

Turning 44

Chapter 44

"Why then, do you keep that fact a secret? There's no need to hide it, is there?"

"I suppose so. But it's a power that, when revealed, wouldn't bring much good. It's as if it might as well not exist. I think it's better to believe it doesn't from the start."

At such a seemingly jesting response, Yuder blinked in puzzlement, to which Kishiar responded with a smile.

"Seeing you risk your life and use your strength to save others time and time again is what made me decide to use this power. If it were revealed that I've used it, my adjutant Nathan would be furious. He might even forbid me from going out at night. So, keep it a secret, will you? Let it be our little pact."

Yuder stared at Kishiar's smile, unable to discern what was truth and what was deception.

Could someone truly exist who, for such a simple reason, wouldn't use their healing power until the moment of their death? But he couldn't ask the Kishiar of the past for an answer.

"...I understand. But, may I ask one more thing?"

"Sure, as long as it's not whether I possess the power of the awakened, the divine power, and the power accumulated as a knight."

Yuder was momentarily lost for words. Kishiar smiled, looking like a boy who had successfully played a fun prank.

"You're the only one in this place who knows that I was chosen by the divine sword. I guessed you'd have questions as soon as you saw me use divine power."

Kishiar's red eyes, like a sun illuminating all, seemed to read everything in a person's mind. His nonchalance, despite seemingly having figured out Yuder's thoughts yet not hinting at it until now, was masterful.

"...Is that possible?"

Yuder asked softly, deliberately omitting the subject 'the three powers'. Though his comrades had left and there was no one within earshot, one could never be too sure.

"Well, what do you think?"

"If it's true, then what in the world could harm you?"

That is, assuming he deliberately chose not to dodge an incoming attack.

"...Even if anyone charges at you, they wouldn't stand a chance."

Kishiar, adept at reading people's intentions, couldn't discern the fleeting memories of the past that had momentarily flickered in Yuder's dark eyes.

"Haha, you're more skilled at flattery than I thought. I never would've guessed, considering you never seemed the type to say things just to please."

"I merely stated the truth."

"Yes, your words might indeed be true. But, what does it matter?"

A strange look briefly flitted over his red eyes.

"No matter what I possess, it's meaningless to me. What I truly need isn't anything like that."

His words suggested that all of it was insignificant. Yuder was once again at a loss for words.

Such things?

To belittle the incredible notion of a single human possessing the power of an Awakener, divine power, and aura...

The Kishiar he had met upon returning to the past was even more mysterious and unfathomable than the one he remembered. Even Yuder, who had experienced all sorts of things and grown over the past decade, couldn't clearly comprehend him.

"Then, what do you believe you need, sir?"

"Do you want to know that?"

The once youthful, carefree, and world-weary energy in Kishiar's gaze vanished in an instant. He once again adopted the leisurely and languid countenance of a duke, his eyes gently curving.

"Accept the position of Cavalry assistant, then."

"Assistant... please wait a moment. There's no such position, is there?"

Indeed, no such position existed in the past. Kishiar had delegated all assistant duties to his adjutant, Nathan Zuckerman. Anything relating to the Cavalry was entrusted to the deputy commanders, including Yuder. It had always been sufficient. But now, a position as Cavalry Assistant?

"Just make one. It seems like you're reluctant to take on the role of Deputy Commander, so I thought about creating a comfortable position that no one would be responsible for."

Kishiar responded in a smooth tone, as if he had thought of this all along.

"The Cavalry has been established not too long ago, so it should be possible to create such a position. I'm very fortunate."

"..."

"So, you don't like this idea either?"

Kishiar's hand, radiating a white light, tightened its grip on Yuder's hand. With his treatment not yet complete, Yuder had no choice but to neither resist nor flee.

Yuder shot a somewhat disrespectful look at the man before him, who seemed to thoroughly enjoy seeing him in a predicament.

"Why do you value me so highly?"

"Isn't it obvious? Your determination to repay those who threaten your life with their own lives, your excellent judgement to protect others at the cost of your own safety. Your combat skills are as proficient as a knight who's been through countless battlefields. If I don't value you highly, then who should I value?"

