect his children. Yet, he failed to save his son and was too late.

His gaze then turned to Kahn. Despite his sorry state, his aura was as terrifying and domineering as someone sitting at the epitome of strength should be.

Everything before such a being was nothing but dust.

"You... you're the new Hero of Darkness?" asked Havi as soon as Kahn stood up.

Shocked!

Kahn was instantly taken aback. All the emperor did was just look at him once and already unveiled his real identity.

"These people... none of them are humans. And that Basilisk... there's something strange about it." he spoke with a confused yet curious gaze.

But this wasn't the end either...

"You have another soul inside you... Half-soul of another person."

Shocked!

Bewildered!

Just 10 seconds in and Havi already figured out all of Kahn's secrets without even trying.

[Kid... speak the truth. That's the only way we will survive here. Otherwise... he will kill everyone without a second thought.] said Rathnaar in a gloomy voice.

Even the Peak Saint knew how dire this situation was. A single lie and they'd be for sure because the Emperor was a being who could kill Kahn and everyone else just by looking at them.

"Your Majesty... please let me explain." spoke Kahn in a calm tone.

In reality, he was just as terrified as any living being would be. This wasn't a situation he could escape from even with all of his tricks.

"I will hear from my daughter." said Havi in a majestic voice and looked at Venessa.

Venessa then told Havi about the treason by the church. How Axel and the members of the Hero's Party kidnapped them here and killed Victor.

"That much... I know already. They sent me a recording of Axel killing Hector.

But where is that bastard?! I see the corpses of his allies but not him." said Havi in a vengeful voice and enraged expression as if he was about to burst out at any moment.

"That snake ate him." said Kahn as he pointed at Rudra.

[You fucking traitor!!] bellowed Rudra in Kahn's mind.

Tap!

Tap!

Venessa walked forth and told Havi about how Kahn and his allies showed up at the crucial moment, saving her life and protecting her all this time while they killed the enemies one by one.

And finally, she told him about the battle between Kahn and Axel, including the details such as Axel's true form, the Blood Titan and Fire Deity Kagutsuchi being summoned by Axel.

How Kahn even risked his life while facing Amaterasu, the divine weapon of Hero of Fire and how he almost got killed when Axel aimed at her heart.

Cough!

Cough!

Havi spat a big chunk of blood, his internal organs were already in a dire state and his regeneration abilities weren't working because of the backlash of forcefully using his bloodline.

[Master... I sense the Emperor's life force dwindling.] informed Armin.

"Your majesty... allow my subordinate to heal you." spoke Kahn as he maintained a worried expression.

"Tch! I won't work. I don't need healing... I need life force. And that's not possible." said Havi as he wiped off the blood from his mouth.

Shing!!

Suddenly, a green aura encapsulated Havi's body.

Armin quickly started using Nirvana Armor and Hermes Staff's set effects and converted the life force of all the plant life in the 15 kilometers region and started healing Havi.



Even the Emperor had his eyes wide open because converting life force from other beings and using it to heal someone was completely unheard of. Even the best Healers of the Vulcan empire had to expend their own life force to achieve that feat.

10 MINUTES LATER.

The emperor was no longer bleeding and his life force was becoming stable. Armin on the other hand was sweating profusely because he was using all of his mana, life force and the external life force absorbed from the plant life to rejuvenate Havi's body.

And finally... Havi was out of danger. The emperor could feel that the backlash of the bloodline was gone for now.

He looked at Armin and Kahn, nodding at them as a way to show his thanks.

"There's something I must do first." said Havi and a small yellow orb coalesced over his left forefinger.

Before they could even react, he appeared in front of Venessa and pushed that orb towards her forehead.

"AAAHHHHRRRRGG!!" shouted Venessa in agonizing pain as she grabbed her head and fell on the ground, wriggling as if she was suffering immense physical and mental pain.

[What the fuck?! Does he plan to kill us?!] wondered Kahn with an ashen face, almost feeling as if this was going to be his last moment.

However, Havi showed no hostility towards Kahn and looked at Venessa as if he too was hurting to see his daughter suffer in pain.

Five minutes later, Venessa stopped screaming... but as soon as she stood up, she gazed at Havi and a stream of tears dropped from her eyes.

"Why?... Why didn't you tell me?" she questioned her father.

"I... I had no choice. It was the only way." said Havi, his face full of regret and guilt.

"For my sake... for the empire's sake..." spoke Venessa as the grief welled up in her heart showed on her face as she continued crying...

"You chose to suffer alone."

Chapter 684 The Aftereffect

A gloomy silence ensued in the surroundings. Winds howled and the smoke from the charred battlefield made the entire region foggy.

Yet the way Venessa had spoken to Havi... it encompassed the place with sadness and pain.

Kahn and the group had no idea what was happening and why Venessa suddenly started wailing in pain but next, she started crying.

As far as he knew about their relationship from the times he and Venessa talked with each other...

Venessa and Havi were father and daughter only in name. The latter did not care if she lived or died but suddenly, their relationship took a u-turn out of nowhere.

In reality...

What Havi showed Venessa through that yellow orb were his memories.

For some unknown reason... Havi had decided to share his biggest secrets about how things happened back then.

How Freyja, his most loved wife and Venessa's mother actually died because of the conspiracy.

What part did the 2 strongest Fireborne clans play and how did the Church provide them with the untraceable poison that was used to kill her mother.

The memories show how those events broke Havi as a man.

To maintain the peace in the empire, avoid causing a war that'd have led to hundreds of millions of citizens dying in the crossfire and to protect Venessa enough though he loved her the most among his children... Havi made all those choices and he alone carried that burden.

Venessa was weeping and kept staring at her father. She was angry... yet full of grief at the same time.

Those memories also included how it was Church that killed the previous Emperor and Havi's older brother. And how they had been planning it for over a century.

The battle where Havi had to get out of the Flame Killer formation and the price he paid for it wasn't hidden in those memories either.

