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"Is there anyone here willing to surrender and say something nice? Come out and kneel within the count of three, and I'll spare just that one person."

Suddenly, the atmosphere around them shifted ominously. A chilling winter wind swept between the enemies and Yuder, leaving a void in its wake.

"...What did he just say?"

"Spare who...?"

"Is he serious? What's wrong with his eyes?"

The enemies finally lost their laughter. Among them, Yuder noticed one individual glaring intently at him. The gaze was filled with hateful vengeance, and it felt strangely familiar.

'Seeker. So he's part of this group, too.'

In his previous life, Seeker was a scoundrel, but he never moved in groups like this. Some things had changed, but the essence of some remained the same, Yuder realized.

'Actually, this is better. I wasn't satisfied merely warning him last time.'

Silently, Yuder lifted three fingers. All eyes converged on his hand.

'One. Two.'

As he folded down the first and second fingers, not surprisingly, no one stepped forward to kneel. Only the sound of restrained breathing and escalating tension filled the air.

Folding down his last finger, Yuder quickly scanned the enemies' formation.

'Three.'

"Kill him!"

At someone's loud shout, energy surged through Yuder as well.

"Ugh!"

"What the—?"

Those who attempted to charge at Yuder found themselves tripping and falling, as if they'd been yanked back by invisible threads. While they writhed and screamed on the ground, a cold, deliberate voice echoed from the hill above.

"You all look quite fitting, kneeling."

Only then did the mercenaries realize that Yuder had manipulated the earth to grasp their feet. So engrossed were they in his words and counting fingers, that even those confident in their speed and agility had no chance but to tumble. Seeker, gripping the ground in fury, shouted obscenities.

"Damn you! I will definitely be the one to take your head— What?"

"Where did he go?"

Yuder, who had clearly been in front of them just moments ago, had disappeared. Two other men who were with him had vanished as well.

"Damn it! He's escaped. Chase him!"

"Hold on. My feet are still stuck!"

"Idiot! Just take off your shoes!"

Amidst the chaos, those who managed to free themselves sprinted towards where Yuder had been. Though they didn't see him, footprints remained trampled in the bushes.

A rustling sound of someone fleeing came from a not-so-distant location—opposite to where the footprints led.

"There!"

Those with keen ears chased after the sound.

"That noise is definitely a trap. The real trail is the footprints!"

Others followed the footprints in the opposite direction.

In a situation where their prey had escaped, the only thought crossing their minds was one:

'I must be the one to catch him first!'

So engrossed were they in this single-minded pursuit that they momentarily forgot about the most important person of all: the mercenary who had used tracking skills to successfully lead them to Yuder.

"Ch—Ch—Choke! Yu—Yuder, ah—"

"Be quiet."

Yuder descended from the tallest tree after everyone had been lured away by Kishiar and Nathan Zuckerman. The moment he waved his hand, the ground below, marred by the fallen mercenaries, split open. A face emerged from the earth, half-buried in the soil. The man, who looked small and frail and seemed far from suited for combat, had been the one using his tracking abilities to follow Yuder.

When everyone else had fallen, he'd been entirely buried underground, unable to even scream as he was entombed alive. However, thanks to the ensuing chase, the other mercenaries hadn't noticed he was buried and had all left, an astounding oversight.

The tracker trembled, spitting out a mouthful of dirt.

He never thought he'd be captured so easily just after finding Yuder Aile. He had no fighting skills to speak of, but he believed the other mercenaries would protect him. What a fantasy that was.

'No. Once they realize I'm missing, they'll all come back. If I can just pretend to cooperate until then...!'

Before he could complete his thought, a foot stomped down on his shoulder, pushing him back into the ground. He felt the slow but excruciating sensation of his shoulder bone breaking.

"Aaargh!"

A cold voice murmured above his writhing form, as if reading his thoughts.

"Don't bother scheming. The ones you're waiting for won't be coming back."

"What, what are you..."

Then, from somewhere, a dreadful scream echoed, only to abruptly cut off. Similar screams followed from different directions but quickly ceased.

The tracker tensed up.

They had only focused on Yuder Aile's presence, not caring much about the two men accompanying him. Even their employer hadn't informed them of this detail.

But this situation...

"Wait, just wait. I surrender. No, I mean, I truly surrender. I'll even disable my tracking, just please spare me!"

"Who said anything about needing that?"

A foot swiftly landed on his head again. Although it wasn't weighted, he was certain that if any force was applied, he would be buried once more.

"If you wanted to live, you had three seconds to surrender. That opportunity is long gone."

As Yuder's foot pressed down, the tracker felt his body sinking into the ground like a quagmire. The pressure seemed to crush his skull and neck, giving the illusion that they were shattering.

"Ah... Uh... Cough!"

As he tried to scream, dirt and gravel invaded his open mouth, stifling the sound.

"There's only one reason I've come to deal with you first."

The tracker barely managed to lift his tear-soaked eyes.

Yuder, who showed neither anger nor any other emotion one would expect in such a situation, looked utterly alien. The cold, metallic glint in one of his golden eyes, gleaming in the darkness, was terrifying beyond belief.

His well-honed instincts screamed. This man had done things like this more than once or twice. He didn't even blink at the sound of human screams, and clearly knew how to inflict pain precisely as he desired.

Only those who had taken lives recklessly could wear such an expression.

'Impossible. How could someone barely twenty years old...!'

In a cold that could make even a seasoned mercenary shiver, a voice akin to the god of death finally spoke its last words.

"Tell me everything you know about your abilities and your client."

'I've dealt with the most annoying one first, at least.'

Yuder ran through the trees, leaving behind the Awakener who had fainted and broken his neck after Yuder buried his head in the ground. As Yuder leaped off branches, leaves brushed against his cheeks.

It was an obvious choice to take care of the tracker first. Even if he had gotten lucky, anyone with the power to track him was someone worth understanding.

'That way, if another one shows up later, I won't fall for it so easily, and if someone like that joins my team, I'll know how to train them.'

In his previous life, he had defeated those who came to kill him and effectively utilized the unique abilities of those with interesting powers for the advancement of his Cavalry.

Though it was regrettable that he hadn't learned anything valuable about the client from the pathetic tracker he had just taken down, it was something he could look into later.

'Kishiar and Nathan Zuckerman must still be in the process of taking care of everyone.'

The decision to divide the enemies was Kishiar's idea. It was the best way to keep the identities and abilities of Kishiar and Nathan Zuckerman a secret while ensuring that no one outside would ever find out what had happened.

Even if Kanna Wand were to show up, it would be hard to decipher what had actually happened. And so, this was a battle that reflected the fact that they were fighting 'Awakeners.'

Yuder, recalling Kishiar's orders that had perfectly showcased 'his own health,' felt a deep satisfaction both as a former cavalry commander accustomed to such battles, and as someone who cares for and loves Kishiar.

At that moment, signs of someone's presence were felt from not too far away.

'Finally, they're here. Let's see...two of them?'

Yuder jumped down from the tree and unsheathed his sword. He walked gracefully towards the source of the noise, eventually disappearing into the darkness of the forest.

"..."

Again, a presence vanished nearby. Seeker huddled in a bush, shivering, and then emerged, grinding his teeth.

His hands kept shaking, even though he didn't want them to. The hilt of his dagger was sweaty, and he had to wipe it on his clothes.

His body was overwhelmed with unbearable anger and fear.

'What the hell... What is happening?'

He thought everything was going well when he had first located Yuder Aile. Even after Yuder disappeared, he believed things were fine.

But as they chased Yuder's footsteps, he realized one by one, their numbers were dwindling. Someone was picking them off.

They had searched as a group, but their enemy was elusive as a ghost. Some, doubting their companions, had sprinted off alone only to vanish moments later, leaving behind only their screams.

It felt like they were ensnared by something. In the dark forest, they couldn't even tell where they were.

Staggering, he tripped over a tree root.

"Ugh...!"

Unable to make a sound, he tumbled and rolled on the ground until he abruptly came to a halt. When he lifted his head, the sight that met his eyes was the body of another mercenary—a man he'd thought had vanished earlier.

"...!"

A closer look would have revealed that the man was still breathing, but to Seeker, his fear-distorted vision saw only a corpse riddled with wounds. As he tried to retreat, he realized that the dagger he had been holding had also disappeared.

"Damn it! Where did it go? My sword. My dagger...!"

"Here it is."

At that moment, someone placed a sword in his hand. Seeker instinctively grasped it, experiencing a fleeting moment of relief before a cold dread raced down his spine. He turned to look.

A stranger, wearing an unfamiliar face, gazed down at him and offered a silent, gentle smile.

"Who... Who are you?"

"When the environment changes, some people change and some don't. Seeing as you're back here, despite having had a chance to escape, I reckon you belong to the latter group."

The man's voice was so calm and melodious that it felt as if they had been conversing for a long time. But Seeker quickly snapped back to reality and aimed his dagger.

"What the hell are you talking about? You're from the Cavalry, aren't you?"

"Why do you think such differences occur?"

"Goddamn it! I asked if you're from the Cavalry!"

"The answer remains unknown, but one thing is certain."

Ignoring Seeker's protests, the man calmly raised his hand.

"I don't want to become like that."

The last thing Seeker remembered was seeing a small orb of light condensing at the man's fingertips. Accompanied by excruciating pain that coursed through his entire body, Seeker dropped the dagger and collapsed right then and there.

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Yuder looked down at the unconscious men whose heads alone protruded from the ground. As per Kishiar's orders, he had dealt with these men harshly and buried them partially in the ground. The sight wasn't particularly pleasing; it made his eyes sore and filled him with fatigue.

"Still, there was something to gain from these men."

These were the same rogues who had fled the second phase of the tests as soon as they heard that Yuder had sent Seeker away. Quick on the uptake, they had a good deal of information about their client and the situation at hand.

According to them, not everyone who had gathered there had initially come to take the recruitment test with Yuder as their target. Most were mercenaries who had decided to quit their jobs and aim for admission to the Cavalry purely on merit. Up to that point, they had no intention of getting involved in anything like this.

However, once they applied, they realized there was intense competition, and their rough background as mercenaries did them no favors. Who wouldn't prefer applicants with a cleaner record and a better family background? News that even nobles with awakened abilities were applying to the Cavalry fueled their anxiety and disillusionment.

It was at this time of unease that a servant of the 'client' approached them in the taverns and lodgings frequented by mercenaries. The client was a noble in the capital who claimed he needed inside information from the Cavalry and wanted to help them pass the tests.

'So these are the men who took that offer.'

The client assisted the mercenaries by erasing their pasts and even writing their applications for them. For a while, everything seemed to be going smoothly as they passed the first phase of the tests.

But that was short-lived. Yuder began his culling process, starting with Seeker, and the path to passing the second phase became increasingly narrow for them. Those who failed or fled were given a new mission by the client.

The mission was to track down or kill Yuder Aile, the rising star and emerging hero of the Cavalry, who was discovered to be in the West.

Up until that point, the mercenaries thought they were the only ones who had taken the job. But upon accepting the second mission, they were shocked to learn that there were others like them.

Someone introduced by the client, whom he called the "sage," taught them how to fight against Yuder, who was strong enough to take on a monster the size of a house on his own.

