

Turning 59

Chapter 59

Yuder had borrowed it from one of the Cavalry members returning home the day before.

He remembered that the man, a devout follower of the Sun God from a pious family, always carried multiple holy books. Believing Yuder to be a fellow devotee, the man had willingly lent him a copy.

While not everyone deeply believed in the deity, most people on the continent had grown up closely observing and interacting with the temples of the Sun God from a young age.

Therefore, even the commoners who could barely read were generally aware of the contents of the holy book. It was common knowledge. This was precisely why Yuder had chosen the holy book as his first training tool.

"Well, do you understand something now?"

"Huh?"

"Kanna, if you want, you can limit the scope of the information you read."

At Yuder's words, Kanna's expression reflected a sudden realization.

"Oh... I see. I didn't know. I've never thought about it before..."

Of course, she hadn't. Until now, she was satisfied as long as she could read anything, and that had been enough.

However, to develop abilities like hers, it wasn't sufficient to just read anything well.

If one attempted to absorb excessive information without restraint, they would soon hit their limit. Her habit of abruptly stopping after reading a few words without order was likely due to using her ability aimlessly.

"So, you must start by setting a goal and start from a narrow scope. First, practice reading the small things in detail, then gradually move on to more detailed and broader aspects. Eventually, you should be able to select and read the more critical information."

It was akin to practicing speed-reading. Initially, you would read each line thoroughly, and later, you would skim while still identifying the essential sentences.

Of course, this wasn't a skill that could be mastered overnight. It would require consistent practice daily. It was something that would gradually prove its worth over time.

"Practicing with books would be best. At first, just touch the book and read only the information related to the content, then check how accurate you were. Once you're comfortable with that, move on to the author, when the book was written, and its previous owners. It might be easier to read if you start from the most recent person and go backwards."

"Ah..."

Kanna nodded frantically, trying her best to remember Yuder's words.

"Do I do this every day?"

"Yes. And there's something else you need to do."

Yuder pulled out a thin cloth from his pocket, wrapped half of the holy book, and placed it on the ground.

"Try to read the information of the book you just read in this state."

"...But I'll only be able to read the information of the cloth?"

"Place half of your hand on the book and half on the cloth. Which one do you think you'll be able to read?"

"Well..."

Kanna's expression changed peculiarly.

"I'm not sure."

"Try it. If the information of two objects tries to come in at once, try to read only the book's information. It's a practice of selecting information. Since it's the information of a book you've read once, you should be able to read it more easily."

"I... I'll try."

As Yuder suggested, Kanna placed half of her hand on the cloth and the other half on the book, then closed her eyes again. The formless energy bursting from her hand was even larger and clearer during the second attempt, pulsating intensely.

Kanna's forehead was drenched in sweat, a clear sign of her struggle. Her energy had fluctuated, growing and shrinking several times.

"Uh..."

"Keep concentrating. Keep at it. Don't give up."

"My, my head hurts... I didn't know choosing to read would be this tough..."

It was to be expected. Growth, after all, often demanded pushing oneself to the limit just to advance a single step.

However, the moment of using one's ability to its limit was often a moment of life-threatening danger. Therefore, many Awakeners only managed to grow within the brink of death.

This faulty method of growth was something Yuder realized only quite late.

'If you steer in the right direction and continuously stimulate your limit without endangering your life, you can still grow without facing such a crisis.'

The important thing was to keep trying to exceed the limit of one's abilities, not to actually put oneself in danger.

After watching Kanna struggle so diligently, Yuder turned his head. Gakane, who had been observing the two with his mouth slightly ajar, quickly straightened up in surprise.

"Gakane. You're next. Are you ready?"

"Of course! Just tell me what to do!"

It was admirable to see a student brimming with so much enthusiasm. Even recalling his past life, Yuder could not remember a junior who sought to learn with such passion. Viewing Gakane with the heart of a former Cavalry commander, Yuder nodded in approval.

"First, bring out your shadow."

Before he could even finish speaking, Gakane's shadow abruptly rose to its feet. The black silhouette had the exact height and build as its master.

"How far have you tested the limits of your shadow?"