Venessa was knowledgeable enough about their bloodline to know the consequences of Havi's choice.

Her father... didn't have long to live.

Step!

Step!

Venessa walked forth and quickly hugged Havi tightly. Soon, the sobs turned into cries.

Because of Havi's decisions... Venessa had suffered for the past 22 years of her life. She wanted to become the Empress to prove herself. Yet one day, Havi told her that she was forcefully being married to Axel. That created a lot of deep hatred in her mind for her father.

But after seeing the truth behind it all... she came to understand why her father did what he did.

Still... Was it forgivable?

No, it wasn't. But Venessa wasn't a little girl who saved the world in only Black and White. She understood that the burden, pain, grief, anger, hatred and responsibility Havi had carried all these decades was far many times heavier than what she went through.

She tightened her arms around her father's slumped and regretful figure.

Although Havi tried his best to maintain his composure as the almighty Emperor... even he couldn't help it for long, resulting in both father and daughter crying their hearts out.

In a way, this moment...

Was the new beginning of their relationship as Father and Daughter.

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15 Minutes Later.

Kahn and the rest of the crew had a very awkward and uncomfortable expression as the duo before them started crying out of nowhere.

[Master... while healing him with the life force, I also checked the Emperor's body.

His bloodline is destroying itself at a rapid pace. At this moment, his physical body and rank as an 8th stage saint is keeping him alive.

But the way his life force is diminishing... He will die within 2 decades at this rate.] informed Armin with a stern voice.

[Dammit!! Is that why they're crying? No... it must be some other reason. Otherwise, Venessa wouldn't be affected to this degree.] thought Kahn.

Just then, the sobbing stopped and the Emperor spoke to Kahn.

"You've fought for my daughter's sake even though you could've easily escaped.

Even those people who share blood and family ties or call themselves as best friends won't risk their lives in the type of world we live in. Yet you didn't abandon my precious daughter. So you can be at ease...

I won't kill you." said Havi as he let go of Venessa.

"Now that the church has betrayed us... there's no point in capturing you either.

And I have to reform my empire and groom Venessa into becoming the next Empress now.

So I don't have time to deal with the Heroes and Gods. Just protecting my empire would be a big challenge at this point." he iterated his intentions.

[Luck is on our side, boy.

In a way, the Church causing this coup d'état and you saving Venessa's life has saved your own. Otherwise, the emperor would never choose to spare your life.] said Rathnaar in a merry tone.

Although he could take over Kahn's body in the direst situation... the current Kahn was too weak to bear the burden and allow Rathnaar to make any significant impact in a battle against someone like Havi. But in the end... things turned out in their favor.

"With the Pope gone... no one can track Axel's divine key or use any methods to know about your whereabouts." revealed the emperor.

"What do you mean? Is the pope dead?" asked Kahn with a baffled expression.

"Yes. Kidnapping all of you here was just a bait to lure me into their trap and kill me.

You being brought here by Hero's Party was Axel's grudge.

But if not for you being the Hero of Darkness and having enough strength to repel them... things would've turned ugly and they would've managed to blackmail me using Venessa even after I killed their strongest fighters.

In a way... you have greatly helped me and the imperial clan by saving my daughter." said Havi with a tone filled with genuine gratitude.

Just then, Kahn asked a question of his own.

"Doesn't that mean you can now get rid of the Church of Hetrax for good?" asked Kahn with a gaze full of curiosity.

"No. It's not as easy as you think.

Something that's ingrained in the culture for centuries after centuries can't be overthrown just because of a coup or hostile takeover. I may be able to get rid of the church but then it will put the entire empire in a situation of a civil war.

People's faith can be... blinding.

It's better that nobody knows the truth about what happened here." revealed Havi.

"Why? They planned to kill the emperor, already killed an Imperial Prince, your son.

Isn't that a righteous reason for you to exterminate them?" asked Kahn hurriedly because he couldn't understand why Havi wouldn't just exterminate the church of this high treason.

[Boy... he's an Emperor. You've never been one so you wouldn't understand.

The ruling figurehead can't use the Eye for an Eye method for the troubles happening inside his own territory. It'll do more harm than good.] informed Rathnaar who too was the emperor of the Rakos Empire and understood Havi's reasoning very well.

"It's not that simple at all. Because once the house is breaking apart from the inside... the outsiders will smell the blood and band together to take everything from you." responded Havi with a serious voice.

"Huh? Can you elaborate please?" asked Kahn in a puzzled tone.

"What I mean is... although you killed Axel to save my daughter. You have also..." said Havi as he revealed the main reason why he was talking about keeping everything a secret...

"Doomed the entire Vulcan empire."

Chapter 685 Unfair Consequences

The Emperor's proclamation that Kahn's actions of killing Axel, the Hero of Fire had doomed their empire resounded in the surroundings.

Kahn and the group had dumbfounded expressions on their countenances. Even Rudra in his ginormous Voronir aka variant Basilisk form had his eyes wide open.

"By now... Kagutsuchi must've told Hetrax about you and all the other gods should already know about you killing the Hero of Fire. But based on what you two told me...

Kagutsuchi has no idea that you fought Axel to save Venessa." he explained.

"Currently, your identity is unknown to everyone among the living and all the empires, as well as gods, would assume that the new Hero of Darkness is following his predecessor's footsteps." he spoke in an authoritative tone.

"We will fake your death as Kahn Salvatore. A body would be arranged and all the blame will fall on the battle between Hero of Fire and Hero of Darkness.

The news will say that the Pope got involved but he too died during the battle." he said hastily.

"What the..."

Kahn couldn't get the full picture of what Havi was planning. Among their group... Only Rathnaar understood where this conversation was going.

"Why are we talking about faking my death? I literally saved your daughter's life. Can't you at least help me hide?" questioned Kahn.

"For that, I'm thankful to you.

