

# Turning

## - Chapter 1

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"Listen, criminal Yudrain Aile."

An otherworldly voice echoed above his head.

"You are a criminal who forgot your duties and responsibilities as the commander of the cavalry, and dared to conspire with an absurd claim that you acted for the sake of the world. You trespassed into the forbidden sanctuary, attempting to steal the World Sphere. Do you acknowledge your involvement in the assassination of Duke of Peletta nine years ago, the destruction of the Pearl Tower seven years ago, the Red Field Rebellion five years ago, and countless other incidents that cannot be enumerated? When the truth was revealed, you shamelessly attempted to flee by joining forces with other countries."

Yuder smirked bitterly to himself. The litany of accusations made him sound like a great criminal to be remembered in history.

Was there anyone present who truly wanted to know the truth, instead of just repeating predetermined answers?

What they wanted to believe was not the unsettling reality that the world might be on the brink of collapse, but rather that everything would be resolved if they killed the humble commoner-born, half-baked Omega who dared to conspire against them.

For years, Yuder had wandered the world, trying to find someone who would truly listen and believe him. Many signs indicated that something bad was about to happen in this world.

Even Yuder couldn't fathom the magnitude of what was slowly approaching, but no one would listen to him.

Yuder, with his eccentric and sharp personality, had no family or connections and kept drifting from place to place. He was deemed mad and completely isolated.

Even now, he was alone.

If only he had gone when the neighboring empire had beckoned, perhaps he wouldn't have ended up like this. With his remaining eye, Yuder looked towards the imperial throne on the distant platform.

The emperor's seat was empty in his blurred vision. The emperor, who once whispered that he relied only on Yuder instead of his ministers, and ordered many tasks that couldn't be handled publicly, had turned his back on Yuder after his arrest.

Instead, a man stood beside the throne, wielding a black thorn-wood staff embedded with red magic stones.

Not long ago, that staff belonged to Yuder. The cavalry commander's uniform he wore, and even the authority to stand next to the throne, were all once Yuder's.

At one time, the man had been Yuder's subordinate. The person who once dared not even meet Yuder's eyes had now usurped his position. The way he held the staff was quite arrogant.

Who was there to blame now?

In retrospect, he had lost too much under the pretense of serving the greater good. He thought he would have no regrets even when facing death, but standing before it, he felt otherwise. Many things swirled chaotically in his mind.

The stubbornness and pride that had sustained him.

The countless tasks he still had to do.

The unanswered questions.

Those who had departed before him.

The future after his disappearance.

And... the face of someone he had forcibly suppressed all this time.

"..."

"There had never been anyone as wicked as this criminal in history. Despite committing a heinous crime of attempting to use the emperor's trust and the entire empire for his benefit, the criminal showed no remorse. The emperor had fallen ill from the shock of elevating someone who knew neither honor nor responsibility to a position they did not deserve. Thus, a fitting punishment for the weight of his crimes was death, and today, at this very spot, he would be executed by beheading. Long live the emperor's eternal blessings! That is all!"

A cheer rang out as flower petals filled the air. Yuder was dragged by the soldiers and raised onto the high altar.

Atop the altar, specially constructed for the execution of the high criminal, a massive guillotine with a gleaming blue blade was positioned so that everyone could witness the beheading.

Due to the prolonged torture, Yuder's battered body slumped weakly beneath the blade. The unfamiliar pain, which he rarely felt while surrounded by the ever-obedient energy before the destruction of the mana hole, became unbearable to breathe. Yuder gasped for air as his vision blurred.

Ordinarily, criminals sentenced to death were given an opportunity to leave last words, but of course, Yuder was not granted such a chance. Yuder looked up at the sky, which was so blue that it stung his eyes.

It was strange. He should have felt bitter enough to cry tears of blood, but he didn't feel all that bad. The thought of soon being liberated from all these tedious affairs was even somewhat refreshing.

Indeed, what could be more ridiculous than worrying about the future when one was about to die and vanish?

It was they, not Yuder, who had ignored the bloodstained warning.

