

## Turning 46

### Chapter 46

"Was its name the Cavalry?"

"I believe so. Kiolle has been making quite a fuss about them."

The old man shook his head slowly, his brow furrowing.

"My ears are still ringing."

"Ah, due to the incident where he was humiliated by a commoner not long ago."

"I can't believe such a foolish one came from our house. We put him in the knight's order to gain some prestige, but instead of behaving, he came back humiliated by a mere commoner. It's a worry. He still doesn't understand what he did wrong."

"Don't be too upset, Duke Diarca. Not all children can be exceptional."

Upon hearing the young crown prince's cool comfort, the old man, Duke Diarca, smiled.

"That's true. It seems that all the outstanding abilities that run in our blood have been granted to you, Your Highness."

"You flatter me too much."

They returned their focus to the game. At first, the crown prince's pieces seemed to be simply avoiding those of the old man. But as time passed, surprisingly, the fleeing pieces began to knock down the old man's, starting to gain the upper hand. What seemed like retreat was, in fact, a meticulous strategy.

In the end, the game concluded with the crown prince's victory. The crown prince spoke as he toppled the last piece the duke had placed.

"His Majesty will bestow rewards upon Duke Peletta and his subordinates this time."

"To make a name for themselves throughout the continent, that would be best."

"I'm very curious about what grand game they plan to play, investing so much effort. My expectations are high."

"Is that all you're curious about? Aren't you finally going to see the famous stone? That's what I'm most curious about."

At the duke's words, the crown prince simply grinned.

"Yes, everyone will see it soon."

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Duke Kishiar La Orr of Peletta returned to the capital, having successfully completed the secret mission assigned by the emperor. As his departure and return were both quiet, almost no one knew he had left his post.

Only Kishiar and those who journeyed with him felt a mix of emotions as they entered the capital. The worrying times, fearing someone might target the Red Stone before they returned to the capital, were over.

"You all did well."

Upon reaching the front of the Cavalry barracks, Kishiar dismounted and briefly praised everyone.

"It was a difficult journey, but thanks to you all, who willingly followed me, we were able to return safely. Neither I nor His Majesty will ever forget your hard work. As it's late, go rest now. After breakfast tomorrow, come up to where I'm staying."

The Peletta knights, who had kept a respectful distance due to the box containing the Red Stone, saluted with emotional faces. The Cavalry members' faces showed a mix of fatigue and pride.

Kishiar turned his head to look at the entrance of the quarters. His adjutant, Nathan Zuckerman, was already there. His gaze lingered on the small box in Kishiar's hand, clearly guessing what it contained.

"Nathan. We need to return the Misty Wind Horse, call someone."

"Understood."

"And after that....."

Yuder left behind the brief conversation that Kishiar was having with his lieutenant and headed into the quarters with his fellow Cavalry members.

The inside of the quarters, now shrouded in darkness, was not too dark, thankfully, thanks to the regular placement of glowstones. During the day, these stones looked ordinary, but at night, they shone as if a lamp had been lit. They were so expensive that even a well-off household could only afford a few.

That such stones were generously embedded throughout the quarters was testament to how highly Kishiar regarded his Cavalry.

"I'm really tired from riding non-stop. I want to go wash up and sleep right away."

"Me too. I hope they've cleaned while we were away."

The Eldore siblings yawned and chatted quietly. Nearby, Kanna was discussing with Gakane how it still felt like a dream that their mission had ended successfully. Everyone was in a peaceful mood with their tension relieved, but only Yuder was engulfed in deep silence.

However, the other members did not find his introspective demeanor odd, as he had often been lost in thought before. They well knew the remarkable things he had accomplished during this mission.

"Yuder, see you tomorrow."

"Rest well, and don't think too much."

Yuder nodded at his colleagues' greetings and entered his room. The room, designated for one person, was small, but it had everything he needed.

However, his gaze did not linger on the cleanly swept room, even though it had been cleaned in his absence. No sooner had Yuder placed his bag down and sat on the bed, than he rolled up his sleeve to inspect his hand.