But by killing the Hero of Fire even for the sake of saving my daughter... you have already put a target on your back and implicated 4 billion innocent people living in my empire." spoke Havi, his expression turning grim.

"How?" asked Kahn because he had no grasp of the situation. He understood why the first choice of hiding the truth was reasonable but leaving the Vulcan empire... didn't fit well with him.

"Listen... If the news of you killing Axel to save Venessa leaks out; the other Empires will use that as an excuse to attack us; saying that the Imperial family harbored the Hero of Darkness all along and betrayed God Hetrax.

That would give them enough cover to gang up and destroy the Vulcan empire in the name of a righteous cause.

That's why my daughter's involvement or the church's treason absolutely cannot be revealed to the world." replied the emperor in a serious tone.

"And that's not the end of it." spoke Havi and then, even his expression turned ugly and hateful as he spoke in an indignant voice...

"There is a certain group hunting you." he revealed in a grim voice.

"What?!" exclaimed Kahn as this was the first time he heard about it.

"A treaty was made after what happened 300 years ago with the previous generation of summoned heroes.

You were already the main target. And now that another hero has died by your hand... they will come for you. When they do, even I will have to comply because of the rules of the treaty.

That group is so strong that even an 8th stage saint like me would die for certain if I fought against them." revealed Havi.

Unbeknownst to Kahn, Havi was indeed trying to help him despite the precarious situation his action of killing Axel had put the emperor in.

Havi himself had averted many wars within the empire and even controlled the recent situation with Rogis, the Second Prince perfectly. He was more than capable of handling such situations and was a competent emperor.

But this situation would put him in a state where they'd be attacked by 4 to 5 neighboring empires all at once and those forces had Emperors and Empresses just as strong as him.

No empire had the strength to fight the full forces of 5 empires at once even if they were a behemoth.

On top of it... the mysterious group was supposedly comprised of people who would be able to overpower him if he fought them alone.

This level of war would be nothing but futile and terrifying bloodshed. Thus, avoiding this war when his own situation was their best way out.

"And you're already a known figure in this empire because of the Blacksmithing Duel. Taking any risks is a luxury I cannot afford as the emperor of the Vulcan empire.

At best, I can cover your tracks and give information that would divert them in the wrong direction." he spoke with an expression of helplessness.

"Who will be coming for me? Some empire's force?" asked Kahn.

"I took a blood-oath. I can't say their name or provide any direct information.

Just know this... They're a force exclusively made to hunt you down once your existence becomes known to the world.

Only the Dragon Empire and the Demon Empire can go against them at this point." iterated Havi. This was a situation that couldn't be avoided.

"In other words... If you want to live..." said Havi and continued in an authoritative tone as if he would not take a 'No' for an answer.

"Leave the Vulcan empire."

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30 MINUTES LATER.

It had been close to 5 hours at this point ever since the Axel, the Hero's Party and the Church of Hetrax started their coup. But now, the situation was reversed. However... this also led to a big consequence that Kahn had to face no matter what.

After discussing and quarreling among themselves... Without having any other choice, Kahn decided to leave the Vulcan empire.

Because it wasn't just about himself but the fate of the entire Vulcan empire and billions of people living in it.

Without holding back, Havi told how things would go from here if Kahn was caught. And how he was going to take measures to protect Kahn's identity.

"You should go somewhere that even I have no idea of. That is the only way." clamored Havi.

The emperor was a scheming mastermind himself and had already thought about 20 steps ahead.

But as a result of this plan that would save Kahn's life; there was a price that he'd have to pay. Because after this incident, Kahn aka the Hero of Darkness was going to be turned into...

The enemy of the World.

Chapter 686 Hardest Decisions

The emperor Havi Hos Sigfreed of the Vulcan empire created a perfect escape plan for Kahn to escape while he himself promised to cover his tracks and made necessary arrangements that'd also help him keep hidden unless Kahn himself exposed his identity.

In his plans, Kahn as Kahn Salvatore, the mega-talented Saint Blacksmith who became famous just this day and almost won the Blacksmithing Duel would be declared as collateral damage during the battle between Hero of Fire and Hero of Darkness.

After that, Havi planned to use this incident as a pretense to temporarily assume command of the church in the name of protecting it as their empire's vital institution.

Later, he'd subjugate the Church of Hetrax and pull it under the direct control of the Imperial Clan. And then, he'd root out all the traitors and conspirators, reforming the church and deterring all the possibilities of any other coup or treason.

And once he achieved that, no one would dig into the matters of this battle between Kahn and Axel and the former would be safe as his identity would be hidden even from the mysterious group that would soon show up to hunt the Hero of Darkness.

This was the only thing Havi could do to repay Kahn for saving Venessa in the time of peril and overturning the situation in their favor while maintaining the peace in the empire at the same time.

As for the truth behind the whole situation with Hero of Fire, the Hero's Party and the Pope... They were going to get something they didn't deserve. Because for this plan to work, Havi had no other choice but to turn all the culprits into...

Martyrs.

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Kahn accepted his proposal because if Havi was right, then nobody in the entire world could protect him if he stayed.

"Before I go... I have a request." spoke Kahn as he firmly gazed at the emperor.

"My master... Throk Oakenshield, is not to be touched or brought into the crosshairs.

He had no idea about my true identity and still thinks of me as his normal human pupil.

I hope you can keep him safe even if someone from that group investigates me and my background." he requested humbly.

Although he wanted to bid farewell to his master... it would put his life in jeopardy if someone tried to look into his background after this incident became clear to the public.

Havi nodded in affirmation.

"As for them... can I take their corpses with me?" asked Kahn as he pointed towards the deceased members of the Hero's Party that his subordinates killed by themselves.

"They're the traitors of my empire. I was going to incinerate them anyway to clear your tracks.

Just leave their weapons and armors around. I can use those to stage the site of the battlefield." responded the emperor.

Soon, Ronin collected all 7 members of the Hero's Party including their cores that were still intact since a saint's core wasn't that easy to destroy.