The sage knew quite a lot about Yuder's abilities, including his skill in swordsmanship and his power to harness the forces of nature. He told them, "Among you, there are those who may be weak in combat but excel in tracking. Since he successfully infiltrated the second phase test site and used his abilities, follow Yuder Aile when he leaves the West. You may each be weaker than him, but there's strength in numbers. Even a mouse can beat a lion if it has help. And so..."

Despite not knowing his face or name, they felt a deep sense of trust in his words. The 18 mercenaries decided to focus their efforts on harming Yuder rather than regretting the Cavalry tests they had already failed.

They revealed that the client who had directly approached them was Baron Renbow. Yuder had previously heard this name thanks to Eldore siblings and Gakane when they had searched the sage's dwelling.

'A noble who frequents the sage's dwelling and doesn't hesitate to offer support. Given how closely he's involved with the sage, and his behavior... he must have been brainwashed by now.'

The sage was aware of Yuder's abilities because he had heard from the Awakeners belonging to the Star of Nagran, both in the East and the West, who had previously witnessed Yuder's prowess. Yuder had often wondered how different the sage was from Nahan, and today, he felt that he could draw a conclusion.

'He doesn't share the same beliefs as Nahan. But he's certainly not a pacifist either.'

While Nahan may be crazy, he would not have used other Awakeners to attack him first in such a situation. Nahan's primary target had always been the detestable non-awakener nobles.

Would the Star of Nagran know that the sage, whom everyone hailed as virtuous, had lent his voice to the plans to first harm Yuder Aile for the sake of Duke Diarca? A cold smirk surfaced in Yuder's eyes.

'If it were me, the real heavy hitters would be prepped in the South. This would merely be a test using Renbow as bait. He probably got curious when he unexpectedly heard about my presence and wanted to prod me a little. Otherwise, he wouldn't have used mercenaries, who are expendable.'

The audacity to proceed hinged on the belief that, even if this plan failed, Yuder and his troop would not have fully grasped the true identities of the sage and Renbow.

'Unfortunately for you, we already know about you.'

One of the men captured by Yuder mentioned that, before losing consciousness completely, the sage had left behind a few Awakeners and whispered something further. They had been excluded from that information, so he would have to find someone else who knew. Such was the hastiness of their alliance; they barely even remembered each other's names and details.

'Whatever he whispered to just a few, whether it's about me or other information, I'll have to find out.'

It was becoming increasingly difficult to sense the remaining men, as if they were wrapping things up. It was so quiet that not even the sound of an ant could be heard.

Kishiar and Nathan Zuckerman must be somewhere nearby, but their absence of presence was remarkable in its own way. Yuder momentarily set aside the fact that he himself was also one of those without a traceable presence and sank into thought.

'If they're hard to find, the best method would be to use bait from our side to draw them out, but...'

Kishiar had explicitly told Yuder not to use himself as bait. So Yuder quickly relinquished the idea.

What could he do? If Kishiar preferred another route, then that was the only way to go.

'... If only the heat period wasn't approaching.'

The reason for Kishiar's opposition flashed across his mind, and a deep sigh involuntarily escaped him. When he inhaled again, Yuder suddenly sensed a slightly unfamiliar yet faint scent. It was similar to the sour smell wafting from an old barrel of wine.

Could this foul scent possibly be his? Doubting, he brought his wrist up to his nose. Just then, rustling sounds came from behind him.

"Uh... Haah... Haah... Found you..."

A mercenary, injured all over, mumbled as he glared at Yuder.

"You're the monster of the Cavalry, an Omega... You're the one with the female scent... Yes... You're the only one... I found you first!"

The moment the man opened his mouth, Yuder smelled an unmistakably pungent and sour odor. It was the same scent he had just smelled. A rough, intense aroma was emanating from the man in waves.

'Alpha Awakener.'

The moment he recognized its identity, he furrowed his brows.

"I know. You're in heat, aren't you? No matter how much you try to hide it, this scent... it's impossible to conceal. I have a keen nose... I'm indeed lucky!"

Thud.

A pulsating sensation, as if his entire body was being struck, resonated. Suddenly, a scent burst forth from Yuder's body.

'What the...'

The scent, which seemed to want to push away an unwelcome intruder immediately, ignored its owner's will and aggressively clashed with the opposing scent. Yuder quickly tried to suppress it, but it refused to obey.

He felt a sudden dizziness, as if all his strength was being drained. The scent, which he hadn't even been aware of until now, seemed to be emanating from every pore in his body.

The rising heat, cold sweat, and an invisible chill enveloped him. Yuder's sword fell from his hand. He leaned against a nearby tree, gasping for breath.

"Ugh..."

Simultaneously, the wounded mercenary who had been staggering towards Yuder collapsed to the ground, his face a picture of surprise.

His scent had become much stronger than before, but it was too weak and limited in range to counter Yuder's. The man's eyes rolled back, and blood vessels burst, turning them bright red. His pants began to dampen, and a pungent odor, different from urine, wafted from the liquid.

Yuder knew what it was.

It was the thick and abundant seminal fluid that an Alpha, upon encountering an Omega in heat, would release much more than usual.

The repulsive sour scent mixed with the acrid smell of the fluid assaulted Yuder. He reflexively tried to summon the power of the wind to dispel it.

"..."

But only a faint breeze stirred. Neither fire, water, nor earth responded to his call. The more he tried, the more he felt a suffocating sensation, as if a spring had been blocked, causing pain that seemed to constrict his heart.

'Why now of all times?'

Most Awakeners couldn't use their powers properly when they had just entered their heat. Everything except their instincts seemed to be dormant, and for some, even their memories became hazy, making it hard to control their strength. They were naturally vulnerable to external attacks.

But Yuder had never seen a case where even a tiny bit of power couldn't be exerted.

'It's my first real heat period since I don't remember the first manifestation clearly, so how could I know.'

While he could fend off visible attacks, the repugnant scent that he felt through his nose and skin had no solution other than to distance himself. Yuder, struggling to suppress his uncontrollable scent, staggered backward.

As he moved away, the mercenary on the ground writhed and reached out.

"Khh... Khh..."

His eyes no longer saw reason; only a burning lust remained. That desire, which Yuder might not have noticed under normal circumstances, was now perceived as sharp as a blade. The instinct to pin down the retreating Omega gave the wounded man a mysterious surge of energy.

With surprising speed, he crawled on the ground, reaching out to grab Yuder's ankle. As the opponent's scent drew closer, the explosive scent from Yuder's body went wild.

Struggling to maintain his balance as if he could collapse at any moment, Yuder grasped a nearby tree and located the sword he had dropped. Fortunately, it had not rolled all the way down the sloping hill; it lay caught at the edge. With a wobbly gait, he turned back toward it.

Just as the frenzied hand of the Alpha Awakener lunged to seize his heel, Yuder also managed to grasp the hilt of his sword as he fell to the ground.

"Gh... ah!"

Before the man could hurl himself at Yuder, he let out a scream, impaled by the sword that Yuder had thrust down upon him. Gripping the hilt that had penetrated through the man's back and abdomen, Yuder plunged the sword deeper into the ground without hesitation, resisting the heat that surged through his entire body. His hands and body were soaked in blood, mingled with the acrid scent of iron.

'Even if I can't exert my strength due to the heat period, thinking I can't handle a scum like you would be a grave mistake.'

Invisible scents wafted in the space between the man trying to hold on despite his pain and the one stabbing him with a sword. A lethal intent radiated between his narrowed eyes. Yuder didn't let go of the sword until the mercenary finally released his foot. Only then did he manage to rise shakily to his feet.

He took a few steps but was suddenly engulfed by an immense heat, far greater than anything he had felt before.

"..."

Yuder swayed and collapsed. He tumbled unceremoniously down the sloping hill where his sword had earlier lain.

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His consciousness was in disarray. The darkness before his eyes flickered like an endless night sky, intermittently lit by countless constellations passing by.

Yuder felt as if he was falling, infinitely down, in a state of dulled senses.

He recognized this sensation. While it was absent in his cognitive understanding, his body remembered the experience it had undergone before.

A searing, chaotic heat engulfed him. Instincts that had always been suppressed by cold rationality now welcomed this sweet flame wholeheartedly. It was a moment when these primal senses became the ruling force within him.

His parched body absorbed moisture, swelling with newfound vitality. Heat lingered in his hair, tickling his sensitive skin as it fluttered.

'You already know this heat,' a whispering flame crawled along Yuder's skin, settling near his ear.

'Remember.'

'Remember it...'

As if led by a summons, both unfamiliar and familiar memories surfaced within Yuder's field of vision.

'Ah...Ah...!'

A dizzying moan tore through his ears. The voice was rough and ragged but simultaneously stimulating something in the listener.

Mixed with that voice were sounds of wet flesh grinding and colliding, accompanied by the faint cries of wood, all echoing in a labored, rhythmic panting.

Lost in the sounds, Yuder belatedly realized that those moans were his own, escaping from his lips. And he also realized where he was.

He was in the Commander's office of the Cavalry. He was sprawled face down on a large desk cluttered with scattered papers and ink bottles. Each time a hot force penetrated between his legs from behind, his legs, unable to find a stable footing, wavered uncontrollably.

Something too large was thrusting into him, making it almost impossible to breathe. It felt like a club pounding inside him, violently jumping about. His chest was compressed, gasping for breath, but his melted senses offered no response.

The blurred view of the Commander's office came into focus. Not just the desk, but the entire room was in complete disarray. The sofa had sunk in and torn open, revealing its innards. Shreds of clothing lay about the floor like rags. Fragments of what might once have been a teacup were scattered, leaving no clue to their original form.

And filling the room was an overpowering aroma and viscous liquid, tracing a path from the sofa to the floor, bookshelves, and finally near the desk where he was bent over.

Why did the traces of that path feel like screams?

What had happened here?

Just as he reached that thought, another hot force slammed into him from behind. It went deeper than it should have, bulging his lower belly, finally making contact with his buttocks with a smacking sound.

"...!"

At that impossibly deep penetration, his lips involuntarily parted and he let out another sound. His mind went blank.

How could he possibly feel this sensation while still alive?

If he wasn't dying, then there was no way to explain this experience. Absurd thoughts flashed by meaninglessly, like lightning, before exploding.

"Ah...!"

A scream that chilled him to the very tips of his hair. His muscles tightened in his tensed arms. Fingers that delicately scratched the desk's surface lost their strength due to the sudden withdrawal, and he gave in.

Yuder could no longer look around. Once he had delved deep, he repeatedly made his way through the doors that kept opening. Every time his stomach felt pierced, his vision flashed, and he couldn't even discern the sounds coming from his own mouth.

The overwhelming pressure, the sharp pain of something that was always closed now opening. But amidst all that, there was a sensation he had never felt before. It was pleasure.

This unexpected pleasure, originating from an unknown place, gripped his body and mind at the most unpredictable moments. Every time it surged, Yuder convulsed in shock. This intense, unfamiliar sensation made his rationality shrink back, allowing his instincts to skillfully take over.