'Still the same.'

The purple spot, which had not completely disappeared even after receiving Kishiar's divine power healing, had neither grown nor shrunk during his journey here. But Yuder could not be reassured. Despite his continuous pondering on the way, he could not figure out why the spot hadn't completely disappeared.

While returning, he had pulled his sleeve or crossed his arms to hide it from anyone's view. If someone noticed the bruise-like spot that inexplicably grew or shrank, it would attract unnecessary attention.

It was an injury sustained during a crucial secret mission they had sworn not to mention. To avoid any unnecessary trouble, he thought it would be best to get a separate glove.

'And I need to find out if there are similar curses or diseases like this spot, and if they can be cured.'

There had been many things he had planned to look into once he returned to the capital, but the spot had suddenly changed the priorities. He didn't like it, but he had no choice. If his body wasn't well, he wouldn't be able to do anything.

Yuder finally stopped his worries after thinking up to this point. The accumulated fatigue from his long journey without proper rest surged in like a burst dam.

He barely managed to undress and prepare for bed before collapsing onto it. Sleep washed over him as if it had been waiting.

'...I have no regrets. Just a little... disappointed.'

His voice held no strength, yet it sounded exceedingly elegant. Yuder blinked blankly. Through his blurred vision, he saw a figure.

A man sitting upright at a beautifully carved desk, wearing a faint smile. Under his faded golden hair, his darkened red eyes shimmered.

Yuder, upon seeing that smile, recognized who the man was, and when this scene took place.

The man was Kishiar La Orr, as he appeared on the day of his death at the Duke's mansion in Peletta.

The desk in front of him was carved from a unique wood that only grew in his territory of Peletta, as was the chair.

The rugged yet stylish stone fireplace was completely empty and incredibly dark, as though it hadn't been used in a long time. The only thing in that space that hadn't lost its light was the divine sword, which lay atop a transparent scabbard on the fireplace.

Everything was as vivid as reality, but it was undoubtedly a dream. An old memory was unfolding once again, of its own accord. Even though he was aware of this, Yuder couldn't escape from the dream.

Was this a kind of punishment, to have to watch this nightmare until the end once it had begun? He wasn't pleased, but there was nothing he could do about it. Yuder decided to hope that it would end quickly. According to his memory, he was about to swing his hand, and everything would end.

But then,

"What are you saying?"

Yuder was taken aback by the sound of his own voice in the next moment.

What on earth was happening? He had no memory of giving such a response. Unaware of Yuder's confusion, Kishiar opened his mouth again.

"...I wonder where it all went wrong. Thinking about it, it seems like it was when we retrieved the Red Stone."

"..."

"Yes... That's right. It must have been then that everything started going wrong. But even knowing that, I couldn't stop it. Because I had no other choice."

In Yuder's memory, Kishiar hadn't said anything like that as he faced death. Amidst the immense confusion, Kishiar's words seemed to continue, teetering on the brink of stopping.

"If the injury I sustained from touching that stone hadn't shattered my vessel....."

"..."

Yuder awoke with a start, drenched in cold sweat.

The familiar ceiling of his quarters greeted him. He had finally woken from his dream. However, he wasn't able to calm down easily and spent quite some time panting heavily. It was no wonder why.

In the dream, Kishiar and Yuder had a conversation that was not in the original memory.

And it was precisely about the retrieval of the Red Stone.

It felt too real to be simply a dream mixed with delusions. It felt so real that it seemed as if his original memory was the one that was wrong.

Holding his throbbing head, Yuder recalled the words that Kishiar had said in the dream. He was saying that everything went wrong from the injury he got when retrieving the Red Stone.

That was something that hadn't happened in reality. Currently, the one injured by the red stone was Yuder. He let out a long sigh while looking at the unchanging spot on the back of his hand.

'I should consider the possibility that what I thought I remembered from that day might not be the complete memory.'