Kahn on the other hand had a discouraged and helpless expression. Because so far... he had created a perfect background for himself in this empire and was basically set up for life as he rose in ranks and hid perfectly.

But now... by choosing to fight and protect Venessa, his only friend in this empire... he had forfeited all that effort.

Because in this arrangement... Bad guys like Axel, Hero's Party, and the Pope were going to become glorified heroes of the Vulcan empire while the good guy who slayed the dragon and saved the princess was going to be turned into a vile and evil villain who ambushed and killed the virtuous and honorable Hero of Fire.

Sometimes, the truth did more harm than the lie. Thus, Kahn had no other choice but to get labeled as the Murderer who will be on the wanted list in all the empires that served the gods.

And all Kahn had as reward for the past 1 and half year was that he was now a Saint Rank Blacksmith.

Other than that, everything else he achieved was in vain.

-----  
The moment of departure finally came and Kahn faced Venessa who was still unable to accept the fact that the only friend in her life so far... The one who chose to protect her at the cost of revealing his



identity as Hero of Darkness and ended up putting the entire world's ire on his back... was now going to leave.

"I... I... am sorry." she spoke with an expression filled with guilt.

Although it wasn't her fault in any way, Venessa couldn't help but blame herself.

"It's neither yours nor my fault. Things just didn't go well for either of us." spoke Kahn as he tried to comfort her.

But before he could react...

Swoosh!

Venessa suddenly appeared in front of him and hugged him tightly, her eyes still carrying small droplets of tears.

The brave and fierce warrior princess of the Vulcan empire seemed so... vulnerable.

Pat!

Kahn patted Venessa's head and hugged back.

"If you ever need my help in the future... all you have to do is ask." she said in a gentle tone.

"You are my only friend. Someone I can trust with my life.

Yet I can't even protect you..." murmured Venessa in an apologetic tone.

"My my... don't carry any guilt over your mind. You have to face many problems of your own.

So help your father in dealing with the church and managing the empire. You have to become a strong individual and a capable ruler for all our sakes.

I believe in your capabilities and conviction." responded Kahn and he gave a gentle and genuinely thankful smile at Venessa.

Shing!!

However, the next moment... Kahn felt an immense killing intent targeting him.

Havi... was giving him a death stare!

Kahn stopped hugging Venessa and averted his gaze somewhere else to not irk this overprotective father in front of him.

"Alright then... I guess it's time I leave." he spoke and in the following moments, all the subordinates entered his shadow.

A void crack opened and Kahn disappeared inside it, his entire existence was erased from the spot.

Kahn chose to leave using Dimensional Void with the little bit of Space Force he had accumulated in this short time to remove his trace completely so no one could track his direction of retreat from here.

Winds howled strongly as Venessa bid farewell to Kahn with a stern expression, promising to herself that one day... she'd repay him for what he did for her today.

To her... this incident was something that had changed her entire life and shifted the direction of her fate.

This day also marked the end...

Of Kahn's journey in the Fire Empire.

Chapter 687 Peaceful Sanctuary

ONE WEEK LATER.

Inside a dark and damp cave, a man sat on top of a stone platform that was carved perfectly horizontally using a sword's slashing attack.

The man had his eyes closed as he was immersed in meditating under blanket of darkness.

Drip!

Drip!

The droplets dripped from the spiky ceiling in a natural basin of water, reverberating in the entire cave as it gave a sense of mystery to this whole scenario.

Swoosh!

A gust of wind entered through the entrance of the cave and in the following moment, a figure rose from the black shadows in front of the meditating man.

"Master... I have returned." said a man with shoulder-length hair and a black mask covering the left half of his face while his green eyes glowed.

The meditating man slowly opened his eyes and asked in a stern voice that resonated in the entire cave.

"What's the situation there?" queried the man in a dark gray longcoat attire with silver patterns on shoulders and sleeves.

One week ago, Kahn and the group had returned...

To No Man's Land.

The reason why he did so was because it was currently the only safe place for him.

"Give me the detailed report." spoke Kahn as he looked at Ronin who emerged from the shadows and knelt in front of him.

"Because of the recording of Celine Armitage killing Ezekiel, the situation took a dire turn.

To avoid a full-scale war, some of the clan members who were vying for the leader's position killed Celine.

Later, her head was offered to the Nabi clan as a form of apology. Yet the Nabi clan's leader, who is also Ezekiel's grandfather, did not accept it.

And since the Neutral Faction thought the Armitage Clan was intentionally hiding Tablet of Arcana, no one came to their aid and some tried to extort them in time of need.

But in the end, a great battle happened and more than 20 million soldiers from both sides died and finally, the clan leader of the Nabi clan killed the Patriarch of Armitage clan.

With the help of other clans from the Pureblood faction, they wiped out the entire Armitage Clan." he said and handed out a written report to Kahn.

"I see. So her entire clan of millions was massacred because of my machinations when I faked my death.

I should be feeling guilty. But for some reason...

I don't." said Kahn with a carefree expression as he shuffled through the pages of the report.

The noble factions and all of their clans were going to kill him to get their hands on Tablet of Arcana anyway. For the past 200 years, more than a billion innocent people of Verlassen fiefdom died because these clans had abandoned it, using the excuse of no Saint being able to enter there.

Thus Kahn faked his death and his last recording screwed over all the noble factions big time.

As for the fate of the Armitage clan and millions of lives lost... It wasn't like Kahn told them to massacre each other instead of peacefully resolving the situation.

So Kahn felt no responsibility since he was no longer much of a good guy with overwhelming moral values and guilty conscience at this point of his life.

"Ever since your supposed death... All the three noble factions have been ruined." he reported in a stoic voice.

"The 3 factions are now only a shadow of their past... all of them took a big hit to the point of no recovery.

Despite their power and connections... they couldn't deal with the consequences of your death that they allegedly caused.