"I'm not the only one like that. Everyone else was the same."

"The other members did very well too. But the calmness you showed is something that can't be acquired through just a few months of training. I highly regard that."

The light flowing from Kishiar's hand stopped. However, he still held Yuder's hand. In his grip, a certain determination could be sensed. Looking down at the hand held by Kishiar, Yuder opened his mouth.

"If I refuse again..."

"Then I will create the position of Cavalry Training Officer."

Even if he refused that offer, another similar one would follow.

Yuder realized that Kishiar had already made up his mind. When he had suggested it before, it felt somewhat tentative, but this time was different. As Yuder had rejoined the Cavalry, there were limits to refusing the Commander's will. Even more so if it was sincere.

"I understand."

In the end, Yuder nodded.

"You've made a wise decision. We'll discuss the details when we return."

Kishiar released his grip with a smile.

"...Hm?"

However, a moment later, he opened his eyes wide in rare surprise, his face a picture of confusion. Yuder also felt a sense of bewilderment.

"This is..."

The bruise on the back of his hand, which should have completely healed by now, hadn't vanished entirely. It had only shrunk to its original small size, a small, dark red spot remaining on the skin. The two fell silent, looking at the spot.

"...It wasn't an ordinary injury."

Kishiar's eyes narrowed.

"Tell me exactly how you got hurt, Yuder Aile."

There was no need to hide the reason for his injury. Yuder looked at his hand and opened his mouth.

"When the Gakane's shadow clone touched the Red Stone and exploded yesterday, I was a bit late in putting up the barrier. I think it's a trace of the energy from the stone that pierced through my hand."

"Energy from the stone?"

Kishiar furrowed his eyebrows as he looked at the box placed at Yuder's feet. His eyes seemed to race with countless thoughts in an instant.

"So... there's no pain?"

"Yes."

There was no pain even when the bruise grew. It was the same now. Yuder clenched and unclenched his fist lightly, feeling a strange sensation.

"That's fortunate at least. But if anything feels off, report it immediately. We will need to investigate the injury once we return."

"Understood. I will also check if the other comrades have similar injuries."

"Commander, Yuder! What happened inside? General Gino is worried."

Just then, Gakane's voice rang out. Kishiar and Yuder briefly met each other's gaze before rushing out of the mansion.

Outside the mansion were the Cavalry members, General Gino, the Peletta Knights who had rushed here without sleep, and the soldiers. General Gino and the Peletta Knights were able to stand at a similar distance as the Cavalry members, but others could not. Faces staring from afar were full of confusion.

Despite having protected the place for two years, the Imperial Army was of no help when those coveting the Red Stone infiltrated.

It was fortunate that Kishiar was unharmed; otherwise, it would have been a great calamity. Naturally, General Gino, who led them, didn't look well either.

"I'm glad to see Your Highness unharmed. However, the fact that those beasts could reach this place is my responsibility. It's deeply shameful. Now that they're all dead, what should we do?"

"I haven't been hurt at all, so don't worry, General. However, since the dead had been hiding around here for days, release your soldiers to search the vicinity immediately, and inform me as soon as you find anything."

"Understood."

General Gino turned around and immediately began giving orders to his soldiers loudly.

After most of the soldiers quickly disappeared, Kishiar called the general closer and said he would be leaving soon.

Having seen the audacious moves of the enemy, General Gino didn't stop Kishiar. He immediately called one of the soldiers who remained at his side.

"Go and fetch the Misty Wind Horses right away."

Despite it being late at night, preparations for departure were made in an instant. Kishiar, having draped a long cloak to cover his uniform, received the box containing the Red Stone from Yuder.

His figure, lightly leaping onto the Misty Wind Horse and grabbing the reins, resembled a manifestation of the Sun God who had emerged to illuminate the darkness.

"I will lead the way. The Cavalry members will follow right behind, and the Knights will follow as closely as possible. We will run without rest, so be careful not to lose your way."

"Understood!"