

Turning 55

Chapter 55

"Do as you will."

In his previous life, there were many who vowed to remember the name of Yuder. However, none among them could lay a finger on him.

"That... that man until the end... Master! Please wait!"

The servant cried out with a horrified face and then dashed after the Count, who had turned his body, stirring up a cold breeze, towards the palace interior. Those who had been spectating lost interest and dispersed when Yuder showed no reaction.

However, a few of them remained, observing Yuder and Kanna with interest. An old man who approached Yuder was among them.

"Do you know this? The Count Gallon's family has held their title for seven generations, and their main house is within the fourth wall, powerful enough to be in the inner sector."

Kanna, who was behind Yuder, stiffened. A weak-looking young man, seemingly accompanying the old man, was watching them, not knowing what to do. Yuder gazed at the old man's face for a moment, then slowly smiled.

"And what does that have to do with me?"

"You're not afraid of making a powerful enemy by hiding your comrade?"

"If I were to put it bluntly, I'd say it's the other way around."

"The other way around?"

The old man, his long white beard giving him an imposing air, evoked the image of a dignified noble family head in his traditional attire. Anyone else might have been intimidated by his presence, but there was no change in Yuder's expression.

"You see, he has made a formidable enemy in me."

"Ha! Such confidence. May I ask what gives you the nerve to say such a thing?"

Why wouldn't he? Yuder opened his mouth with a cool smile.

"Of course, it's the power I possess."

"..."

The old man's eyebrows twitched. A moment later, he burst into hearty laughter, full of admiration.

"Power that transcends status and influence! I'd like to witness this formidable power myself. I hope your words aren't empty promises."

After saying this, the old man patted Yuder's shoulder and headed towards the young man, who had been waiting anxiously.

"Master. You always say that watching a fight is the best, but why did you get involved here? I'm utterly embarrassed...! Do you realize how late we are? By now, everyone else would have gathered...!"

"You fool. What does it matter if I'm late? I've seen the most interesting thing here. How could I simply walk away from that?"

"But...!"

"Quiet, and lead the way, boy."

Yuder quietly watched the young man and the old man bicker and disappear, then turned his head. As if she had been waiting for this moment, Kanna spoke up.

"Yuder. Why did you do that?"

A small voice came from behind Yuder. Kanna was clutching his clothes tightly with her trembling hands. Yuder turned to face her.

"That's why, isn't it? The reason you didn't want to come here."

"Why would you do something like that? You have no idea how tenacious and terrifying that man is! How are we going to handle this...?"

Instead of an answer, a deep sense of despair returned. It was as good as any answer.

"I... I'll speak to the Commander. I'll tell him you're not at fault, Yuder. And I can resign before he comes... Yes, that might work..."

"Resign?"

Yuder turned toward Kanna, who was making an absurd claim, and spoke firmly.

"Why are you trying to quit the squad?"

"But you heard him. He said he would come to the Cavalry...! Aren't you worried?"

Kanna retorted, seemingly unable to understand.

"Didn't you hear what the other person said earlier? About what kind of person Count Gallon is? He's a terrifying person. Really, truly terrifying."

Kanna's fear of Count Gallon seemed to run quite deep. What had she experienced? Yuder lightly tapped on her trembling shoulder, redirecting her gaze back to him.

"It's okay. If he doesn't come, I'd be more disappointed. I introduced myself hoping for that."

"What?"

"It doesn't matter at all what power his family holds. All I'm curious about is your story. Kanna, what is your relationship with that family?"

"Right. I'm quite curious about that situation too. I wish you would tell us soon."

A soft voice interrupted from behind Yuder. At that moment, Kanna retreated in surprise.

"Co-Commander?"

Yuder saw Kishiar, wearing a large purple robe typically worn by court mages, slowly emerging from the shade of the trees.

His striking appearance and outfit suited to conceal his white uniform were one thing, but the surprise was something else. Kanna mumbled with her mouth agape.