There's a great change in their leadership as well. All the 3 Faction Leaders were forced to give up on their governmental positions as Chief Justice, Head of Ministry and General of the Military.

Majority of the nobles lost their position of authority in the government while many powerful clans fell." spoke Ronin with lifeless eyes as if this change in Rakos Empire didn't affect him in any way.

In the end, it was up to the public to cause a revolution.

Kahn's death greatly impacted the government structure and now it was undergoing a complete reformation that would take at least a decade to completely stabilize.

"What about my fiefdom?" asked Kahn in a serious tone.

"In Verlassen, Every major city has your statue in the main square. You're perceived as the fiefdom's hero even now. Many regions of the Rakos Empire treat you the same." explained Ronin.

"And what about those three?"

"Sir Albestros Winston has broken through to the Saint Rank nearly 4 months ago.

He is now the only Saint Rank Blacksmith of the Rakos Empire." reported Ronin with a pleased expression.

"This... does put a smile on my face."

"Mister Sirius Blake is controlling funds of both the government of Verlassen that was elected through public voting as you willed it in your last recording and he is also the main treasurer of Seven Deadly Sins organization that has expanded even in many parts of the empire now." said Ronin gleefully.

In a way, Kahn, Ronin and Ceril were the biggest masterminds and contributors behind creating the Seven Deadly Sins underworld organization.

And now their fruits of labor were growing up. With the three factions weakened, they had more room to expand and cement their own authority across the Rakos Empire.

"What about him?" asked Kahn curiously.

"Tobias has leveled up and he is now comparable to a 2nd stage saint.

As you ordered, he is protecting sir Albestros who lives just outside the borders of Verlassen fiefdom. But given your relationship and history with him, nobody has dared to make trouble for Sir Winston.

They all know that the moment they touch your former allies, the citizens of the empire would boycott whatever that's left of their clans and respective forces." iterated the Spirit Assassin general.

"In the past 1 and a half year... Tobias killed over 22 semi-saints from the 3 noble factions discreetly. All of them were the spies who infiltrated and tried to take over Verlassen after your death." spoke Ronin, the head of the Intelligence and Scouting department among Kahn's generals.

And finally, Kahn's expression turned solemn.

Ronin understood what this gaze meant and the following second, he took out a cube-shaped artifact.

Soon, the dark cave was filled with multicolored lights as a holographic image of a lean and beautiful figure donning a black and yellow battlemage outfit appeared at the center.

A hologram of a woman going through various documents placed on a wide table while the room around her was filled with books related to summoning magic, war tactics, ancient magic spells and formations came to be.

This woman who looked like she was going through some meticulous research and planning for something significant was none other than...

Kassandra Mikealson.

Chapter 688 Old Ties

After Kahn and the group returned to No Man's Land, he had 4 objectives in mind.

One was the temporary asylum he desperately needed.

Two, he wanted to check up on people he cared about that he had to leave behind in the Rakos Empire.

He sent Ronin who could turn into a spirit form to cross the border undetected and complete the other two objectives.

Third objective was to contact Tobias and get all the resources they had amassed such as SS Rank Mana Cores and Ores since the time they left.

Kahn and the group didn't need money... they needed these resources to level up and become stronger.

Since they were forced to leave in a hurry and didn't want to leave a trace behind, Kahn didn't go back to the Oakenshield company building and bring all the resources they had siphoned in the name of managing Throk's company.

The ones they had on hand would deplete in a few months given how their demand for resources rose with every level up by a huge margin, especially for Kahn who needed twice the World Energy to rank up to the next stage.

Ronin then handed out 300 space rings to Kahn in a box.

"These are 100 million SS Rank mana cores and ores that Tobias managed to gather till now." informed Ronin.

"Good. These should be enough for all of us for at least another year." spoke Kahn with a pleased countenance.

As for the 4th main objective... it was all about Cassandra.

"Lady Cassandra is now a 2nd stage saint herself and recently revealed her rank to the Mikealson clan.

I have followed her for a few days. As for her personality... She has changed a lot.

She can be said to have become very... Conniving." he said.

"Well, even this recording is enough to show those changes in her. That was expected after what the Mikealson clan and her parents did to her.

She also promised me that she won't be the same naive girl as before who lived for the sake of her clan and its prestige." spoke Kahn as he gazed yearningly at Cassandra's face in the hologram.

Kassandra now seemed more jaded, focused and cunning. Her entire character was reformed and from a protected and devoted daughter... she seemed like an ambitious woman who was no different than a Queen in the making.

She was no longer the type who only lived by morals and codes instilled in her since childhood. She no longer cared about her clan or family and even the blood ties meant nothing to her.

"There's a struggle going on for the position of the clan heiress between Cassandra and Veronica.

After Lady Cassandra revealed her ability to use magic again, the clan higher-ups became conflicted.

Veronica Mikealson, her cousin also became a first stage saint 2 months ago. So there's a lot of internal struggle within the Mikealson Clan." said Ronin.

"I see. Once she received the treatment as the heiress, Veronica also changed.

She was one of the people who abandoned Cassandra back when they basically sold her to me for the Tablet of Arcana.

Well... That's her battle to fight. Even if I could... Cassandra would never accept my help in that matter." smirked Kahn, feeling a bit proud to hear about Cassandra's progress and the necessary changes in her personality.

For some reason, she seemed even more beautiful and divine to Kahn, just looking at her projection made his heart race a bit faster.

5 minutes later...

"Did you deliver them?" he asked his left-hand man.

"Yes, master.

After meeting Tobias, I gave them enough resources that would help them become at least 5th stage saints. The strongest one among them was already comparable to a 3rd stage saint.

They could later replenish the resources from Tobias again." spoke Ronin.

The mysterious people Ronin was talking about were none other than the new legendary rank subordinates Kahn created.

Before leaving the Vulcan empire, Kahn asked Havi to give him the bodies of the Hero's Party members who were killed by Kahn's subordinates.

And because all of them had their cores intact, Kahn decided to create new subordinates to increase his firepower.

