

# Turning

## Chapter 6

"Whooa."

It was an act that made them forget their dignity, but no one could blame them. The sight was that astonishing.

Next was water. Yuder changed the energy surrounding the sword. Then, the fire melted and in an instant, a swirling stream of water wrapped around the entire blade.

A sound similar to a whirlwind echoed faintly throughout the room.

Holding the sword, Yuder swung it around several times and then slowly advanced.

"I'll demonstrate only this much and prove that this is real water. Does anyone want to touch it?"

Yuder watched as the examiners hesitated between preserving their dignity and fear. People are always afraid of what they haven't seen before.

They might have seen swordmasters who envelop their swords with energy and archmages who wield elemental magic before, but when the two were combined, even something familiar suddenly felt strange.

The examiners were all speechless. No one dared to volunteer. Just as Yuder was about to withdraw the sword, the examiner seated at the far right spoke up for the first time. It was the man wearing a magically altered face.

"If no one else will, I'll do it."

"No, you mustn't. Your...!"

In that instant, the deputy commander of the Imperial Knights cried out in alarm, then quickly closed his mouth.

'Hmm. It seems my guess was correct.'

Although the deputy commander had barely managed to restrain himself from revealing the examiner's identity, his reaction only served to further confirm Yuder's suspicions.

"It's okay, don't worry. I'm 'that one,' aren't I?"

The examiner seated at the far right grinned at the person trying to stop him, looking completely relaxed.

If someone other than Yuder had been present, they would have been unable to guess why this examiner seemed so carefree.

The deputy commander of the Imperial Knights appeared to want to say something, but in the end, he just sighed and lowered his head.

"Please, do as you wish."

"Well, I intend to. Something interesting has finally come along, hasn't it?"

The man who fearlessly reached out to touch the water-encased sword and the one trying to stop him might have appeared insignificant if not for the fact that one of them was the deputy commander of the Imperial Knights. To those who knew, the situation held a different meaning.

The Imperial Knights were mostly composed of high-ranking nobles. Only those born into families that had served the imperial family for generations and had practiced diligently with the sword since childhood could pass the difficult exams and ascend to the highest ranks.

Naturally, promotions only occurred when one demonstrated both skill and noble lineage. To have risen to the rank of deputy commander in the Imperial Knights meant the person came from a family of at least the rank of count.

So, who was the one person before whom these individuals bowed and retreated? The answer was simple. It was the royal family, the bloodline of the Sun God, who were said to be born with the power of light.

Royals were born with striking appearances, golden hair like light, and red eyes. The examiner before him must have used magic to disguise his appearance and hide these distinctive features.

In the world, there existed a transformative magic that was created for use in such situations. Of course, it was a very difficult magic, so there were more cases where one couldn't see someone who had changed their appearance using it. However, Yuder had once known a member of the royal family who could freely wield that magic.

That mysterious royal, who frequently changed his appearance, Yuder didn't know all of his disguises, but he was sure of a few. One of them looked exactly like the examiner before him.

'If I had never seen that face before, it would have been difficult for me to guess it, no matter who I was. It's been a long time since I've seen it, but it's really sophisticated magic.'

That person was none other than Yuder's predecessor, the first commander of the Cavalry, Duke of Peletta Kishiar La Orr.

Among the numerous charges Yuder faced just before his execution, there was also the charge of killing him. The case of Duke of Peletta's murder had been one of the biggest suspicions surrounding Yuder for a long time. It was also the only case that he had left as a burden on his own conscience.

That's because Yuder was indeed the one who had taken his life. It was the first mission he had carried out, upon receiving the emperor's secret order...

To think he would meet the man he had killed so soon again. He had thought that if he joined the Cavalry, he would have to face him first, but he never thought he would be here as one of the examiners.

Yuder, trying to suppress his complicated feelings, offered his sword to the man who had stood up from his seat.

"Please touch only the water surrounding the blade, not the blade itself."

He had been polite, but his tone was somewhat arrogant, as he had suppressed his emotions too much. The examiner seemed to think so too, as he shot him looks that seemed to say, "What kind of crazy thing is this commoner doing?" However, Yuder just stood there unabashedly.

If the man Yuder knew was indeed him, he would never get angry at this level. If anything, he might find it amusing...

"Hahaha. How interesting."