"When did you...? No, rather, why are you dressed like that...?"

"Haha. Don't worry about it."

"Have you finished your conversation with His Majesty? Where did you leave the box and the carriage?"

Kishiar shrugged with a smirk at Yuder's sharp question, who, far from being surprised by his appearance, was rather unflustered.

"You're never surprised, which makes things quite boring. The carriage is where it was left, and His Majesty is briefly examining the box. But more importantly, wouldn't you like to discuss this interesting information about a squad member's secret that even I was unaware of?"

Seeing Kishiar's laughter, Kanna's face turned pale again.

"I...I..."

"Hold on. If we talk here, we might draw attention. Come this way. There's a perfect place to talk inside there."

Kishiar leisurely led them and entered the Black Pigeon office through the main entrance. Given the large number of people coming and going, no one recognized or stopped them.

Kishiar, who was walking amidst the crowd, suddenly slipped into a very narrow space between two buildings.

From the outside, it seemed too narrow for anyone to pass, but as they followed him, a path wide enough for a person to walk appeared as if by magic. The narrow gap they'd seen was an illusion created by the overlapping building and shadows.

Upon exiting, surprisingly, a very small open space appeared.

"When buildings are continually constructed and inserted over a long period of time, occasionally unnoticed gaps like this are created. No one will come here, so feel free to talk."

Even Yuder, who was quite familiar with the palace's geography, had never seen this place. It was astonishing.

"How did you know about this place?"

"Forgot, did you? I was born and raised here. Exploring the palace was my favorite pastime as a child."

The Imperial Palace extended to the Second Wall, but the palaces where the emperor and the imperial family resided were mostly within the First Wall. It was unthinkable that a young, noble prince would venture beyond the First Wall for exploration and play.

It was a staggering answer, but it seemed all the more surprising because it was plausible, considering it was Kishiar.

"I'm really sorry, Commander. I didn't mean to cause any trouble for the Cavalry or you. I just... I needed a place to hide."

In the quiet courtyard, Kanna finally removed her large hat with trembling hands and revealed her face. The first thing she did was to bow deeply in apology.

"A place to hide. From Gallon House?"

At Kishiar's question, Kanna nodded difficultly.

"Yes. I don't see any point in hiding anything anymore. As you've probably guessed, I lived in Gallon House. Count Hank Gallon would have been my... father, but I never called him that."

Kanna's story wasn't too different from what Yuder had anticipated. She was born to a maid with whom Hank Gallon had spent a night. The Count did not give Kanna a name or a surname. It was a statement of his complete refusal to recognize her as his own flesh and blood.

Her mother, with a bit of money she received when expelled, rented a small house in the Seventh Wall and raised her daughter. However, three years ago, when her mother died of illness, Kanna had to return to her birth house, where she lived a life of contempt, treated not as a daughter but as a maid.

"I thought that kind of life was better than living alone. But... my thoughts changed after I awakened a year ago."

Kanna's ability was to read the information of objects. One day, while cleaning, she accidentally discovered the dark intentions of Count Hank through the objects she touched. He intended to hand her over to another noble, at any age.

That noble was known for his vicious and despicable personality, and even though Hank knew that Kanna would likely die if she was given to him, he didn't care. The political gain he would receive by doing so was his priority.

The moment she read that terrifying intent, she shivered. From that moment, Kanna began to plan how to escape from the Count's house.

"At first, I planned to flee to a foreign country. But then the Cavalry recruitment announcement came out... I decided to try out, and if I failed, I would change my plan and head abroad."

But, to her surprise, Kanna passed. Thanks to Yuder's advice.

"I knew the Count worked at the Imperial Palace, and I was scared that I might run into him if I went there. If I was found, he would definitely recognize me and try to take me away immediately. But... considering how things turned out, I think it would be better for me to resign before he comes looking for me in the Cavalry. ...That's all."

After Kanna finished speaking, silence fell among the three.