Using the 7 bodies, he created 3 new legendary rank subordinates that had the abilities and skills of the saint from Axel's group.

Kahn named them, killed them and then after they met the Skill Impartation criteria, he gave them weapons and armors as well as all the skills he had that suited their respective classes, skills and bodies.

Two of them were males while one was a female.

Using Edna, the Succubus Enchantress and Mikeala, the Tengu Archer... he created Agatha; A variant Summoner class that could provide support in battle greatly while acting as a long-range DPS at the same time.

Using Volka, the Wolfkin archer and Rodan, the Wind Elemental Dark Elf mage... Kahn created Jarvis.

Jarvis was a variant Archer-class individual with wind elemental skills that greatly aided his attack skills, he was a terrifying opponent. Only Oliver from his generals could best this guy and that too only because of his bloodline advantage of the Godbeast Roc.

And lastly... Using Tamak, the Halfbreed Orc Berserker and Garakh, the black snakekin Tank and finally... Azerog, the 4th stage saint trident warrior; Kahn created Riolet.

Riolet was the strongest in that group, already comparable to a 3rd stage saint because he was created using 3 saints with their cores during the Synthesis process.

Riolet had a variant Trident user class named Inquisitor.

He could use both Fire and Ice elements while fighting and provide group defense skills as well as have his own buff and berserker skills. Riolet even had his own domain where all his allies received a 50% buff in all their stats and skills while the enemies lost 30% of their total strength.

To Kahn, Riolet was like mixing Blackwall and Jugram into one guy.

Although none of these new subordinates had any ancient Godbeast bloodlines or possessed the abilities of unique monsters... Kahn had given them the majority of the skills suitable for their class that he possessed.

These 3 new creations did not dwarf his generals in terms of skills... just that they didn't have any monster form or transformation techniques.

As for their main purpose...

It was to protect Cassandra.

-----

When Ronin met Tobias and got the gist of things in Verlassen, he secretly departed to monitor Cassandra as Kahn had ordered.

Using his Phase Shift and Invisibility skills, infiltrating the Mikealson clan's castle was not a problem and he helped Agatha, Jarvis and Riolet to hide in Cassandra's shadow.

Although it looked like Kahn wasn't trusting Cassandra's abilities... he just couldn't help but worry about the only woman he had fallen in love with.

Kassandra's goals about exacting revenge on those within the Mikealson who sold her out like a cheap object were bound to make enemies way stronger than her while there was a risk of her being found out or facing danger any day.

Even with her transformed soul because of Kahn, it would take her a long time to become strong enough to achieve her revenge.

So Kahn sent these three new subordinates to guard Cassandra.

Besides, they were to show up only when she was in mortal danger and help her survive as well as escape.

Kahn cared about Cassandra but she also had her pride. So this was the only way he could ensure her safety while not being around her.

Also, if any of the three subordinates died, the System would alert him regardless of his location and he'd know that Cassandra was in danger.

She was on her own journey that Kahn couldn't accompany her on. But this way... he could also keep her safe without being near her.

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While Kahn was lost in thoughts...

Swoosh!

Omega entered the cave. The rest were on guard duty because Kahn and his 20 doppelgangers inside the Dimensional Domain were gathering enough space force to travel for a long journey.

"Master... it's time we leave." he said.

"Yes." replied Kahn solemnly.

Because of the matters in Rakos Empire, Kahn already waited for 7 days till Ronin was done with the job. And any further delay would risk their lives.

"Where are we going?" asked Omega in a curious tone.

Kahn had already decided which empire he'd go to the very moment he left the battlefield using the Dimensional Void in front of Havi and Venessa.

Kahn then replied in a tranquil voice as he determined their next safe haven.

"To somewhere they wouldn't expect us."

Chapter 689 Mysterious Pursuer

3 DAYS LATER.

A desolate and charred landscape of 50 kilometers with nothing but shattered ground and barren lands that carried the feeling of devastation was filled with strong gusts of winds that carried smoke and dirt.

This place was none other than the central region of the Eastern Grasslands where the battle between Kahn and the Hero of Fire took place a week ago.

Outside this perimeter, there was tight security and 4 warships guarding this perimeter while 20 thousand fireborne soldiers under the direct command of the imperial clan were stationed to monitor the borders.

Rustle!

Rustle!

But unbeknownst to everyone, suddenly a big whirlpool of black, white and green smoke appeared in the middle of the sky out of nowhere; taking the shape of a spherical cloud.



Swoosh!!

"Looks like I'm late."

A calm yet domineering voice appeared from the very spherical cloud that was moving like a blob of fog.

Schwoaa!!

The coalesced smoke quickly exploded and dispersed in the surrounding area and a tall figure was revealed.

A six feet tall handsome and mature silver-haired vampire with stark-white skin and glowing red eyes floated calmly in the air. The black and green armor made for the royalty adorned by this individual emitted the aura of Sovereignty and Power, enough to make anyone instantly bow before this mysterious figure.

"I guess I arrived before those people since I was already searching for him in the nearby empires. Good thing they need to complete the formalities as per the old rules before entering an empire.

Let's see what happened here first." spoke this vampire in an authoritative tone.

Snap!

He snapped his fingers and the very next moment, over 50 kilometers of the radius was instantly covered under a black and white dome that flickered and disappeared instantly.

To the outside world, this change was too fast and instantaneous to even notice the fact that the whole region was isolated under a domain.

To the guards and assassins, the battlefield looked just the same... shattered and destroyed everywhere. However, the inside world had turned completely opposite to their expectation.

Similar to the True Dimension... everything under the Vampire's domain had turned into either Black or White. But in this 50 kilometers circumference... there were 22 places where things turned into different colors.

Each color represented a particular individual or a being.

The vampire's body flickered and he appeared close to each distinct color that represented different auras and saints.

Soon, he started waving his hands in anticlockwise circular motion and then split that imaginary circle he made.

