

## Turning 67

### Chapter 67

"Leaving so soon?"

"I told you. I can't afford to stay out too long."

His vacation time hadn't yet ended, but staying outside unnecessarily for too long might pique the curiosity of his colleagues or Kishiar. He had thought of some excuses beforehand, but they couldn't serve as perfect justifications.

"I'll be back in three days."

Yuder left the old drugstore, ignoring Enon's questioning gaze. However, he failed to visit the place again three days later as he had said.

An unexpected event occurred two days later.

"He hasn't returned yet?"

Yuder was standing behind Kishiar, listening to the report of his members. He was supposed to implement a new training plan he had devised from yesterday. However, there were a few members who had not yet returned despite the end of their vacation, so he had postponed it for a day. The problem was that one of the non-returnees hadn't sent any news until this very moment.

Kishiar called in a few who were close to the member who hadn't returned and listened to the stories related to him. The non-returnee's name was 'Devran Hartude', an ordinary member who had never caused any problems before.

All the members who were close to Devran insisted that there was no reason for him to intentionally not return.

"Devran has told us many times how happy he is to have passed the Cavalry test. He isn't the type to not return without any reason or even send news. There must be something wrong."

One of the members who used to share a room with Devran clenched his lips and declared so. Kishiar, looking around at the faces of the members who all agreed with the same sentiment, continued his inquiry.

"Did he say anything about his hometown, where he was headed?"

"He mentioned going to see his family. Nothing else comes to mind."

"I'm the same."

Most gave the same answer. However, one hesitated for a moment, lost in thought. Kishiar immediately pointed to him with his fingertip.

"Jol, do you remember anything?"

"Well... It's not something he mentioned this time, but something he said before... It just came to my mind. I don't know if I should mention it..."

"You can say whatever it is."

Encouraged by Kishiar's response, Jol, a member of the Cavalry, overcame his hesitation and began to speak.

"After joining the troop, Devran and I once discussed our backgrounds and hometowns. He said at the time that he wanted to bring his family and relatives he had left in his hometown here as soon as possible."

"Doesn't every commoner say that?"

Another member standing next to Jol questioned with surprise.

"Right. But then, Devran said he was worried that the lord might not allow the transfer of residence. When I asked why, he mentioned his younger sibling and suddenly looked pale, closing his mouth saying that he had said something unnecessary. It seemed like there was something going on."

Devran's hometown was a small rural village. He wasn't sure about the life there, but if his hometown was a good place for commoners to live, he wouldn't have wished to bring his family to the capital.

Yet, for a noble who valued their dignity above all else, refusing the request of a promising Cavalry member from their own territory was unthinkable. It was a place personally established by the Emperor's younger brother, Duke Peletta, and if handled well, it could forge connections with him. How could the mere relocation requests of a few commoners possibly matter?

Still, if Devran had been concerned about his request being denied, it likely meant he didn't think highly of the lord ruling his homeland.

"Because of a sibling..."

Kishiar muttered under his breath, rubbing his chin thoughtfully as he considered the words he'd just heard.

"Firstly, we should send a message to the lord of Devran's homeland, asking about the situation, and send someone to investigate. What do you think, assistant?"

"In the event something has happened to Devran, it might be too late by the time we receive a response. How about sending a message and dispatching a person at the same time?"

"That sounds better."

At Yuder's reply, Kishiar nodded and, as if something had just come to mind, smiled subtly.

"Speaking of which, Yuder, why don't you take responsibility and handle this?"

"...Are you suggesting me?"

"Who else would be better suited than you, the assistant with the greatest skills among the 330 members?"

Kishiar raised his eyebrows slightly as he asked this question, and all the members present nodded in agreement. How could the Commander himself get involved over something as minor as a member who hadn't returned from vacation? It seemed appropriate for an assistant like Yuder to handle it.

Yuder, who had thought he wouldn't be sent because there were only about three weeks left until the deadline for investigating the Red Stone, was slightly taken aback. Still, he quickly composed himself.

'Well, it's most likely he's simply been delayed on his way back. It makes sense to send someone who can handle this quickly.'