He moved as naturally as a fish in water, actively harmonizing with the force that sought to dominate him. Every time he felt the shock, his stomach tightened, and the organ between his legs pulsed, releasing fluid. Even though he wanted to avoid the intruder that roughly pushed its way into the deepest part of him, his instincts instead made him push his hips back even harder.

As Yuder pressed his lower body back, he felt that whatever had penetrated him was moving beyond his stomach, rising higher and higher. The sensation, as if piercing through his heart, throat, and brain, was almost violent.

As he pushed his hips and panted, the heat from behind grew closer. He felt a breath, hotter than his own, near his nape. Every time their skins fully touched and then separated, a strange sensation, neither pleasure nor pain, overcame him.

Now, the sounds he made were more akin to mating beasts than human. Unable to resist the overwhelming sensations, he closed his eyes and trembled. Saliva smeared messily, wetting his lips and chin like a starving person.

"Ah, ah, ah, h, uh...!"

The climax was nearing again. Despite experiencing it multiple times, the end always brought the same fear.

He felt as if he was being pulled endlessly to some high place, that escalating sensation. Even though he didn't want to go, a part of him anticipated something, making his insides twitch.

It was truly inexplicable. How could his body move in the direction of the pain and fear he felt?

Unable to withstand the violent shaking, Yuder screamed, arching his back and neck. As he thrashed his head, the person behind him reached out, supporting his waist and chest, pulling him closer. The hands were firm enough to trust, even in their urgency.

A long, beautiful hand with a half-removed white glove.

Though consumed by the same passion, the trembling hand seemed to be in pain. The moment Yuder looked down at it, his forehead creased like lightning. For a brief moment, his lost rationality and thoughts awakened from somewhere deep within, overshadowed by pleasure.

He felt a suffocating sensation, as if his throat was being strangled.

It was the pain of a naive and awkward emotion dying. He didn't know what he had hoped for, but he knew he hadn't wished for this, and thus, a mournful moan escaped him.

An immense pleasure consumed him, but Yuder's deeply sunken eyes darkened even more. As he limply let his body sway, the man holding him leaned down, pressing his lips to Yuder's neck.

Even as his body jerked roughly, the slowly touching lips absorbed the sweat on Yuder's face, the saliva, and even the tears that fell from below his eyes.

In a manner unbecoming, Yuder's body trembled at the careful, yet strenuous movement of their lips.

Their hearts palpitated in inexplicable harmony, a faint light passing between their conjoined bodies. Yet, neither of them realized this phenomenon.

Moments later, their trembling bodies began to fuse at an unprecedented speed. Bright flashes filled Yuder's mind, and with the illusion of hearing the sound of their deepest selves being pierced, Yuder relinquished all control, surrendering fully to the other.

It felt as if their body was wholly devouring the other.

Everything seemed to converge into a murky death here and now.

Yet, amidst this obliteration, something within him refused to die, instead melting and flowing toward the other. And from the man who embraced Yuder, something molten trickled into Yuder as well.

Instinctively, Yuder opened himself up to it. A thirst he had not even been aware of seemed to lessen the moment it was accepted. He opened his parched lips in a gasp, and the other delved inside him once more, this time with even more fervor.

His mind went blank. He wanted nothing more than to be further entangled. They slipped off the desk, half-crashing to the floor, sprawling over a chair.

It was an act as primal as any, but no longer did pain have any place in it. Yuder, who had been moaning freely, suddenly heard approaching footsteps. The other must have heard them too. Yet neither made a move to escape. In a world where shame and reason had evaporated, the approach of another was inconsequential.

Moments later, the door burst open. After sweeping their gaze over the chaotic room, the eyes of Nathan Zuckerman settled into despondency. As a last note, Yuder's consciousness began to fade away into the distance again...

When Yuder next came to, he found himself in a familiar imperial bedroom. He watched, as if from a far-off place, his own body writhing frantically on the bed of the small palace where Kishiar had spent his childhood.

"The fever is too high. We've given him painkillers and antipyretics three times, and it still hasn't gone down. Why is this happening..."

"Since the Prince—no, the Duke—hasn't arrived yet, we have no answers. Bring more water and towels to wipe off the sweat!"

This was not a past life. Yuder realized he was reliving the day of his second gender manifestation, a day also marked by a sexual heat he could hardly contain.

Elderly servants scurried to wipe sweat from Yuder's face and body. But his physical form continued to writhe, making tiny moans of agony, and moved restlessly.

The movements suggested a horrifying pain, one made all the more terrifying by his inability to scream. One of the servants clucked his tongue and shook his head.

"It seems as though he's battling some invisible deity. His teeth are grinding so badly we should get him something to bite on."

Yuder dimly remembered the agony of the second gender manifestation, feeling as though his bones were breaking and reassembling.

The servants might not have noticed, but Yuder felt an overpowering scent filling the bedroom. A scent that had never been tamed since his birth began to freely swirl around him, gradually taking form.

"...What's the situation?"

Then, a voice came from not too far away. It was Kishiar's voice.

Yuder saw a man in exquisite formal attire, tense from head to toe, staring past the bedroom. There was no smile on Kishiar's face.

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"I apologize... I have done my best to change the guest's clothes and wiped away the sweat, even administered the fever reducer three times, but the fever has not subsided. He seemed to be in severe pain, so I gave him painkillers as well, but there has been no improvement yet..."

Two attendants alternately bowed their heads as they reported Yuder's condition to Kishiar.

Due to an intense fever and pain of unknown origin, Yuder was constantly drenched in sweat. Despite their diligent care and repeated medication, Yuder's suffering appeared to remain unabated, with the fever blossoming over time and even emitting a strange scent from his entire body.

This scent was utterly unlike the musty smell common when ordinary people sweat. Nor did it resemble the fragrance of perfumes used by noblewomen. There are monsters that emit all sorts of scents to lure their prey, but how could such an odd fragrance emanate from a healthy person? Even the experienced attendants, who had weathered numerous incidents in the palace, could not maintain their composure in the face of this situation.

"It seems we may need to call a physician... What should we do?"

Hearing the attendants' report, Kishiar's gaze turned continuously towards the trembling figure.

Yuder saw Kishiar's hand, which had briefly twitched as if to move in his direction, disappear into a tight fist a moment later.

"Calling a doctor would be futile. This is a symptom that only occurs in Awakeners who are experiencing a second gender manifestation."

"Is this manifestation really such a serious matter?"

Noticing Kishiar's knowledge of a second gender manifestation, a fleeting look of sorrow passed through the eyes of the aged attendants. Kishiar smiled, as if to reassure them.

"Not at all. It seems my assistant's manifestation process is simply more intense than others. The heat and the scent may be due to an overlapping heat period, making it more painful."

It was not common, but it wasn't necessarily abnormal. Just as insects shed their exoskeletons at varying speeds, the process of something new forming was naturally arduous. But this state does not persist post-transformation. Once the shedding is complete, maturity is attained. Kishiar jokingly lightened the mood, presenting himself as living proof. The attendants finally relaxed their expressions and laughed along.

"Indeed, after undergoing awakening, Your Grace returned much more formidable and mature. Anyway, it is a relief that you say so..."

"But Your Grace, is there a reason you keep standing outside? Please come in and rest."

Unlike the attendants surrounding Yuder's bed, Kishiar remained motionless beyond the first protective barrier, maintaining a curious distance from the bed, neither fully entering nor withdrawing.

"...No. I will stay here."

"Do you have other matters to attend to soon? Even so, wouldn't it be better to rest for a while?"

...

Kishiar did not answer. As a servant rose to fetch a new towel and warm water, approaching Kishiar's position, Kishiar suddenly shook his head.

"I apologize... but please leave through the opposite door, not this one."

"Eh?"

The servant, who had reflexively expressed his confusion, was taken aback upon looking at Kishiar.

"No, Your Grace. Since when have you been sweating so much? Good heavens. You have perspired as much as that guest over there!"

Up close, Kishiar's forehead and neck were completely drenched in sweat. It was unbelievable that he could maintain a smile and carry on a conversation without showing any sign of his abnormal state.

Kishiar, waving off the panic-stricken attendant, took a deep breath and smiled faintly.

"I'm alright. More importantly, that person's condition is urgent; I would prefer you tend to him. I would like to help personally, but alas, I cannot."

"What nonsense you speak, Your Grace. How could someone of your stature... Nevertheless, I will ensure you need not worry. However, please do not stay here any longer than necessary. You've hardly eaten throughout the party; I shall bring you some refreshments."

"No. Tomorrow holds the first trial of the House of Apeto. I doubt it will proceed as planned, but I must attend nonetheless; my stay cannot be prolonged."

"Then all the more reason not to linger here, wouldn't you agree?"

"Just a little longer. Until it gets better."

"Your Grace..."

"Just a little more."

Kishiar stubbornly dismissed the attendants, preventing them from fussing over him more than Yuder, whom he kept watch over without missing a beat, even amidst conversation. His gaze, gentle yet firm, never strayed from Yuder's condition on the bed.

Eventually, the attendants ceased urging Kishiar to rest. He remained standing in the same spot before the protective barrier, watching over Yuder as he wished.

Kishiar observed every detail: Yuder's pallid cheeks twisted in pain, faint moans slipping through clenched teeth, limbs convulsing, and eventually, his body slumping over as if succumbed to fever.

And Yuder, through his faint senses, was aware of Kishiar's vigil.

The attendants, not being Awakeners, might not comprehend the enormity of what Kishiar was enduring, but he knew all too well.

Enduring the scent of a newly manifested second-gender Awakener in heat was not a matter of mere patience. Even at a distance, the overwhelming impulse was a challenge to withstand.

There was no urgency as there had been when he first rushed to move Yuder here, nor was there a compelling reason for him to stay and watch.

Yet, why was he so stubbornly enduring this pain, this instinct?

As dawn approached without a decrease in fever, the attendants finally brought precious ice. But even after the ice had melted, Yuder did not regain consciousness, the fever so intense it seemed to emit a mirage of steam.

At the break of dawn, Kishiar spoke.

"We must use Ponesa. Do we have any in storage?"

"What? No, since Your Grace left the palace..."

"Then we must acquire some."

"You can only obtain Ponesa powder with permission from the Imperial Physician and the Imperial Pharmacy. And at this hour, the pharmacy would not yet be open..."

"Do we need to go to a pharmacy that isn't even open?"

The attendants exchanged glances, their expressions turning to one of disbelief. They were the ones who had witnessed the growth of the legendary mischievous prince who once lived in this palace, so they surmised what their master intended to do.

"Surely... you do not intend to scale the walls of the palace greenhouse to fetch the Ponesa yourself, do you?"

"..."

"Your Grace!"

At that moment, Yuder began to breathe heavily once more. After the attendants had waged a war, sopping his face and limbs with melted ice water and wiping them down, when they lifted their heads, Kishiar had already vanished from where he stood.

"Good heavens, my word... Can it be true that he has really gone?"

"Isn't that the place the Empress herself tends to? I have seen with my own eyes the installation of protective magic there, stronger than anything before... If by some mischance he is hurt by it, whatever shall we do?"

"What sort of person must he be to go to such lengths...?"