"Limit... I'm not sure. It just moves as I think..."

Gakane muttered as he looked at his shadow clone with unfamiliarity. He believed that by strengthening his own abilities, he could better control his shadow, thus he rarely used his powers and focused more on physical training and swordsmanship.

That, of course, was a good method of training. But in Yuder's opinion, a pioneer who had repeatedly clashed and eventually reached the end in his field, such a method alone clearly had limitations.

'Blindly training the body without knowing how far the shadow clone can exert its power is like a horse running with its eyes covered. It can run, but reaching the destination is difficult. It's a reckless approach.'

From what Yuder had observed so far, his clone was capable of effortlessly lifting several long spears at once. This indicated that it could exert physical force, and that its strength was far superior to that of humans.

And when it touched the Red Stone, the arm that exploded out was returned to shadow by Gakane, and when it was summoned again, it returned to its original form.

If a shadow clone could recover from damage in such a way, shouldn't one naturally want to find out how far its limits went?

"Have you ever struggled while handling your shadow clone?"

"Um... No. I don't think I ever did."

Gakane shook his head as he recalled his memories.

"Good. Then let's test today how far you need to go before it becomes hard."

Yuder casually drew the training sword he had at his waist. The training sword was blunt without any sharp parts, but that was sufficient.

With a light gathering of force, red flames erupted from the sword in an instant. Overwhelmed by the intense heat and momentum, Gakane's expression hardened.

"From now on, I will attack your shadow clone. Do not move your main body, stand still, and use your clone to evade and block the attacks."

"What?"

"Let's start."

Without giving Gakane any time to think, Yuder lunged at the shadow clone. As he swung his flame-wielding sword, the clone staggered back to avoid the blow. But it was too late; one of its arms had already been severed.

"..."

Unlike humans, the shadow did not scream or show any signs of pain. The severed arm vanished as if it had never been there.

"Defend properly. If you can't move, revert to shadow form and resummon. We're starting from the beginning."

"Ah, got it. But I don't understand how I'm supposed to block a sword with a shadow....."

"How is it possible for a shadow to carry multiple people? You've already been doing it all unconsciously, you just haven't realized it. Concentrate."

"...ugh...!"

"Move your clone solely through will. Don't open your mouth to command it, and don't move your own body."

Even as he issued these instructions, Yuder continued to swing his sword relentlessly. The shadow clone, slower than a human, could not properly evade even the casually swung sword.

As Gakane's shadow clone continued to take damage and disintegrate, just before a final blow was about to strike its head, Gakane closed his eyes tightly and swallowed hard.

At that moment, a miracle happened. The shadow clone raised its remaining arm in a flash, wrapping around its head to block the attack.

It felt as if Yuder's sword had struck an invisible wall made of wind. A strange sensation traveled up his arm, and moments later, the blade was deflected.

"Wha...?"

Yuder nodded at Gakane's shocked expression, which said, "I can't believe I just did that."

"Good. Let's continue."

"Wait! Give me a moment to think about how I just did that... Just a moment!"

There was no moment to be had. Yuder continued to batter Gakane's shadow mercilessly, ignoring Kanna's increasing frustration from the noise disrupting her concentration. Watching from the sidelines, Kishiar sipped his tea with a look of pure enjoyment.

"Look, Nathan. Isn't it amazing? It's as if a swordmaster is training a novice. I was curious about his teaching skills when he confidently asked for training authority, but the dreams of the squad members returning from vacation will be shattered. Hahaha."

"...It seems so."

From a swordmaster's perspective, Yuder's swordsmanship was not particularly impressive. However, the powerful fire and water constantly emanating from his weapon, as well as his exceptional battle senses and judgment, could not be ignored.

How much practice must he have had to be so adept at this strange combat style, being neither a mage nor a swordsman?

Even if he had awakened quickly, it was only two years ago. Was it really possible to build such skills in that time frame?

Ever since first meeting him, Nathan Zuckerman had been continually investigating Yuder Aile's background. But just as his lord had predicted, there was nothing to find. His past was impeccably clean.

The only certainty was that, as an Awakener, he was a prodigy to a degree that would make anyone envious.