Furthermore, there was a high possibility that Kishiar saw this as a suitable opportunity to observe Yuder's abilities. In his previous life, he had created sudden circumstances where multiple things had to be handled simultaneously to see how Yuder coped. Compared to those instances, this situation was hardly burdensome.

"Leave today without delay. I will leave the number of people you need to your discretion, so choose freely from our ranks."

"I will follow your command."

Yuder swallowed a sigh that he didn't let the others hear. This would affect the training schedule he had planned for the members and the promise he had with Enon, but there was nothing he could do about it.

'Devran Hartude... I need to find out what kind of guy he was before I select who will accompany me.'

Yuder's memories of Devran were extremely vague. All he knew was that he didn't seem to have been in the cavalry for long in his previous life. Therefore, he decided to meet with Steiber, Sul's deputy commander, to hear information about Devran.

"Oh, Yuder, so you're going to look for Devran? If you're the one going, I'm sure it'll be resolved well... That's really fortunate."

Steiber, with his kind face, was very pleased to hear that Yuder had taken on the task of finding Devran. He provided all the information he knew without holding back.

"Devran is from Hartan in the east. His ability is to summon fire, which is quite powerful, but he has had difficulty controlling it."

He praised Devran's character as good-hearted, fiery like a power. He added, worried that this personality might have gotten him swept up in some unfortunate incident on his return.

"Steiber. What do you think about the possibility that Devran didn't come back on purpose?"

"There's no way. He was never late for training even once. If something happened back home and he thought he wouldn't be able to return on time, he would have contacted the Cavalry in advance."

Steiber's answer was firm. Yuder nodded and committed the information he'd given to memory.

Those who had been close to Devran, like Steiber, all insisted that there was no way he wouldn't have returned without a reason. It was clear that he had been more than content with his life in the Cavalry, his passion overflowing.

After gathering this information, Yuder decided to select members to join him in searching for Devran.

'The requirements: someone with good physical strength and agility to travel quickly. Someone with skills that would aid in the search. Someone who would follow my orders without wasting time. And... finally, someone familiar with the geography and customs of Hartan or the eastern region.'

The person with the most useful skills for the search was Kanna, but Yuder had decided against bringing her. He wanted her to focus on her training while he was away.

After considering the remaining criteria, he found few suitable candidates. After much thought, Yuder wrote the names of his selected members on a piece of paper to report to Kishiar.

"Gakane Bolunwald. Jimmy Ocker. Hm. Are those two really enough?"

"Yes."

Kishiar, who received the paper from Yuder, could not hide his surprise at the only two names written on it. However, Yuder had no intention of adding more people.

Gakane was more familiar with Yuder's personality and style than anyone, and his shadow clone was perfect for moving and communicating without attracting the attention of others. As for Jimmy Ocker, despite being a young boy, his knowledge of the local geography and customs, being from the East, would be a great help while also not drawing suspicion.

"Gakane, maybe. But Jimmy Ocker is still a kid, isn't he?"

"He may be young, but isn't it you, the commander, who saw him as a capable member of the squad? From what I've observed of Jimmy so far, I judge that he can handle a mission of this magnitude."

If the mission involved killing or something that wasn't good for emotional education, Yuder would have excluded Jimmy. But this mission's purpose was a search. During their training, Yuder had witnessed firsthand just how talented an Awakener Jimmy was.

Jimmy knew the importance of the opportunity given to him. The boy was always mature, had never whined about missing his parents even during training that would make adults struggle.

Considering that noble boys who entered the Imperial Knights at a young age often gave up on the path despite receiving countless privileges, Jimmy's qualities stood out.

"I assume both have agreed to accompany you on the mission."

"Of course."

Just before reporting to Kishiar, Yuder called Gakane and Jimmy to explain the mission and ask if they were willing to go with him. Gakane accepted readily, and Jimmy, overwhelmed with excitement, couldn't hide his youthful emotion as he vowed to be of help.

"Alright. Then I'll trust and leave it to you."

Kishiar nodded and folded the paper again.