Their gazes turned toward Yuder's face. In their eyes, now more cautious and respectful than before, Yuder was merely closing his eyes in a daze...

With that, Yuder's consciousness slipped away once again.

Two manifestations. Two heats.

Both the beginning and the end were completely different, yet something was the same.

Somewhere deep within, deeper than the flesh, there was the fact that the same person existed alongside the strange desires that flared up like flames.

Once they had existed in despair, and at another time, they had been like a silent wall of protection at his side.

And now...

"...More."

A familiar voice called out to him through the muddled consciousness.

"...Yuder."

Like smoke, Yuder's floating consciousness was drawn to the call, rising towards somewhere. As he ascended, the sensations throughout his body became clearer, and the sounds from outside grew louder.

"Yuder!"

Yuder opened his eyes.

Beyond the hazy view, he saw Kishiar supporting his body. They were standing in mid-air, over an abyss with nothing below. Around Yuder, a gentle light radiated, enveloping him protectively.

"..."

"The blessing has done its job well."

Kishiar muttered to the blinking Yuder.

"If you had rolled a bit more, you would have fallen completely off the cliff."

The light surrounding Yuder slowly receded as if confirming his safety. Yuder stared blankly at Kishiar's face, sweating as in a faint memory. Wondering what it meant, Kishiar took a deep breath and spoke.

"I apologize for being late. I thought I was close, but it seems I underestimated my assistant's ability to hide..."

"..."

"Nathan has gone to fetch the luggage; just wait a little. I have brought the common sedatives and stabilizers, so if you take those..."

Kishiar had the rare experience of not being able to finish his sentence. This was because Yuder silently reached out and wrapped his arms around Kishiar's neck.

A scent, potent enough to make one dizzy, enveloped Kishiar simultaneously. It was a hot, alluring fragrance that, despite its intensity, did not lose the honesty akin to its master.

Kishiar, fighting the urge to embrace him right then, kept silent for a moment before speaking again.

"...It must be very difficult to endure, but if you just bear with it a little longer..."

"...It's not I who is enduring, is it?"

A low, submerged voice tapped at his ears. Within their locked gazes, darkened eyes whispered.

"In front of me, you promised not to hold back any longer, did you not?"

Turning

Chapter 615

Nathan Zuckerman swiftly dismounted his steed, shouldered his pack, and ascended the rugged mountain path as if carried by the wind. The conversation he had earlier with his liege lord played over in his mind.

"I've dealt with all those who entered my assigned territory. Is Sir Aile still around?"

"It seems so. I found traces left by him first; he must be nearby."

Zuckerman's rendezvous with Kishiar was later than anticipated. Subduing the mercenaries was not challenging, but finding his stealthy liege, who moved without a trace, took time.

He found his liege quietly observing mercenaries who were like mushrooms sprouting from the earth, only their faces visible. These were the marks of the remaining companion, Yuder Aile, as Kishiar had mentioned.

"Buried quite well, aren't they? It doesn't seem like his first attempt at this."

It was a surprising exclamation to make upon seeing the buried men, but Zuckerman found himself in agreement with his liege.

The signs of battle around the men Yuder had left behind were plentiful. They looked less like the aftermath of Awakeners clashing and more akin to a street brawl's chaotic traces, suggesting the mercenaries had employed every means in a desperate resistance.

However, the absence of Yuder's own signs among the many meant all their efforts had been futile. Yuder Aile had thoroughly outplayed the two awakened mercenaries and buried them here alone.

He wasn't one to waste time without reason; likely, he had done this to extract information.

"Quickly fulfilling the mission while perfectly hiding his traces, and not forgetting to complete the part I assigned. Even though he started later than us because he dealt with those who used tracking abilities first."

"It will certainly be difficult to identify who did this based on these traces alone."

"That it will."

Kishiar, having finished observing, lifted his head. He surveyed the surroundings, gauging the direction, and then strolled leisurely towards a particular spot.

"So... How did it go on your end, Nathan?"

Zuckerman succinctly reported the information he had gathered from the mercenaries. Upon hearing that their backer was Baron Renbow and that a sage had contacted them from that quarter yesterday, Kishiar lightly replied that he had uncovered as much.

"Nothing too surprising, then. And, dealing with the Awakeners wasn't too difficult?"

"Yes."

The mercenaries Zuckerman had faced were troublesome Awakeners with significant abilities. There was one who could move short distances instantly and another who could manipulate the wind to create diversions, ideal for escape in the mountains.

Therefore, Zuckerman had lured them into a trap using a herbalist's rest cabin he had stumbled upon. By skillfully pretending to leave Yuder's traces, he had turned the mercenaries into his prey. In the confined space of the cabin, no one could withstand Nathan.

"The information provided by Sir Aile beforehand was quite helpful. The cabin had plenty of useful tools, so it wasn't difficult."

Before the mercenaries converged, Yuder had provided Nathan with several strategies to counter typical types of Awakeners he would face, as if he already knew Zuckerman's combat style. The advice was precise.

Even if Nathan Zuckerman had not known the method, it would not have significantly hindered him in dealing with the matter at hand, but having this knowledge made the task several times easier.

It was a startling realization, but Yuder Aile seemed to eerily know everything.

The Nathan Zuckerman of old might have strived to uncover the true identity of Yuder Aile upon such a realization. However, the man he was now harbored no such inclination. He could hardly deny that the recent events had influenced this change in attitude.

"You seem to have grown quite close," remarked Kishiar, suddenly sporting a peculiar smile.

"...May I ask whom you're referring to?" Nathan inquired.

"You and my assistant," Kishiar replied, seemingly in jest. Yet, it was known that Kishiar often embedded unfathomable implications within such remarks. Having witnessed his liege exhibiting unusual behavior towards Yuder Aile on several occasions, Nathan decided not to dismiss this question lightly.

"We are not close," he stated flatly.

"Really?" Kishiar prodded.

"As I mentioned before, it was Sir Aile who sought advice first, and I merely contributed a little. Just because we discussed strategies to counter the enemy doesn't necessarily imply closeness, in my view."

Nathan was referring to a time when Yuder Aile was absent, and Kishiar, who had just woken up from his sleep, had summoned him to recount recent events. The sharp-witted man easily surmised that his loyal adjutant had been collaborating with his assistant to gauge his unusual condition.

"Hmm. Even if many are clamoring for my attention, you barely acknowledge them. Yet, you share tea and snacks with my assistant, even going so far as to secretly watch over me, and you claim you're not close... Nathan, I'm beginning to think your standards of friendship might be a tad different from the common notion. What do you think?"

Caught off-guard by the question, Nathan Zuckerman drew upon years of experience to navigate his lord's unexpected inquiries.

"If there is a particular answer you wish to hear from me, please, just say so."

"So, you won't be led on that easily anymore," Kishiar remarked, a playful smirk on his lips as he tousled Nathan's hair. Even as Nathan grew to be as tall as a mighty fir tree, his lord would occasionally treat him as if he were still a small, young page.

"Nathan. You used to insist that we must remain vigilant around Yuder. I'm curious if you still hold that belief."

Kishiar's question unexpectedly touched on a matter that had been weighing heavily on Nathan's mind.

After a moment of silent contemplation, he responded, "I still believe we need to maintain our guard. However, aside from that, I've come to the conclusion that there is no one as trustworthy as Sir Aile in certain matters. My heeding his advice and sharing opinions with him is purely professional, not a matter of personal affinity."

"On what matters do you base such a judgment?"

"It concerns the Duke, Your Grace."

Kishiar's eyes narrowed slightly.

"That means you were wary, but now you've changed your mind."

Silence fell.

"Then, what if I command you not to trust Yuder Aile from this moment on, and conversely, Yuder suggests that I have become strange and proposes that you two investigate together? What would you do then?"

Nathan Zuckerman's expression shifted. The southern knight, who had initially cast his gaze downward as if to discern his lord's intent, eventually looked up, seemingly having reached a decision.

"To speak frankly... due to this incident, I've come to the decision that, at least once in matters concerning Your Grace, it would be alright to trust in Sir Aile's word. I will verify the basis of both claims before making my judgment," Nathan Zuckerman confessed. It was a statement he had previously made to Yuder as well. However, coming from a knight famously known for unconditionally following Kishiar's commands, it was a surprisingly remarkable admission. Kishiar burst into laughter as if he had heard the answer he was hoping for.

"Nathan. The day has finally come when even you, who has never changed, have begun to change."

Silence followed.

"I had always hoped that you would be someone who could always give such an answer. But until now, you never had. Isn't that so?"

Indeed it was so. For Nathan Zuckerman, Kishiar had been an absolute being.

Of course, that fact had not changed even now. It was just that he had come to recognize the existence of someone else who regarded Kishiar with the same blind absoluteness as himself.

Because he simply could not deny the significance of that individual.

The laughter slowly subsided. Walking ahead of Nathan, Kishiar finally spoke in a softer tone, almost as if talking to himself.

"You must be curious about why I asked you about change."

Silence again.

"The old me lived a life where change meant death, but not anymore. Look at me now. Do you think I have changed much?"

"You have not changed much. Since... since you created the Cavalry."

"More precisely, 'since meeting Yuder Aile.' Aside from that, I don't think I've changed much. Neither my disposition nor my essence has changed significantly since my time in Peletta."

The man's gaze settled quietly as he critically assessed himself.

"On reflection, it seems I still find it hard to escape the belief that patience and steadfastness hold more value than change. Despite declaring my desire to break free from a life where I am expected by no one, I didn't really know how to change. Knowing that change in what I do doesn't necessarily mean a change in essence."

Kishiar didn't say to whom he had made such a statement. Only his gaze, which softened and then firmed again, hinted at the identity of the one to whom such words might have been spoken.

"But to me, who has struggled with this... he said not to hold on any longer."

Silence.

"Don't suppress yourself. It's okay to act honestly."

Again, who had said this was omitted. But Nathan Zuckerman could guess what the omitted subject might be.

"I thought I could do anything if it was the answer he taught me... But even at this age, I've only just realized that being honest feels like standing naked before the world."

It was indeed a very difficult thing. Saying this, Kishiar suddenly smiled bitterly, then fondly, as if recalling something dear.

"There are those who manage such difficult tasks as easily as breathing. Perhaps it's time I changed too."

Silence.

"Nathan. I want to change."

The voice was so soft it was almost inaudible. Yet to Nathan Zuckerman, those words rang louder than thunder.

"And you, I hope you will continue to change as well."

Kishiar did not specify how exactly he wished Nathan Zuckerman to change. Nathan realized that he would probably spend a very long time pondering the meaning of his lord's words.

Just then, as if sensing something, Kishiar abruptly turned his head elsewhere, which perhaps deprived Nathan of more time to reflect.

"...Yuder?"

"Yes?" Nathan responded.

"I sense a scent. Something is..."

Muttering unintelligibly, Kishiar's expression suddenly hardened with a terrifying intensity. A man whose eyes changed color like flames leaping into a fervent red, he launched himself toward the darkness that had descended upon the forest. Nathan, too, sprinted after him. The two men, undeterred by the cracking of branches under their feet, hurtled down the narrow path with astonishing speed.

"I thought it was closer..."