Ah, right. The truth was that he had been tired all along...

The moment he realized this, the blade fell from above.

Death was neither sweet nor painful.

Yuder was born in a small village in the corner of the Orr Empire.

Raised under the care of his great-grandfather after losing both parents, Yuder was left alone when his great-grandfather passed away when he was 13. From then on, he was responsible for himself, gathering and selling wood and medicinal herbs to make ends meet.

A change occurred in his life when he turned 18, after a massive Red Stone fell from the sky, astonishing the entire world.

Fortunately, the stone had landed in the middle of a mountain range in the central part of the Orr Empire where no one lived. In an instant, it turned the world upside down and filled it with a strange energy.

From that day on, some ordinary people began to awaken to strange powers. A child who had never held a sword could cleave rocks with a single branch, and an ordinary village maiden could kill an entire group of monsters attacking the village with a flick of her finger.

At the core of all these powers was the strange energy that filled the world when the Red Stone fell.

Unable to understand the situation, people believed that the energy that filled the world was a type of mana.

Mana had existed in the world before, but back then, only a very small number of talented individuals could feel and use it after a very long period of training. The difference now was that this mana was available to many more people.

There had been few in history, such as mages who had studied for decades in the tower or knights who could wield sword qi after arduous training, who belonged to that tiny minority.

However, those who had newly awakened their power did not have to exert any effort to use their abilities, regardless of age or gender. As they had been able to use their hands and feet from birth, so too were their powers.

People were greatly shocked by the fact that merely awakening their power enabled them to wield formidable strength from the outset.

As a result, the world's structure, which had remained unchanged for over a thousand years, began to shift. A tense atmosphere hung between those who

had held power and authority until then and those who had newly acquired their powers- the Awakeners.

As time went on and it was revealed that those with power could advance beyond their initial awakening level if they met certain conditions, the tension only escalated.

Leaders of various countries were faced with the dilemma of how to handle these newly empowered individuals.

The Orr Empire, where Yuder had lived, was one of the places that had chosen to establish a new organization by gathering those with power through a nationwide announcement.

[All those with power, come to the capital where the Imperial Palace is located. If you can prove the truth of your power and swear to use it only for the empire and the emperor, you will be granted the right to join the Cavalry!]

The news spread like wildfire, reaching even the secluded mountain village where Yuder lived alone.

Yuder was among those who had gained strange powers after the fall of the Red Stone.

One day, he suddenly found himself able to cut trees without an axe. He could cross rivers without getting his feet wet. He could light fires in his stove without kindling and could attack beasts and monsters by moving stones with just a finger.

However, he never thought of showing off his powers to others. He had believed that he would live alone in the small cabin where he had spent his entire life with his grandfather.

But when he heard the news while selling wood in the market, his heart was moved. The Imperial Palace was gathering those with power – an opportunity that ordinary commoners could never dream of.

His grandfather had left a will advising him not to be greedy, but Yuder was still young at the time. To him, who had not yet outgrown his boyishness, the announcement seemed like a chance for dazzling success and thrilling adventures.

He did not yet know that everything comes with a price, and that he was not well-suited for such pursuits.

Yuder packed his belongings and left his home. If he failed to join the Cavalry, he planned to return home immediately.

Thus, in the capital he visited for the first time, he struggled to find the shabbiest accommodation. In that lodging, which had a mismatched name like "Giant's Sleep" and seemed to be on the verge of collapsing, Yuder, who should have been beheaded by the guillotine, opened his eyes again.

"...What on earth is going on?"

No matter how much he stared into the dirty, worn-out mirror, his reflection did not change at all. Yuder gazed strangely at his own image in the mirror.

A face that still held traces of youth. Dark hair that ominously covered his forehead. The neck that should have been severed was unblemished, without a single scratch.

The shoddy clothing hastily made from coarse fabric and the oversized shoes that made walking uncomfortable were all too real. Wherever he looked, he saw his appearance from eleven years ago, when he first left his home and came to the capital.