Within 10 seconds, half of this intangible circle turned white with a black dot in it while the other half turned black with a white dot.

This circle resembling the Yin-Yang pattern enlarged for 50 kilometers and quickly spread around all these colors and their respective locations.

"A fireborne who achieved the 2nd phase of primordial bloodline transformation. Even though he or she was only a first stage saint... this is a big accomplishment.

And I sense a bit of human bloodline in it as well.

Wait... I have seen this bloodline signature before.

Could it be one of her descendants?" he analyzed and asked himself.

The person he mentioned was indeed Venessa Hos Sigfreed.

Swoosh!

Swoosh!

One after another, he appeared at different places and checked the auras. He needed only a second to quickly form an opinion about what happened here and who partook in the battle in that particular area.

"Someone has tampered with this battlefield.

The aura of that 6th stage fireborne... that person's corpse was brought here only recently and the blood was spread in this region." spoke the vampire in a thoughtful voice.

The one he was thinking of was none other than the Pope whose corpse was later brought by Havi to fake some traces on the battlefield.

"A complete imperial fireborne bloodline. Means the Emperor was also here." he hypothesized.

Soon, he moved to all the separate battlegrounds where Kahn's subordinates and Hero's Party members fought individually.

"What the hell is this?!

A variant of Godbeast Fenrir, someone already comparable to a 4th stage saint with the abilities and skills of a Magic Swordsman?

That person has even acquired the Gravity Law!" exclaimed the vampire in disbelief.

Next, he moved to another battlefield.

"A primordial titan?!

A variant of the Godbeast Roc!

A True Demon bloodline individual with their own domain?

What the hell happened here? These people shouldn't even exist!" he clamored in bewilderment.

He had found the existence of Blackwall, Oliver and Jugram respectively.

And right when he checked Ceril's battlefield...

"An Undead with Darkness element... with the gifts from the Deity of Necromancy. How does this make any sense?" he wondered again.

"A variant of Spirit beings... he or she has strong control over souls. And they can shift through space or any object momentarily." he said with a grim expression as he analyzed the place where Ronin fought.

"This place... is filled with Life Force. As if it was the epicenter of all life in this area. If I'm not wrong... this person has traces of the Ashokvatika bloodline." he spoke in a solemn tone after investigating Armin's battlefield.

But after he moved to the final place... he was completely baffled because 5 different auras fought within a 15 kilometers radius and the highlight of the battlefield was the Soul Essence.

"The Hero of Fire used his Divine Weapon.

He also created some sort of blood monster.

And if my assumption is right... then he must have summoned a Deity at this place." said the vampire as he tracked Axel, Blood Titan and Kagutsuchi's presence.

He could even trace the soul essence to predict that Axel used Amaterasu during the battle.

And lastly... he moved to the enemy side that these 3 faced.

"Am I dreaming? A variant with the Dragon and the Basilisk bloodline?

What the hell is this creature?!" he clamored and facepalmed himself after detecting Rudra's bloodline.

But when he came to Kahn's aura...

"He has 3 divine abilities. And 6 Blessings from the War Deity.

I sense 4 gifts. One by the War Deity Kravel and 3 gifts granted by the Blacksmithing Deities Brokkr and Eitri as well.

Seriously... this guy has surprised me a lot." he spoke with a sense of relief.

But the next second, his countenance turned extremely ugly.

"BLOODY! FUCKING! MORON!!!" he shouted and grabbed his head, as if having a mental breakdown.

"Don't tell me... he chose the Synthesis divine ability and created those monsters.

That titan and the undead even have Pseudo-souls. That's not good." he spoke with an aghast expression.

He started pulling his hair in annoyance.

"Too many different abilities, skills and bloodlines. He must have absorbed abilities from other monsters and fighter classes. And then gave them to his monsters somehow.

He chose the damn Ability Absorption!" he raged and clenched his fists tightly.

And finally, he came next to the place on the ground where Kahn left the battlefield using the Dimensional Void crack.

At this point, his stark-white skin turned even whiter as if life was sucked out of him.

"Oye... someone please tell me that he didn't choose the Dimensional Law." said the vampire as if he was speaking his last words before death.

"I give up. The new Hero of Darkness is already a lost cause." spoke this vampire as his figure slumped in defeat.

"This fucking idiot!

Did he really think that his predecessors and those heroes of other gods in the past were braindead retards who couldn't see the potential of these divine abilities and chose to ignore them for small and short-term gains?" he asked himself with an infuriated voice.

"Ability Absorption made by the God of Life.

Synthesis made by the Goddess of Knowledge.

Dimensional Law made by the God of Space." his helplessness could be detected in his voice.

"There's a reason why no one ever chose these 3.

This moron chose the very 3 Divine Abilities that will kill him one day." said the vampire in a tone filled with disappointment.

"He should've at least chosen 2 divine abilities like Death Absolution and Abyss Sanctuary created by God of Darkness.

At this rate... How the hell will he ever become a Demi-God?!" he exclaimed in an exasperated voice.

"Killing the Demon God?

This imbecile won't be able to go toe to toe against even the Demon Emperor's 12 Rakshasa." he berated Kahn in his mind again.

"Why didn't God of Darkness tell him about the consequences of choosing these 3 divine abilities?

Did he intentionally hide this information because of what happened with the 8th Hero of Darkness?

Or does he have different plans of his own with this newly summoned hero?

This situation is turning into a bigger headache compared to other chosen heroes of this generation." he kept wondering because of the current situation.

"And he doesn't even have the Divine Weapon in his possession.

How the hell am I going to complete the mission given to me 300 years ago?" he complained to himself, losing his previous composure of a supreme being.

"Although he has 2 Divine Keys already... I'm sure he doesn't even know what to do with them.

No... I need to find him within the next 5 years. Otherwise, it will be too late and he will..." thought the vampire and completed his sentence with bitterness in mouth.

"Die a miserable death."