Kishiar, who seemed to see something in the darkness, moved his hands as if reaching out and continued to speak in an undertone, the words faintly reaching Nathan. During the pursuit, Nathan Zuckerman caught sight of a few men embedded in the ground.

It was when they headed towards a rugged hill, not far from there, that a pungent smell of blood, mixed with a strange scent that Nathan Zuckerman had never encountered before, hit his nostrils.

Kishiar's shoulders tensed up in an instant. He, too, had undoubtedly detected the peculiar scents. A profound silence fell upon Kishiar, and even Nathan, who had long served him, could sense an unfamiliar emotion crossing the man's face.

Moments later, a ghastly scene unfolded before their eyes.

A stranger lay collapsed with a sword impaled in his back, surrounded by a pool of blood.

The peculiar scent wafted most strongly around this area.

Just by the sight of the hilt of the sword in the man's back, Nathan Zuckerman knew to whom it belonged.

"Your Grace!"

Nathan's cry was swift, but Kishiar moved faster towards the scene. Ignoring the impaled man, Kishiar peered intently down the shadow-enshrouded slope below.

Silence.

Then, from the depths of the dark shadows, a command was issued.

"Nathan. Bury the one here in a place easy for retrieval. Then return and search the horse for the packs. There is a medicine I had instructed to be packed in my gear. Bring those... and if you find my condition to be poor, take that medicine and go to the cabin you mentioned earlier with Yuder Aile, and make sure to administer it."

With those final words, Kishiar fearlessly dove down the slope.

Turning

Chapter 616

Nathan Zuckerman did not take long to reach his intended destination, burdened as he was with a parcel of medicine. The earnest exertion of a swordmaster's body was indeed swift and powerful, incomparable to that of an ordinary person.

Upon arrival at the site still reeking of a peculiar scent mixed with the scent of blood, he surveyed the surroundings. A faint sound of labored breathing came from behind the spot where Yuder's sword lay discarded, the very sword that had been plunged into the mercenary Nathan had buried.

This was the place Kishiar had leaped into without hesitation, a site whose scent could be detected even by one who was not an Awakener like Nathan Zuckerman. The southern knight quietly approached, clutching the parcel and making no effort to conceal the sound of his footsteps.

Despite the short distance, each step sharpened the tension, pricking at his nerves. With one hand ready on his sword sheath to strike should an enemy appear, he stood at the brink of the hill, gazing downward.

As tension peaked, every muscle in his body trembled subtly.

It was then that he heard it.

"You've come at quite the opportune time, Nathan."

A voice, weary and suppressed as though holding something back, emanated from the darkness below.

Recognizing the voice of his liege, Nathan swiftly removed his hand from his sword sheath.

"Where are you, Your Grace?"

"Here."

The voice came from just beneath his feet, from a space tangled amongst the trees. Nathan hurriedly retrieved a magic orb from his parcel that could emit light and cautiously descended toward the voice. Like a hollowed-out space beneath an eroded cliff, there was a cunningly crafted hollow there.

Revealed in the faint light, Kishiar sat leaning against something, holding Yuder Aile.

The man's breath was heavy and his expression was chillingly impassive. Although he was not as disoriented as the second-gender Awakener they had encountered in Tainu, it was clear he was struggling to suppress something.

"It would be best not to come any closer. Yuder is... not quite himself."

At the end of his words, the black-haired man, panting like a wounded beast, lifted his savage eyes as if recognizing a new intruder. His dark, fevered eyes seemed not to recognize Nathan, glaring fiercely. The scent was so overpowering that standing before him was like standing beneath a ripe fruit tree, heady and disorienting.

Seeing the intense aversion in the man's eyes, Nathan realized that it was not safe to approach carelessly.

He bent slowly, careful not to aggravate either of them, and spoke.

"Should I take Sir Aile as you commanded, or would you prefer to administer the medicine here?"

It was a question to gauge Kishiar's condition, to see if he would follow the command or not.

After a moment of silence, Kishiar let out a faint laugh.

"It would be better to administer it first. Bring it here."

As Nathan reached for the medicine, it slipped from his grasp as if pulled by an invisible thread and fell straight to Kishiar.

Kishiar unwrapped the medicine while calling to the one in his arms.

"Yuder."

Yuder Aile's gaze shifted, his breaths sharp and more alert than usual, as he murmured something inaudible.

Time and again, he had endured, and now, he would do so once more.

The growling, almost submerged in a half-sleep, carried a heat that spoke of barely contained ferocity. Kishiar, unfazed by the clear signs of his companion's distressed state, gently froze him in place.

"Yes, I understand. I'll do as you wish, but first, try this. We must at least attempt, mustn't we? That is simply who I am."

Silence.

"Try this, and if it doesn't work, then I will truly follow your lead... Okay?"

Seizing the brief moment of Yuder's hesitation, Kishiar pressed the medicine to his lips as if pouring it in. Soon after, without a hint of reluctance, Yuder nodded, his grumbles swallowed up by the act. Nathan Zuckerman, instead of observing his lord's most intimate moments, cast his gaze down deeply.

"Umm... uh... hmpf..."

It was unclear whether the pale hand that flailed was resisting the medicine or responding to a kiss. Kishiar took that hand in his own and repeated the process over and over, swallowing every breath that escaped.

The sight of a Duke of imperial lineage personally administering medicine to an adult man was unimaginable to anyone not present.

After a while, Kishiar finally exhaled deeply, the moisture on his lips glistening in the light, lending an otherworldly aura to the scene.

"Are you alright?"

"One can only hope to be."

The response to the concern for his well-being was ambiguous, yet the man chuckled suddenly.

"Until just before you found me, I thought my heart would stop... The blessing from the West did have its effect. When we return, I must bring that Awakener to the capital, no matter what."

Silence.

"But tell me... can you guess what one who has shaken many a heart said the moment he regained consciousness?"

Kishiar didn't wait for an answer, as if to shake off something restraining him, he continued.

"He scolded me, told me not to hold on. If I hadn't remembered you were coming... it would have been truly dangerous."

His words carried a tone of disbelief, but Kishiar's gaze was infinitely tender, a stark contrast to the tension that seemed ready to burst.

"What are your plans now?"

"We shall wait and see if the medicine takes effect before deciding. However... thinking back to the time of the manifestation, I wonder."

Kishiar had never spoken in detail to Nathan Zuckerman about the time Yuder Aile had experienced his second gender manifestation. He had only explained that due to poor health, Yuder had been isolated from the ball and stayed in a small palace until the aftereffects had subsided.

Yet, from Kishiar's words, it appeared that Yuder Aile had faced a similar struggle back then, where the medicine had not been effective.

Nathan Zuckerman ruefully recalled the mage's medicine Yuder Aile had likely passed on to someone else. Had it been available now, perhaps they wouldn't be in such a predicament.

However, he suspected that even if the man had the chance to go back, he would have given the medicine to someone more in need. It seemed Kishiar might share this thought, as the corners of his lips lifted in a cool smile.

"If it proves ineffective... then, Nathan. I will amend the command I have for you."

"What is it?"

A sigh. The breath of his lord, carrying a warmth akin to Yuder's, filled the space. The keen feeling of being in front of a wild beast shaking the shackles that would soon be released penetrated Nathan Zuckerman's whole body.

"I will carry Yuder, so you just guide us to the cabin, but... never look back. Once we arrive, leave the luggage..."

His voice, which had been on the verge of breaking, paused momentarily. Then, with a breath filled with uncontainable ferocity and depth, the final words continued.

"Sort out the surroundings and then head to the destination first. I will follow later."

Nathan Zuckerman understood the command's implications in silence.

It was a foregone conclusion that Yuder Aile's heat period was imminent before they departed. Kishiar had planned accordingly, intending to separate from Yuder as soon as he entered heat period, to ensure his rest.

However, Yuder's heat period erupted at the most unexpected moment, and Kishiar deviated from his plan. For the first time, he decided to entrust his back to a subordinate and embrace the unforeseen events that had unfolded.

Alone, without anyone's help or protection.

To respond only to the will of the one in his embrace and to dedicate time solely for him, no matter what happened.

An adjutant leaving his lord behind was an unthinkable act.

Their intended destination was a small mountain village to gather information about the Crown Prince. It was a difficult task to enter the village unnoticed with Yuder Aile, who had just entered heat period.

Excluding the fact that Nathan Zuckerman could not personally verify the safety of Kishiar and Yuder with his own eyes, this might have been the better option.

Yet, Nathan Zuckerman recalled his lord's voice muttering, 'I want to change.' The words 'I hope you change too' also echoed in his mind.

Nathan Zuckerman remained silent for a long time.

After a while, the loyal knight bowed formally, as he always did.

"I will do as you command."

Kishiar's prediction soon became a reality. Yuder Aile, momentarily quieted by a sedative, regained consciousness within minutes and began to growl again. Kishiar groaned in agony as his breath, hotter than before, intensified.

Yet, a faint smile spread across his face.

"So the conclusion is reached."

Nathan Zuckerman saw his lord for the first time giving up on endurance and doing what he desired.

Kishiar, cradling the languid Yuder, stood up. Nathan Zuckerman moved to support him as he shook his head as if dizzy, but Kishiar declined the help with a glance.

Nathan Zuckerman, a non-Awakener, could not fathom the immense pain and endurance Kishiar was maintaining while he managed to climb up the hill without letting Yuder out of his embrace.

"Lead the way."

Nathan Zuckerman moved swiftly ahead without hesitation. He felt the presence and murmurs of his lord carrying Yuder behind him but kept his promise not to look back.

He set down the luggage in front of the small cabin and passed through to enter the woods. Moments later, the faint sound of a door opening and closing was heard.

Turning

Chapter 617

For ten years, Yuder had occupied the position of Commander.

This meant that for a decade, he had lived buried among the world's most numerous Awakeners. Although an incomplete Omega Awakener who neither experienced heat nor emitted a scent, Yuder was familiar with the stories of numerous second gender Awakeners who underwent ordinary heats, stories unknown to him.

It wasn't necessary to spend the entire heat period asleep. Those who had grown accustomed to spending their heat with other second gender Awakeners instead of sleeping with the aid of sedatives could not understand those who chose to endure their heat in solitude. They extolled the virtues of faithfully following their instincts to enjoy pleasant moments, claiming that the exhaustion would vanish, leaving a refreshing sensation.

Yuder, however, could not comprehend the 'pleasant moments' they referred to. He failed to see what was refreshing or enjoyable about losing control of oneself.

For him, being a second gender Awakener was a source of agony. The single heat experience that had come and gone with his manifestation was a source of shame, and the powerless time when he could not control himself was a horror he did not even wish to imagine in dreams.

Therefore, he had never considered his scentlessness, lack of response to others' scents, and absence of heat period as a misfortune. Quite the contrary.

"Uh... Hmm."

But now, leaning against a door, deeply kissing the man who embraced him, Yuder felt differently about the words he had heard before.

His mind and body, governed by instinct, had become extremely simple. The experience wasn't as bad as he had vaguely imagined. The myriad thoughts that usually weighed heavily on his mind vanished, and his body, buried in heat, felt neither discomfort from his dormant abilities nor his heightened senses.

