

# Turning

## Chapter 5

"I was actually quite nervous."

"...Not me. I'm fine."

He had already experienced it once, and the result was obvious. Why would he be nervous? However, he couldn't say that, so he held his tongue.

"You're a really unpredictable person. More than anyone I've seen... I think you'd pass the Cavalry test right away."

"Yeah. That's right. I'll pass."

At Yuder's response, Gakane showed a momentarily dumbfounded expression. Then, he couldn't help but burst into laughter.

"Pffft. What's that? Do you have the ability to see the future? Then what about me? What do you think I'll be like?"

"I don't have the ability to see the future, but I think you'll pass as well."

Gakane laughed even louder.

"Gosh, saying such pleasant things with that expression. Thanks."

Although he thought Yuder's words were empty, Yuder was actually telling the truth. Gakane would definitely pass and join the Cavalry.

He wanted to say something more to Yuder, but a voice called Yuder from inside, so he couldn't.

"Alright. Go register. I'll wait for you by the exit."

Yuder wanted to tell him not to wait, but Gakane turned away more quickly. Yuder entered the Blue Crown. The registration would be over soon. The important thing was the test that would take place after registration.

Due to the large number of people wanting to join the Cavalry, the tests were not all held on the same day. The tests were conducted over three days within the Imperial Knight's compound for those who had completed registration, and the results were determined immediately after the tests were finished.

Yuder was scheduled to take the test on the last day, while Gakane took the test on the day before.

Judging by his absence from the inn, Gakane had passed, just as before. Yuder, carrying a simple bag on his shoulder, left the inn.

The Imperial Knight's compound, where the tests were held, was not far from the inn. The training ground within the compound, surrounded by several tall buildings, was the location for the Cavalry's entrance exam.

Yuder noticed some familiar faces among the tense expressions of the people circling the buildings. They were the faces of those who would pass the tests.

"Number 423, it's your turn!"

Many people were called into the building. Now it was Yuder's turn. He leisurely walked into the building, which was unchanged from his memories.

Though now the test was barely held by borrowing one of the Imperial Knight's training grounds, a few years later, the positions of the Imperial Knights and the Cavalry would be completely reversed.

Ordinary people, who made up most of the knights, could not beat the Awakeners with innate talents. The Cavalry, gaining the emperor's trust, thrived and eventually took over half of the buildings that once belonged to the Imperial Knights, as well as half of the newly built buildings, displaying their prestige.

"Number 423."

Following the guide into the examination room, Yuder faced the five examiners. He hadn't known in the past, but now he could recognize most of their positions. From the left, they were the deputy commander of the Imperial Knights, the assistant of Chancellor Mooker, the representative mage sent from the Pearl Tower, a court mage, and...

Upon seeing the man sitting on the far right, Yuder's eyes changed. Unlike the others, the man wore plain clothes with no discernible features indicating his position, giving off an ordinary impression.

The other participants didn't seem to notice anything unusual about the man, but Yuder was different.

The man's face was an elaborate fake, meticulously crafted with magic. Yuder had seen that deliberately plain face a long time ago, designed not to be remembered.

'Could it be that face?'

"Number 423. You wrote quite an impressive description in the ability section, is it all true?"

Yuder's attention remained on the man on the right when a sharp question snapped him out of it. The mage of the Pearl Tower was shaking Yuder's application form, his face deeply furrowed.

"You can imbue a sword with both fire and water? In my entire life, I've never heard such a preposterous claim."

They had said the same thing about Yuder's application in the past. He had been angered back then, but not anymore. He fully understood why they reacted that way.

Before the Awakeners appeared, magic was something very difficult to master; one could barely accumulate mana in their body after rigorous training and use it through a complicated process. Using magic even once was extremely cautious and challenging.

As a result, most mages delved into mastering only one type of magic, the easiest to use, to achieve success quickly.

Fire magic users focused solely on fire magic, while water magic users focused solely on water magic – this had become a standard practice for over a thousand years.

