

Turning 633

Turning

Chapter 633

"I thought Katchian had become the adopted son of some noble family, never to contact us again. But if he had ever reached out to Mikey, wanting Dudureli mushrooms refined like they did back then... Mikey would definitely have helped him."

Her story carried no hint of falsehood. Even considering her past life's memories, this was evident. In her previous existence, the unexplained events and mysteries surrounding her life only became clear after hearing this tale. Likely, after losing her brother, Marin had left the village to start a life as a mercenary.

'She must have learned of Emperor Katchian's identity later on.'

Perhaps she hadn't known his true identity until she came to assassinate the Emperor who had left the palace for a sojourn. It was common for commoners not to know the names of royalty or nobility. To them, the Emperor was just the Emperor, a distant figure whose name held no significance in their everyday lives.

Marin, seen through the eyes of Yuder in the thorny bushes, seemed too quick to abandon her attempt at assassinating the Emperor, almost as if she was fleeing. Considering her later displayed hatred and persistence towards the Emperor, her quick surrender at that time was somewhat questionable. If Marin had recognized Katchian in that moment, her retreat in confusion would have made sense.

She would have then started seeking revenge, certain about who had killed her brother. Although that journey ended in tragic downfall, what about this life?

'She must avoid the same fate as in her last life.'

Yuder resolved to help her avoid walking the same path. His decision stemmed from more than just sympathy. Having deviated from his previous life's path, he wanted to offer her the same chance.

'Speaking of which, her brother was a loss. He would have been a valuable asset if discovered earlier, not just for her but for others too.'

In his previous life, Katchian had carried out numerous assassinations using the thirst-inducing Dudureli mushrooms combined with other poisons. Using a weak poison first, followed by a stronger secondary poison that the victim would ingest themselves, was a cunning strategy. It allowed him to remain bold amidst numerous suspicions and doubts. Many nobles feared being poisoned in such a manner, recognizing the Emperor as not just a young ruler but a cold, ruthless strategist. Essentially, this poison had been a significant factor in Emperor Katchian reasserting his political power.

The new method of refining a seemingly worthless mushroom.

The intricate combination of two different poisons, a knowledge not easily conceived by anyone but an expert in poisons and plants.

If indeed Marin's brother had discovered all this, he would have been recognized as a remarkable talent. He was not meant to be just a village herbalist. Had he been alive, Yuder would have immediately taken him to Enon.

'Everyone thought it was Emperor Katchian's knowledge, but it was actually this?'

Recalling the bloodstained Dudureli mushroom sack he had found brought a bitter taste to his mouth.

"Honestly, as I spoke, I hoped you would say it wasn't him. But seeing your reactions, it seems I wasn't mistaken."

After hearing everything about Katchian, Marin muttered to the three unshaken listeners.

"The man who killed my brother. It's really him, isn't it?"

"Yes."

Kishiar answered calmly. At the same time, flames seemed to ignite in Marin's eyes.

"The merchant Mikey met, that was someone sent by him, wasn't it? Where is he now? Are you following Katchian? Why? What brings you to this, and who are you?"

"Let's answer one question at a time. But before that, you should know that knowing these answers might put your life in danger. We will protect you, but..."

"I don't care about that. Do you think I fear death now? Just tell me!"

Marin slammed the table, causing a cup to topple and roll onto the floor, but Kishiar remained composed. He took a quiet breath, holding Marin's gaze. Even a simple eye contact seemed to calm the raging emotions within Marin.

When she had settled enough to listen, Kishiar finally spoke.

"Katchian La Orr. That's the name he bears now."

"Katchian... La Orr? La Orr, as in... imperial family member?"

"Yes. Precisely, the current Crown Prince of the Orr Empire."

"The Crown Prince? That little Kitchi, no, Katchian?"

"A few years ago, His Majesty the Emperor held tests for exceptional children from noble families to select an adopted heir. Do you remember?"

Breathless and in disbelief, Marin finally nodded, a faint frown forming as she recalled.

"Yes. I think I remember... People who came to see the lake talked about it. They were betting on which noble's child would win... But you're saying Kitchi was that child?"

"He matched the age and description. Katchian left this village five years ago. The tests for the Crown Prince happened about a year after that. He represented the Diarca Ducal family, one of the largest powers in the East. His biological mother is known to be the daughter born from the second wife of the current Duke Diarca's cousin."

And coincidentally, as soon as it was certain that Katchian would win and be adopted by the Emperor, his biological mother died in an accident. His biological father had been out of the picture since he first entered high society under the Diarca family's name.

Even without parents, his lineage, a continuation of the Diarca bloodline, and his flawless physical traits made his adoption unproblematic.

"Those in the know probably thought Katchian's parents were conveniently disposed of by the Diarca faction... But who would delve deeper?"

No one suspected there was more to Katchian La Orr's background. It had always been so.

Kishiar didn't elaborate further, but it was enough for Marin to recall 'Katchian with a mother in the East.'

"A few months ago, at the end of the harvest festival, Crown Prince Katchian poisoned someone from another noble family at a party. He used the Dudureli mushroom combined with another poison."

"The Dudureli mushroom... That's impossible... Around harvest time, that's when Mikey was killed..."

"Yes. All the circumstances fit together well."

Marin's eyes shook violently. Clenching her fists, she finally asked with a voice trembling with anger.

"So, was the poisoning revealed, and what happened after?"

"There was no punishment whatsoever."

"What? He didn't face any punishment for his crime?"

"Officially, the Crown Prince wasn't the one who committed the crime."

A cold smile flickered at the corners of Kishiar's lips.

"The crime was pinned on a servant who had gone to procure the mushrooms on behalf of the Crown Prince, and the case was closed. However, we were curious why the Crown Prince specifically needed a little-known mushroom from a small village in the west, with which he had no apparent connection. That's what brought us here."

"So, you... Are you nobility too? Are you adversaries of Kitchi... the Crown Prince?"

Revealing his true identity in response could put Kishiar at risk. Yuder considered stepping in on his behalf but then decided against it, seeing the look in Kishiar's eyes as he gazed at Marin.

Kishiar, with a look of earnest longing for the truth, quietly observed Marin, who was looking up at him intently. Then, slowly, he moved his hand and rotated the bracelet that had been altering his appearance, deactivating the magic.

The magic that had blurred his face, hair, and eyes washed away, revealing his original golden hair, red eyes, and face.

He introduced himself properly to the wide-eyed Marin.

"I am Kishiar La Orr, the Commander of the Emperor's Cavalry. I apologize for the late introduction."

His manner of speaking, casual like that of an ordinary mercenary until now, transformed, regaining its inherent elegance.

A shiver, similar yet entirely different from the one Yuder felt when he first heard Katchian's name from Marin, ran from his heart to the tips of his fingers and toes.

Marin, witnessing the same scene, emitted a breathless sound.

"The Cavalry... the one made up only of Awakeners?"

"Yes, you're informed."

Kishiar smiled and extended his hand towards her.

"We are currently touring the country for the second recruitment of the Cavalry members. If you think our goals align in the future, would you consider applying?"