Despite feeling utterly powerless, he was surprisingly unafraid, for he was in contact with the one he most desired to devour.

Kishiar La Orr. As long as he was with him, Yuder was absolutely safe.

Though no one had taught him, he knew that only this man could bring rain to quench the fire within him. His instincts loudly proclaimed that Kishiar, too, was suppressing a sea of desires within him, desiring Yuder in kind.

So what was the problem? Was there any reason not to desire Kishiar?

No. There wasn't. He didn't want to hold back anymore.

It was time to show the man, who still didn't fully understand what it meant not to hold back, exactly what it entailed.

His thoughts were simple, but his goal was clear. Yuder murmured to him to keep his promise, insisting he not suppress himself in his presence and demanding to see everything. The man who had been prolonging the moment, neither fully rejecting nor accepting Yuder, finally conceded after administering a bitter medicine.

He supported Yuder, clinging to him, whispering the same words into his ear all the way here with a voice full of deep heat.

"It's okay. We'll arrive soon. No matter what happens, I won't let you go. If it's too hard, you can bite me..."

Each time those words penetrated his ears, chills spread from the inside of his ears throughout his body, and he trembled from within. When Yuder bit his neck like a permitted beast, he felt a patting hand on his back accompanied by a low moan. The scent that emanated from him confirmed that the moan was not one of pain.

Soft lips gently grazed Yuder's ear, cheek, and then his own lips, descending with a tremble that held a promise of more.

Yuder, without a word, could feel that this trembling was born of anticipation, just before a moment where restraint was no longer necessary.

And then, at the very moment the door opened and he entered,

"Sigh..."

Thud. The man who had been obediently offering his neck to Yuder suddenly shifted direction. As the door closed, Yuder's back was pressed against the hard door. Their lips locked in a breathless embrace. Yuder eagerly welcomed this, feeling as if water had finally been brought to his parched lips.

It was good. Truly good. He could feel his entire body rejoicing in ecstasy. The sensation of being tightly embraced, with not an inch of space between them, was unbelievably delightful.

As their tongues intertwined, a surge of acute sensations, incomparable to any before, shivered through them, and suddenly, Yuder's vision blurred. He realized that his body, tense to the point of pain since the moment he reunited with Kishiar, had finally reached its limit.

Without a chance to stop, everything began.

"Mmm..."

Yuder, tongues still entwined, opened his eyes hazily and shivered. The sensation of warmth spreading between his legs was dizzyingly pleasant.

"Ha... Ah..."

As he released the breath he had been holding during the height of pleasure, he felt his strength drain from his body, yet his hunger remained. It was only natural, as he had not yet obtained what he truly desired.

Before, his sensations had been scattered, but now, in the midst of this burning heat, they converged blindly toward one focal point. His desire for the figure before him was insatiable. Yuder, gasping for breath through slightly parted lips, reached out.

Still not enough. Faster. Hurry. In his eagerness, he roughly pushed aside the fabric of their clothes, and Kishiar supported Yuder's hips, rubbing his face against them.

"...At least, I wanted to give you a better place to rest..."

The old cabin, barely showing signs of human presence, was neater than one would expect for a rest stop occasionally used by herb gatherers. It contained only a makeshift bed, a small stove, and a pile of miscellaneous items like a storeroom.

Kishiar seemed to regret the simplicity, but Yuder did not mind at all.

What does it matter if it's a luxurious palace or a cramped cabin? Being together was enough.

Stop these needless thoughts. You only need to see me.

Yuder pressed his body forward to convey his desire. The intense scent emanating from him completely ensnared Kishiar. Their breaths mingled with heat, and they were soon intertwined again. Kishiar, too, focused solely on fulfilling Yuder's desires, saying nothing more.

The kiss that began near the door continued until they found themselves on the only space available to lie down, a straw bed. Their clothes had almost completely disappeared. There was no fire in the stove, yet they were not cold in the slightest.

The heat of their bodies, biting and licking each other, was so intense that it felt like flames rising within might consume them, leaving no room for the winter's chill to penetrate.

Kishiar, holding Yuder, extended his tongue boldly, licking and nibbling at his chest. Yuder's nipples, having been sucked on by his man several times before, remembered the pleasure that could be derived from there.

"Mmm, uh, ah..."

One side was powerfully sucked in, while sharp sensations rose within the lips; on the other side, the body shivered under the twisting sensation between long fingers. The sensation of being pressed and rubbed was surely close to pain, yet the more it tingled, the deeper the heat pooled in the belly became. It was a curious thing, but Yuder had long realized that such occurrences were possible under the hands of Kishiar.

Yuder grasped the two stiffly erect members pressed against each other between their bellies. Though it was impossible to hold both in one hand, Yuder shook them greedily. Each rub of their sensitive tips caused a burst of light before his eyes and irresistible sounds to flow from his lips.

"Ah, hmm... uh..."

Kishiar swallowed all these sounds, as if it were a waste to let them escape.

Often, an erect member is called ferocious, but anyone who saw the one in Yuder's grasp, Kishiar's, might have felt differently. Yuder found it beautiful, pulsing hotly in his fingers, unabashed in its displayed desire, so mesmerizing that no other words came to mind.

As his heart swelled with this feeling, Yuder could no longer be satisfied with just shaking them together. Gasping for breath, he spread his legs. Between them, already soaked from sustained heat, his own arousal was undeniable.

Deep in his belly, he yearned for something to penetrate that aching hunger.

He wanted it inside.

Then, he should just do it.

Yuder, feeling sweat trickle down his forehead, tightly gripped Kishiar's member. Just as he tried to recklessly pull it between his spread legs, a large hand stopped him. His body, quivering with anticipation, stiffened.

"Ah, hmm, why..."

"Not like this... without preparation. It'll hurt."

Even amidst heavy breathing, the firm voice sent a thrill down Yuder's spine. As Yuder looked up resentfully, Kishiar raised his torso. In the darkness, his perfect naked form shone clearly. In that moment of distraction, the man deliberately and sensually moistened his fingers in his mouth.

Yuder couldn't tear his gaze away from the sight, so blatantly arousing and honest. Kishiar's eyes, too, never left Yuder, openly spread beneath him, drenched in pleasure.

Finally, with a soft sound, Kishiar's fingers emerged from his lips, sufficiently lubricated. Yuder, heart racing with anticipation, spread his hand. Soon, the fingers plunged deeply between his spread legs.

"Hmm!"

Kishiar's fingers were much larger and longer than others. At first, even one finger felt like too much pressure, as if it would penetrate to the very depths of his belly.

But now, it was different. The suddenly yielding membrane swallowed two fingers at once, gripping them tightly as if it would never let go. A chilling pleasure surged, making his back arch.

Ah, that immense sensation of finally being filled in his starving place.

A thrill akin to goosebumps surged, and his body, already aflame, was drenched in ecstasy.

"Ah...!"

In the fantasy realm, Yuder, lost in the sensations overwhelming him, arched his body, unable to hear the groans escaping his lips.

Before he could fully regain his senses, a second surge of intense heat welled up at the tip of his heated member, and a white substance burst forth in disarray. Trembling with a desire that did not subside even after his second climax, Yuder embraced Kisiar.

The body he held was indistinguishably hot from his own. He thought he heard a man, who had passionately kissed his ear and thrust his tongue in a frenzy, whispering breathlessly, asking if he was alright, but he couldn't be sure.

Their entwined fingers explored each other, and each time they parted the sticky insides, his mind seemed to whiten. Initially accommodating two fingers, later more invaded, completely filling him. With each squelching sound, his body tensed, and sparks flew.

Yet, his body and instincts knew something was still missing.

"Ah... Uh, uh..."

Unable to form coherent words, Yuder expressed himself through his body instead. Pushing away Kisiar's hand and catching his breath, he grasped his own damp thighs, feeling his gaze drawn there.

Gasping for air, he exerted strength to part them, and soon felt the sensation of the opening giving way, briefly revealing a gap.

In the darkness, their gazes met for an instant.

Yuder greedily watched the last vestige of restraint vanish from Kisiar's eyes.

Turning

Chapter 618

Two large, elongated hands overlapped upon Yuder's own, which clutched at his thighs. The sensation of skin sliding over his fingers and the back of his hand made him momentarily catch his breath. At that moment,

"Ah... Hah...!"

His lower body pushed upwards, as the swollen organ forcefully penetrated the parted crevice.

In that instant, it seemed as if all his senses were solely devoted to this connection. Though his eyes could see, his mind couldn't register, and the sounds reaching his ears held no meaning. The pressure on his chest from the lifted posture and the urgent need for breath, his thoughts, even his own identity, were all forgotten.

Yuder wholly felt the tightness as the opening stretched to its limit, welcoming what he had long awaited. The tingling sensation as it made way deeper and deeper, shivering with excitement.

Time seemed to slow. The girth and shape of the organ inside him, every pulsating vein, and throbbing heartbeat were perceived with excruciating clarity.

Finally, when it felt like it was tapping against the very end of his insides, Yuder heard his own loud moan, distant as the ejaculate forcefully shot through his torso and chest.

"Aah...!"

The end of the wall within.

In this life, when Kishiar first overlapped with him, he never crossed that wall. It wasn't that he couldn't but rather he knew Yuder's limits better than Yuder himself did. Though he could have pushed further, he always stopped just before, sensing exactly where the end lay.

However, there was no need to push further deliberately. As their bodies merged more over time, Yuder's tolerance surprisingly increased.

And now.

Without any pain, the depths within opened wide, welcoming the organ pressing deeply against the wall's end.

"Uuh, ha, aah..."

Breathing was hard with the fullness inside, almost as if his belly had swollen up to his navel. With each short breath, the sensation of the organ pressing against the end of his wall briefly clouded his mind, but Yuder relished this feeling, having finally obtained what he desired.

Gasping like a beast that had overeaten, Yuder clenched his teeth and reached down to the joined area. That slight movement caused a deep tightening within.

His fingers, smeared in various fluids, caught the still not fully entered shaft and the soft ends of pubic hair.

Indeed.

His suspicion turned to certainty. Even though it had reached the wall's end, there was still more. Confirming this, Yuder felt a surge of thrill and joy inside his swollen belly.

Then, at last, a long breath escaped Kishiar. The shockingly deep and rapid penetration they both felt seemed like a very long time to savor. It wasn't only Yuder who felt this way. Kishiar, removing Yuder's hand exploring the joined area, intertwined their fingers and drew them towards his lips.

The rough fingertips, now exposed as their gloves were removed, received a brief kiss.

Simultaneously, their bodies began to tremble.

"Ah, ah... Ah!"

It was a movement more rugged than ever before. There was no time to synchronize and move together to the rhythm, such was the intensity. Yet, there was no sense of rejection. The sensations, which would usually feel too intense, were now surprisingly pleasant. If possible, he wanted the man entwined with him to be even more consumed by deep desires, to be moved by the same emotions, urging him on even more.

Thus, Yuder allowed the sounds erupting from his mouth to burst forth unrestrained. He made no attempt to hold back or suppress any of it.

Like a horse running freely on a path without any fences, their bodies intertwined and swayed. He shivered at the sensation of being filled and emptied ceaselessly.