Yes, just like that.

As Yuder felt an odd sensation, the man reached out without hesitation. He hadn't noticed it while sitting, but once he stood up straight, he was taller than anyone else in the room.

While transformative magic could change one's facial features, it was difficult to alter one's physique. Yuder became more confident in his guess about the man's true identity.

Despite his size, the man's movements were not sluggish in the slightest, and they were surprisingly leisurely and elegant, even with a sword as big as Yuder's, which looked like a toy in comparison.

The moment the man's fingers touched the stream of water swirling around the sword, the examiners collectively shuddered.

"..."

And the water that touched his hand rippled like ordinary water, splashing forcefully in all directions. Water quickly stained both Yuder's face and the man's hand and clothes.

"It's real water."

"As I said."

"How dare you...!"

One of them couldn't hold back from blurting out, unable to bear listening to Yuder's words. The man in front of him raised a hand and squinted and he quickly closed his mouth. Yuder looked directly into the eyes of the man, who seemed to find him interesting as he looked down at him.

Red pupils, like genuine jewels hidden behind a mask of ordinariness.

The sight of those red eyes, which he thought he had eradicated forever with my own hands, shining vividly before him, felt both unfamiliar and strange. Had he felt this way when he first saw him in the past? He wasn't sure. He couldn't remember.

"Interesting. Impressive ability. Fearless too, considering your power."

"Would I fail if I had no fear?"

Yuder ignored his words and only said what he had to. The man listened to Yuder and gently smiled, the corners of his lips curling upward.

"No, of course not. We can't miss out on talent like this."

"Thank you."

Yuder withdrew his energy from the sword. Now, all that was left was to head to the lodging where the successful candidates would stay.

"Number 423."

However, just before exiting through the door, someone called out to Yuder from behind. The man with the red eyes was smiling.

"I'll remember you. See you again."

Of course, they would meet again. After all, he was the commander now.

Yuder felt regret that he couldn't respond to the man's words as he pushed the door open and went outside.

The number of Awakeners who passed the first-ever recruitment after the establishment of the Cavalry was 330. It was a remarkably large number, but it was a natural occurrence since it was the first recruitment.

During the first round of recruitment, they didn't yet know how to classify those who had awakened their powers or what kind of people were needed for the Cavalry. The information about the Awakeners themselves was also woefully inadequate.

However, after accumulating more information and experiencing trial and error, the number of successful candidates decreased significantly from the second recruitment onwards.

Eventually, even though they had set up a system for continuous recruitment and testing of specialized personnel, the number of successful candidates dwindled to the point where not even one person passed in a month.

But all that was a matter of the distant future. The faces of the first successful candidates were a mix of joy and nervousness as they all gathered in the huge indoor training arena. That was the only place where a group of 330 people could gather at once.

"The commander will be here soon. Everyone, maintain your formation and stand at attention."

Managing them was not the Awakeners but the Imperial Knights. It was a newly formed group with no structure, so it couldn't be helped.

The knights couldn't help but cast disdainful glances at the assembled Cavalry members. In their eyes, the Awakeners were nothing more than mysterious, lowly people of no clear identity.

Most of the newly accepted Cavalry members were intimidated by those glares, but there were also brave ones who brushed them off with a snicker.

"Look at those gazes. They would die instantly if I waved my hand."

"Right? They look like they'd die after taking only five blows from my sword, but they act all superior because they're nobles."

"Weak and repulsive."

"They don't know their place."

The blue-haired man and woman whispered so loudly that it seemed as if they wanted the others to hear. The stern-faced knight, holding his spear, turned beet red. He gritted his teeth, but he couldn't say anything due to the situation.

Seeing this, the new members who had been intimidated regained some of their confidence. It was the same scene Yuder had witnessed in the past.

'Hinn and Finn siblings. They were quite famous.'

The blue-haired twins were distinctive for their rumored ancestry, which included fairy blood from their family lineage. They possessed exceptional beauty and remarkable abilities, but their overly unrestrained personalities earned them the dislike of their superiors.

Eventually, they were said to have left the Cavalry after only a few years and returned to their hometown.

Contrary to their seemingly delicate appearance, as if they couldn't even pluck a flower, they possessed an impressive physical enhancement ability that left a lasting impression on Yuder's memory.