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Dozens of minutes passed as the vampire kept complaining, cursing his luck while also badmouthing Kahn for the choices he made.

But while he was letting out all the frustration... his expression turned serious as he sensed another powerful being coming towards him from 500 kilometers away.

Yet, this vampire didn't bother hiding his presence anymore. He deactivated the domain and calmly folded his arms together.

15 minutes later... Another being clad in burgundy-red armor while traveling atop a massive bird-like creature made of scarlet red fire, revealing a tremendously oppressive and domineering saint pressure, appeared in the sky.

"You took longer than I expected." spoke the vampire with a smile on his face.

"What the hell are you doing in my empire?!" asked Havi, his eyes full of battle intent and ready to fight.

He pointed out his legendary rank spear and spoke the name of the intruder in front of him...

"King Belmont."

Chapter 690 The Leverage

Havi appeared on the battlefield that was already turned to smithereens in just 20 minutes after this vampire secretly invaded the Vulcan empire.

"What the hell are you doing in my empire..."

King Belmont." said Havi who floated 3 kilometers away high in the air as his bird-like flying ship made of flames disappeared.

"Oh, so you do know about me. I'm honored." replied the vampire with a benign smile.

"Who wouldn't? There are only four 9th stage saints in this entire world known as 4 Sovereigns.

Only one of them is a vampire titled as the Revenant Sovereign.

And my imperial family's records also mentioned your name...

King Argos Belmont." said Havi with a solemn voice.

"Then you should know about our arrangement since you're the reigning emperor.

I'm here to honor the pact I have with your Imperial family." said the vampire as his long silver hair waved in the air because of strong gusts of wind.

"The pact... as per my knowledge... it wouldn't apply if the situation put the Vulcan empire at risk.

As you may have already heard... the current situation isn't just about the Hero of Fire or the imperial family but the entire Vulcan empire." iterated Havi.

"I do not expect you to honor it to that great extent. I too would like to avoid bloodshed even if it's your empire.

Just tell me..." spoke Argos Belmont, one of the 4 sovereigns.

"Where is the Hero of Darkness?" he asked in a dreary voice while exerting his saint pressure.

"I don't know. He ambushed and killed our Hero of Fire as well as the Pope.

He was already gone before I appeared here." replied Havi without changing his expression.

The being in front of him was a 9th-stage saint who also had a hidden relationship with his family since 200 years ago.

"Tch! Spare me the nonsense.

I know you staged the battlefield.

That 6th stage fireborne saint... your Pope from the Church of Hetrax, I assume; didn't die here but somewhere else.

And if I'm not wrong, one of your scions was involved in this battle. He or she fought against the Hero's Party members instead of the Hero of Darkness and his minions.

I have already seen through it all." replied the vampire king.

Havi was instantly shocked but controlled his expression, not showing surprise in the slightest.

"Do you want me to reveal this information to the other empires... or particularly to them when they reach here?" asked Argos with a slight grin, trying to blackmail the emperor.

[Dammit!! Why did a 9th stage saint out of all the people come here?!] cursed Havi in his mind.

At this moment, Havi's mind was conflicted. Because this was a being even he couldn't get rid of. On top of it... Havi still hadn't fully recovered.

Ever since Kahn left, Havi had been creating a trail in different parts of his empire to cover his tracks and also suppress the people from the church after forcefully assuming command.

But just this morning, a 9th stage saint suddenly appeared out of nowhere and found out about the real situation in just minutes.

"Previously, the nearby empires failed to find him since that group wasn't assembled ever since its founding 300 years ago.

I assume you also know that the 9th Hero of Darkness can travel using the True Dimension and that's probably why no one was able to track him till now.

But now that a chosen Hero was killed by him, all those people who had been hiding since 3 centuries will come out and band together again.

Among that group... They have a 7th stage saint from the Erdve Empire.

Space Magic and Space Law is their specialty. They will be able to detect that he has the Dimensional Law divine ability.

Once that happens... he will never be able to hide properly." spoke the vampire as his majestic aura spread in the surrounding 50 kilometers.

Both Argos and Havi were trying to talk it out instead of fighting. Because both of them knew that their involvement would be revealed if they fought now.

"So tell me, Havi Hos Sigfreed... will you tell me the whereabouts of the new Hero or not?" he questioned again, this time he held a big leverage over the emperor.

"What do you plan to do with him?" asked Havi, gritting his teeth while having a constricted expression.

"That's none of your concern. Just feel lucky that I'm not exposing you.

I will also erase his tracks completely and leave a trail that couldn't be seen through.

Even that 7th stage saint from the Empire of Space won't be able to track him." said Argos nonchalantly.

However, Havi's countenance turned grim.

"I gave him my word that I will help to cover up for him.

So go and threaten someone else. I'm the kind who doesn't betray those I'm indebted to." said Havi in a firm tone.

His saint pressure also rose as Havi prepared himself to use his bloodline to fight.

But instead of responding to this challenge...

"Arrssh... you're much ruder and hot-blooded than your grandmother. Looks like your entire family is filled with thick-skulled idiots." said Argos in an annoyed tone.

Havi also had a surprised expression after hearing this.

"You knew her?" he queried in a curious voice.

"Of course I did.

I trained her, you ignorant ingrate.

I have this pact with your imperial family because I groomed her to become the Empress and also solved the biggest drawback of your primordial bloodline." said Argos, the vampire king as if he was greatly wronged.

"How do you think your family knows about my existence when other empires had no clue about me until 50 years ago?" he rebuked Havi.

"Besides... Are you crazy?

Why do you want to hasten your death by fighting me in that condition?" he questioned in an overbearing voice.

"Wh.. What do you mean?" queried Havi with a somber voice.

"You know what I mean. The way your bloodline is burning itself... You'll die in 15 years." said the Vampire.

"So tell me, do you want to become my enemy or do you and the Vulcan empire want to become..." spoke Argos as he made a proposition.

"My biggest Ally."