"Uhhh..."

This was what he had desired.

This was the very sensation he had vaguely longed for.

In a parched thirst that knew no quenching, the flames that had only been rising were now being sated by a torrential downpour, greeted with jubilation. Though it felt like little movement had been made, another intense climax surged up to the crown of his head. Yuder, feeling strength gather in their abdomen, tightened his legs around the man's waist. Even if he couldn't move in rhythm, this alone made the penetration much deeper, the thick tip pushing further into the walls than before.

"Ah..."

Yuder shuddered, shaking his head. Droplets of sweat splashed, dampening his hair. Even the sensation of teeth sinking into his exposed neck felt like an intense pleasure.

When his inside was finally pushed to its limit, Yuder felt his vision blur and the area between his legs grow wet. The ejaculate that spurted from the trembling member, though thinner than before, was just as forceful.

However, this climax was not just at the front. As semen fell in front, the massive member that was tightly held in the back was also twisting and tightening, bringing a searing heat inside. This was the explosion of internal mucus that occurs when an Omega Awakener reaches the pinnacle of climax. The clear mucus that burst forth as he climaxed spurted and flowed between the joined parts, soaking his buttocks.

"Ah, ah... Ahh..."

It was an indescribable pleasure.

His vision alternated between darkness and light.

Yuder, feeling the hot sensation thrusting deep within and withdrawing, thought blankly.

'More, more... More...'

In response to his desire, Kishiar did not cease his movements even as Yuder shivered in climax. Moving as if Yuder's desires were his own, the man embraced Yuder deeply.

His lips ceaselessly stole kisses from Yuder's cheeks, eyes, nose, and lips. Though his movements lacked Yuder's leisure, there was a desperate, almost poignant feeling, as if not having a part of the other's body in his mouth meant death.

Yuder responded to these kisses as best as he could, embracing Kishiar's back. That was all he could do now. Their sweat-soaked fingertips, feeling the internal thrusting movements, twitched and flexed as if

struck by lightning, sometimes slipping and scratching down the back in an inability to withstand the pleasure. But Kishiar never loosened his embrace around Yuder.

Yuder felt the sensation of swelling inside, as the moving member within him grew increasingly engorged. The inside of his belly, filled more tightly than ever, felt as though it might burst, yet the pleasure was so intense it was as if his mind was melting. Without a moment to adjust to the rhythm, his body twitched, his hips gyrated, and as he clenched his legs wrapped around the man, the latter's lips forcefully sucked in Yuder's lower lip.

As he reflexively parted his lips, the approaching tongue invaded Yuder's mouth deeper than ever before.

Simultaneously, with a dizzying surge of pleasure causing his hips to buck upwards, Kishiar's waist, which had retreated, now thrust forward with the most powerful force he had exerted thus far.

"...!"

The thick tip finally pierced through the wall of his belly, unleashing a ferocious pleasure.

Amidst a storm of sensations so intense it felt as if it might pierce his heart, his insides were soaked with a heat not his own. Yuder trembled as if impaled, unable to make a sound.

At that moment, his gaze was stolen by the face of the man in the darkness, wrinkling his brow in the height of pleasure.

The face of Kishiar La Orr, accustomed to suppressing even his pleasure to avoid being excessively rough, was not present here.

Yuder observed, through the sweat-drenched golden hair in the night's darkness, the man's eyes honestly crumbling in the moment of climax. He saw the rough breath and emotion that instinctively revealed itself, then seemed to hide away, only to be fully released when their eyes met.

It was a face Kishiar had never shown Yuder in all their previous encounters.

"Ah..."

It seemed as if his instincts made a quiet swallowing sound in his darkened mind.

How could any physical pleasure compare to the feeling of a parched earth finally drinking water?

"..."

When Yuder exhaled a long breath within the immense satisfaction, the man beneath him opened his eyes again. The man, looking down at Yuder laughing in satisfaction, pierced below him, similarly lifted the corners of his lips in a fierce smile.

In that moment, all the elegance that usually seeped through, and all the masks hidden beneath his smile, vanished from his face.

The man pulled Yuder's relaxed legs onto his shoulders. Even after climaxing, his member, undiminished in vigor, began to thrust vigorously into Yuder's belly once again. Yuder embraced the man's neck, welcoming the movement.

The second time was even more intense than the first. The member, having once breached the wall, now repeatedly crossed its boundary with unabated ferocity. With each thrust came immense shock and strength flooded his body, but so too did immense pleasure. Each time Yuder's legs, slick with sweat, almost slid off the shoulder, Kishiar repeatedly grasped them, restoring them to their original position.

Turning

Chapter 619

For the first time since his birth, Yuder was completely immersed in pure pleasure, free from any turmoil. The anxiety of needing to maintain rationality had vanished at some point. He moved as he wished, expressing his feelings honestly.

His mind, devoid of any plans or thoughts, surprisingly felt more natural as time passed. He became acutely aware of his body, its limits, and capabilities more clearly and cleanly than ever before.

His mind, cleared of complicated knowledge and cluttered memories, was akin to muddy water settling into clarity. Through the serene ripples, he could clearly see the existence of his partner, merging with him, overwhelming in its certainty.

Indeed, instinct was not an enemy that made him lose control. It was quite the opposite.

He had never thought of jewels as beautiful, but the emotion he felt looking into those red eyes, glowing like flames in the darkness, was undeniably the eternal longing inherent in human emotion.

And that same emotion was present in those beautiful eyes.

Some things become more evident when they are not articulated in words.

In this silent moment, entwined without a word exchanged, Yuder rejoiced in the realization that he possessed the body to become one with Kishiar La Orr.

He hoped the immense sense of unity he felt at the moment would be eternally etched within him, even though time was finite and could not last forever.

"Ah...!"

Once again, the tip of the glans, surging over the wall and plunging in, unerringly struck an indescribable point of pleasure. Sensations he never thought existed in his body simultaneously shivered and glowed, gripping his insides with intense force.

Yuder trembled faintly, his eyelids fluttering as he felt the sensation of ecstasy sweeping over his body. His organ, having climaxed several times, could hardly expel any more fluid, yet the feeling of climax remained the same. Waves of pleasure, starting from deep within his hips and belly, enveloped his body for a long time, sweeping over him like ocean waves.

He did not resist the fierce wave that seemed to sweep away his entire being. No matter how high the waves threatened to engulf him, it was alright. As long as he had this warm touch and the intoxicating scent enveloping his entire body, he could breathe anywhere.

The lovemaking that began in the darkness continued past sunrise, and even as the sun set in the west.

Yuder had experienced long lovemaking sessions before, but this time, the atmosphere and intensity of passion were different. Previously, if Yuder felt tired or overly intoxicated with pleasure, the act would naturally slow down. Kishiar would then enjoy talking softly, holding Yuder on top of him, or gently stroking and kissing.

However, this time, even as Yuder lay spent from excessive pleasure, the act did not cease. Neither Yuder wanted it to stop, nor did Kishiar hide his desire to continue, hence there was no reason for a lull.

"Uh, hmm, ah..."

In the lingering pleasure that endured like an unextinguished ember, Kishiar sat against the wall, ceaselessly rocking the body of Yuder, who sat atop him, embraced like a child. The fingertips clutching his thighs were slick with sweat that seeped down to the more intimate flesh beneath. Every time his long fingers fiercely gripped and spread Yuder's hips, lifting them upwards only to relax again, Yuder trembled intermittently, moaning under the weight of his own body, feeling the depths of their union more profoundly than ever.

Each time the fully inserted member seemed to pierce through to his solar plexus, pushing up the inner walls, Yuder's breath hitched. The mucous membrane, accustomed to being compressed and abraded, relished the pressure with unchanging ecstasy. Even when his stomach felt utterly melted and deflated, it remained insatiably greedy.

Kishiar, too, with eyes ablaze with equal fervor, watched every reaction of Yuder's body. He missed not a single quiver or muffled moan, devouring and absorbing each one. Though his usually eloquent tongue ceased its flow of words, it was now fully employed in tasting Yuder.

And this tasting was not metaphorical but quite literal.

Throughout their entwined bodies, Kishiar's hands and tongue lingered on various parts of Yuder. Fingers and toes, the insides of wrists and calves, the inner thighs revealed by splayed legs, the outlined tendons and the member, even the eyelashes and hair clumped with moisture, all indiscriminately found their way into the man's mouth.

Later, the sensation of his nose buried in the hair and his teeth lightly grazing was enough to bring a mild climax. The chest, most suckled upon, swelled red, throbbing with pleasure at the slightest touch. And Yuder, too, in his own way, urged Kishiar on, fiercely swaying his hips to the rhythm they both desired, though their paths differed.

Kishiar moved as if discovering and fully consuming every flavor of Yuder's body was his sole purpose. Even the scent that wafted freely, following his master's desire, wrapped around Yuder, his fragrance and body, with the tongue delving into every pore.

It was a lovemaking persistent, stubborn, and unyielding, embodying the very essence of Kishiar La Orr himself.

"Ah, uh, hmm, oh..."

Another climax surged, resonating deep within his belly. The root of the member tingled and writhed of its own accord. Yuder, feeling a slight strength return to his limp arms, flailed his head resting on Kishiar's shoulder. As the melted opening twitched, hot fluid flowed out with each pulse.

"Hmm..."

Kishiar exhaled rapidly, his tongue invading Yuder's ear. The squelching sound filled one ear, the dual penetration sending waves of pleasure directly to the brain.

The hand supporting Yuder's clenched buttocks rose, revealing the thickly embedded member. It seemed unbelievable that something so large had been inside, as the sensation of it slipping out through the membrane made Yuder tilt his head back and moan.

"Ah...!"

With a reflexive tension in his thighs and an emptied belly gasping for breath, there was a momentary pause.

Then, as the hand on the buttocks gently released its grip, the body plummeted downward.

"Huh..."

The member slid back inside, forcefully returning to its original position. The pleasure points were all scraped simultaneously, and the sensation of the inner walls being pierced made Yuder climax once again.

"Ah...ugh..."

The toes curled and a bright, flickering light danced before the eyes. A deep, muffled moan, tinged with intense red heat, enough to startle anyone, escaped in a hoarse whisper. Pressed against the belly of Kishiar, the arousal of Yuder surged, clear liquid spurting from its tip.

Yuder, reveling in the sensation of Kishiar greedily licking and biting inside him, rhythmically clenched his hips. With each movement, Kishiar's scent, as if approving, penetrated deep into his skin. The climax seemed unending.

"Ah..."

The pleasure felt when scent and flesh's desire merged was unlike any before. It was as if every part of Yuder's being disintegrated into grains of sand, to be devoured by Kishiar in a grand ecstasy. Kishiar, too, seemed to be engulfed in the same pleasure, remaining motionless inside Yuder for a long while.

After the pleasure had somewhat subsided, Yuder, regaining some strength, toppled the man who nonchalantly licked what Yuder had released. He straddled him, his still potent arousal mashed between their thighs. He buried his face in the chest, gasping for breath, while the sound of a beating heart echoed in his ears.

The rapid heartbeat signaled a return of strength to his weary limbs, reigniting an unextinguished ember within.

"Whew, haa..."