Learning magic of different attributes simultaneously took too long to become accustomed to manipulating mana, and more importantly, the mana accumulated in the body could clash, posing a severe risk.

Thus, a mage using more than one type of magic was almost considered a far-fetched story found only in novels.

Of course, that was the story before the Awakeners appeared.

Among those who had awakened with the power of the Red Stone, many could handle multiple attributes of magic in various ways. While their proficiency and power varied greatly, it was undoubtedly a phenomenon that shattered existing common sense.

Among them, Yuder was the best of the best. He could freely manipulate all attributes, imbuing any weapon he touched with his power, making it even stronger. Imbuing a sword with attributes was nothing to him.

'In truth, even reporting that I can only handle fire and water is an understatement.'

In the past, he had merely claimed to be able to handle attributes but had not mentioned imbuing them into a sword. It was only after several advancements that he discovered his ability to imbue weapons with attributes.

If he had reported his full powers, no one would have believed him, and he would have been disqualified at the application stage. Some reduction was necessary, but he did not want to follow the same path as before.

The result of his dilemma was this. Yuder believed that by showing this level of skill, it would be easier for him to achieve his goal by immediately standing out after being accepted into the Cavalry.

As Yuder showed no reaction to the mage's anger, the deputy commander of the Imperial Knights, who had been sitting to the left, stroked his beard and spoke up.

"Arguing amongst ourselves won't get us anywhere before we see it for ourselves, will it? So, if what you say is true, show us. Make us believe, convincingly."

"I understand."

Yuder looked around. The test rules prohibited bringing personal weapons, so he was empty-handed. However, not far away, there were a few blunt practice

swords and tools provided for the test takers. Without hesitation, he walked over and picked up a sword.

"Hmm."

Though it was a practice sword, it was so heavy that an ordinary person would never be able to hold it. The examiners' expressions changed as Yuder, whose arm didn't seem particularly muscular, lifted the sword as if it were a mere branch.

Getting the reaction he had hoped for, Yuder stood with the sword in a place where the examiners could see him well. He could hold the sword lightly because he was an ability user who could manipulate the forces of nature at will.

Not only the five main elements, but anything that came from nature could be moved by Yuder as if it were his own limb. Most weapons were made of iron, so it was only natural.

As a result, when he was captured and tortured, he had been disassembled, first by piercing the mana hole beneath his navel, the most significant weak point and vital spot for an Awakener to use their power.

Even when he was about to die, his arms and legs were crushed, and he was tied up with ropes made from monster tendons, which were not natural existences.

Yet, he survived until the day of his execution, simply because he was an Awakener, nothing more, nothing less.

But now, Yuder's mana hole was perfectly fine, and his physical condition was excellent. The people in front of him still didn't know what an Awakener was capable of.

They merely watched, not knowing what Yuder could do with the blunt practice sword he held.

'Of course, I only plan to show them an appropriate level of skill for now...'

He had no desire to waste time in the world he had finally returned to. Yuder wanted to pass the test by leaving a good impression on the examiners, while also not showing his full strength.

As he thought this far, Yuder's gaze briefly drifted back to the man sitting on the far right, wearing the ordinary fake face.

"...I'll begin now."

Yuder raised the sword. As the examiners' gazes were all fixed on the tip of the sword, he slowly gathered energy. Although it felt like a long time since he had last done this, the method was as natural as breathing and imprinted in his mind, so he wasn't confused at all.

He grasped the energy flowing around him. Then, he wished to transform it into fire and applied it to the tip of the sword he was holding. It was challenging to explain how natural it was for Yuder, but that was roughly the process.

In an instant, the blade was enveloped in flames, making a crackling sound. The heat was much hotter and redder than usual, so the examiners could feel that it was genuine fire.

Yuder slowly swung the sword down from top to bottom. It might have looked simple, but the power behind it was far from insignificant.

As sparks fell with the sound of the wind being cut, several examiners jumped in surprise, retreating backward in their chairs.