Kishiar's scent, caressing Yuder's back, seemed to detect his desire, boldly exploring between his hips. Yuder responded, releasing his scent, fiercely pulling Kishiar closer. Fingers glided into the open space, swirling inside, as a clear, semen-mixed fluid poured out, soaking both Kishiar's body and the floor.

Realizing there was more to be released, Yuder moved his lower body, slickly rubbing up and down. Though his waist lacked the strength for vigorous movement, the sensation of sensitive flesh and the loosened opening colliding and rubbing against Kishiar was unmistakable.

Yuder, seeking solace, twitched his lower body, gripping the fingers exploring inside, eliciting a faint laugh as they withdrew.

Wet hands then spread Yuder's legs wider, aligning the tip at the gaping opening. The moment the gaping space eagerly clenched and relaxed, desiring the impending pleasure, Kishiar's arousal penetrated deeply into Yuder's waiting body.

"Ah..."

A tingling shock ran to the back of his head.

The sensation of being filled, momentarily vacant, returned with a stronger internal impact than before.

But that too was fleeting, as the pleasure of satisfying his hungry insides began to drench his body again with rapid collisions.

The pleasure continued endlessly. Even in brief moments of rest, Yuder experienced a secret ecstasy, feeling the man embracing his body continuing to move inside him, exhaling hot breaths of satisfaction. Waking, he swallowed saliva instead of a meal, smiling as Kishiar nibbled his ankle bone before resuming

their prior activities. Whenever Yuder smiled, Kishiar would kiss him ecstatically, as if his brief laughter was like a winter sun.

Whenever he licked Yuder's skin, no matter how weary he was, a remarkable strength surged through his body. Even when his arousal was less than half-awake, there was no hindrance to the pleasure he felt.

The small house, with nothing more than a thoroughly ruined straw bed, was repeatedly soaked with scent and fluid.

It was only after a period long enough for even the tips of his hair to be imbued with Kishiar's fragrance that Yuder was finally able to form coherent thoughts. This clarity came five days later.

"...I'm a bit hungry, it seems."

Lying atop Kishiar's chest, Yuder blinked blankly, feeling hunger for the first time in what seemed like ages.

"Is it morning...?"

Turning

Chapter 620

"Is it morning...?"

As his eyes moved to glance outside, slender rays of sunlight were seeping in. He couldn't tell the exact time, but judging by the dim light, it was clear that the sun had risen not too long ago.

It was only then that he truly confronted the state of the cabin, which was in utter disarray. The makeshift bed, made of dried straw covered with cloth, had lost its original shape, spewing its innards here and there. The corner was littered with various items that had fallen or been scattered.

The liquid stains scattered across the walls and floor, and the finger-shaped indentations, spoke volumes. The overpowering scent of two rich fragrances permeated the small space, leaving no doubt about the events that had transpired there.

"..."

Yuder recalled the first manifestation of his second gender in his previous life as he looked at these traces. Before losing consciousness to the heat of his mating season, the despair-filled scene of that office had briefly flashed in his mind, and it bore a striking resemblance to the cabin before him now.

However, there was a significant difference between then and now. Yuder, looking at the storm-ravaged scene, felt no despair.

His thoughts were solely focused on a cool and detached assessment of reality.

'...I'll clean up later.'

His body was so languid and relaxed that he didn't even want to twitch a finger. It wasn't so much fatigue as it was a sensation akin to the fullness after a hearty meal. He couldn't quite explain the disparity between the hunger he felt in his empty stomach and the satisfaction in his body, but his mind seemed mostly clear.

'I think my strength... has somewhat recovered.'

He could feel it without having to use his powers. The sensation wasn't entirely back to normal, likely due to the lingering effects of his heat period.

The fact that he didn't immediately get up and move around when he felt hungry, preferring instead to stay entwined in the warm embrace, was evidence enough that the aftereffects hadn't completely worn off. Yuder exhaled thinly, listening to the rhythmic heartbeat against his cheek where he lay on the chest.

Then, the man holding him opened his eyelids smoothly.

Without asking if he had awoken, Kishiar blinked slowly several times and drew Yuder's body closer. As their faces neared, he stared into his eyes, which soon swirled red. Their lips naturally overlapped.

"Mmm..."

The moment their tongues gently entwined, a tingling sensation spread from the root of his tongue down his spine. In the languid pleasure that seemed to drain the strength from his body, Yuder felt a reflexive tension in his waist.

The thought of hunger returned only after the long kiss had ended.

"...Aren't you hungry?"

It felt like a long time since he had used his voice. There was a slight sting in the back of his throat. His voice, half-lost, felt strangely unfamiliar. Kishiar responded by pressing his lips against Yuder's nose.

"It's been five days; it's natural to be hungry. Are you feeling a bit better now?"

His voice was also husky, but Kishiar, always possessing a pleasant voice, didn't sound odd at all.

'Actually...'

He had never thought a husky voice could be sexually stimulating, but now, he could understand why someone might think that.

The man, who always spoke with a strong and clear voice, now whispered languidly, causing a tingling sensation deep in his chest. It felt as if he was witnessing something incredibly rare and special.

"...Wait. But how many days have passed?"

Yuder spoke, trying to ignore the flickering embers of strength within him.

"...Has it been five days?"

"Since you entered here, the sun has set and risen five times, so it seems so."

"..."

Though slightly perplexed, Yuder counted the days in his feverish memories and soon nodded in agreement.

'I must be hungry by now.'

During their heat period, the Awakener's bodies suppress all desires and responses, except for those related to sexual urges. They hardly feel any effect from not eating or sleeping until the end. This is why Awakeners who take sleeping pills and force themselves to sleep, not eating for days, remain surprisingly unharmed.

Some birds in the north survive their lengthy mating season without eating anything, so perhaps the Awakeners, too, burn through their accumulated life force during their heat period.

'But even if that's the case for me, what about Kishiar...'

As far as he remembered, Kishiar had not left his side since they entered this place. Even if he managed to sneak out for brief moments, it seemed impossible for him to have eaten anything, and Yuder couldn't help but worry as he looked at him intently. He seemed to read his mind and answered.

"I'm fine. If I were so frail to collapse after just five days, I wouldn't have lasted this long."

"Still... You didn't have to endure this. You could have just pushed me away and gone out to eat."

With Kishiar's abilities, he could easily have caught something to eat comfortably. He could have also contacted Nathan Zuckerman occasionally for food... It seemed unnecessary for him to starve with Yuder, and as he regretted this, Kishiar laughed briefly.

"Why are you laughing?"

"No, it's just... You're still you, no matter the circumstance."

Yuder stared at him, not quite understanding his meaning. He continued.

"You fiercely ordered me not to hold back for these five days, and now you wonder why I did."

"..."

Had he done that? His fevered mind slowly recalled the past.

'So, I did.'

With words, body, or scent, Yuder had relentlessly tried to break down his walls. Whenever he showed any sign of restraint, he aggressively encouraged him to let everything out. He had been like a wild beast.

Yuder understood perfectly why he had done it, but it also felt like something he wouldn't do, a side effect of the heat period.

But that didn't mean he had nothing to say.

"The 'not holding back' I mentioned then and what I'm referring to now are different. I meant..."

"I know. You mean there was no need to go without food during the heat period."

"..."

As Yuder pursed his lips, Kishiar continued with a feigned look of injustice, smiling.

"But let me be clear, I never really held back this time. If you look at the state of this house, you and I, it would be unfair to say otherwise."

Kishiar's gaze drifted towards the lower half of their bodies, stained with the evidence of his unrestrained passion. If one were to say that this was the most significant mark of his lack of restraint, it wouldn't be entirely incorrect.

'I remember telling him before that if our heat periods weren't overlapping, there was no need to worry about consequences, yet he rarely finished inside.'

Honestly, Yuder preferred it when Kishiar released inside. More precisely, he relished the thrill of being intimately connected when Kishiar reached his peak.

The chances of successful reproduction among second gender Awakeners were exceedingly low, especially when their primary genders matched. Even during overlapping heat periods, the likelihood of conceiving was slim. In a world struggling for survival, finding an Awakener who managed to conceive under such rare circumstances was even rarer.

There were a few instances in his previous lives where an unplanned overlap of heat periods with a partner led to pregnancy, but that wasn't the case with Yuder.

'Perhaps back then... it was because Kishiar's vessel was already deeply cracked.'

It was impossible to know what Kishiar from a past life thought about this matter. However, in this life, even knowing the slim chances, Kishiar was always cautious.

But this time, for the first time, he let go of his reservations and released himself into him as he wished. Yuder still vividly remembered the overwhelming sensation of warmth filling him.

'Pregnancy, huh...'

The word, once seeming from a world entirely different from his, now felt earnestly real for the first time, perhaps an aftermath of his heat period.

He had never contemplated having a child to continue his bloodline. After his grandfather's passing, he never felt the need for kin, as more pressing matters occupied his mind. He was certain this would remain unchanged. But what about the current Kishiar?

Had the man, who had grown accustomed to living as a Duke unable to leave an heir and later became a second gender Awakener, ever entertained such thoughts?

Lost in these unfamiliar ponderings, Yuder abruptly brushed them aside when Kishiar spoke.

"Skipping meals was less important than what I desired right in front of me, so I did as I wished. Frankly, I'm not that hungry now. What I crave is not elsewhere, but right here."

His words were laden with a blatant sexual undertone, yet at the same time, they carried a profound desire to consume in the most literal sense. Yuder recalled how Kishiar had relentlessly licked, sucked, and devoured every inch of his body, biting his lip as a sudden surge of heat rekindled deep within him.

"So... are you alright otherwise? No issues apart from hunger?"

"...There are none."

"Yes. Perhaps it's time to rise. Water is here, but for a meal, the rest must be fetched from outside..."

Kishiar hesitated for a moment as he tried to rise. It was because of Yuder, who pressed down on his chest, lifting his upper body to prevent Kishiar from getting up.

"Before that."

Yuder, while conversing, glanced down at his rejuvenated manhood, wetting his lips with his tongue. A slow flame flickered in his cool, dark eyes.

“It seems there's something else that needs resolving.”

“...You said you were hungry, didn't you?”

Kishiar softened his eyebrows and smiled. However, his eyes were already intensely fixed on the man with black hair above him.

“It's a problem that you said such things, Commander. Now that the fire has been ignited, what can we do?”

“Yes... I was wrong to do this to someone still under the effects.”

Kishiar firmly grasped Yuder's buttocks. As he gently spread the flesh, a wet mucus trickled out from the suddenly opened crevice.

Yuder clenched his teeth, feeling the rising heat, and almost simultaneously, the flame in Kishiar's eyes kindled.

Only after one more time did Yuder finally have the energy to rise and clean the house. His restored abilities were less than half of his usual, but even that was enough to tidy up and organize the small cabin.

While he washed the entire house with water without moving a finger and used the wind to move the remaining items, Kishiar went out and returned with a mountain of fish and fruit. Their luggage, which contained a change of clothes, was also with them. A courier bird was also included.

“You've brought quite a lot. Where did the courier bird come from?”

“It came from Nathan. He said he arrived at the destination first and has been doing well for five days.”