

Turning

Chapter 7

As the atmosphere became somewhat relaxed, everyone naturally aligned themselves into rows. Yuder spotted a distinctive red hair not too far away. It was Gakane.

He hadn't noticed Yuder yet, but it was slightly amusing to see him constantly looking around as if searching for something.

"The commander is entering. Everyone stand straight."

Finally, someone stood on the prepared platform at the front of the training ground amidst the noise outside. A few knights followed him in, as if escorting him, but only one stood on the platform.

The tall man with shining blonde hair, red eyes, and white uniform instantly captivated everyone's attention. Just his presence alone made it feel as if everything around had lost its light.

"Nice to meet you all. I am Duke Pelleta, Kishiar La Orr."

A man whose very existence was like the sun itself. That was the true face of Kishiar La Orr without using transformation magic.

All 330 members of the Cavalry Corps and the Imperial Knights could not take their eyes off Kishiar. He glanced around lightly as if to confirm that everyone was looking at him.

Yuder saw his red eyes flicker ever so slightly when their eyes met, but he didn't show any reaction.

"As you can see, I am a member of the imperial family born with the power of light and a duke at the same time. But does that matter to you? ...No. It doesn't mean anything here."

Kishiar's soft voice echoed through the space, making it feel as if it was bewitching. Only the Imperial Knights seemed confused and embarrassed.

"Here, I am merely one who has awakened by the power of the Red Stone, just like all of you. And I was chosen to represent you simply because I know His Majesty a little better. The spirit of the Cavalry is solely for the security and power of the Empire, and your own freedom. That should be enough. You may not understand the meaning now, but I hope you will realize it someday."

"..."

Everyone fell silent at his declaration, which was more shocking than radical. Not even a breath could be heard.

"I'll end my inaugural address here. You will temporarily reside on the Imperial Knights' premises until the proper construction of the Cavalry's exclusive building is complete. If you have any questions, feel free to visit the Cavalry commander's office. That's all."

"Now, let's greet the commander."

Unable to hide their confusion, one of the Imperial Knights shouted. The inexperienced new recruits, who didn't even have a proper way to salute yet, each gave their own individual greetings. The knights watched with a disgusted expression, sighing in disbelief.

Kishiar La Orr was the only one smiling there.

"The commander, huh? He's quite an odd one."

After the shocking inauguration ceremony, the Cavalry members were guided to a temporary housing building. They were divided into groups of four based on gender, sharing a room together.

They had received a vague explanation that they would live like this until the division of tasks within the Cavalry was finalized, but no one complained.

That was because Kishiar's inaugural address had been so shocking, and their curiosity about meeting others with the same abilities for the first time in their lives was immense.

"Yuder! I knew you'd pass!"

Yuder finally spotted Gakane among the new recruits, running towards him like a puppy that had found its owner.

"I passed too. And so did Kanna. Have you seen her?"

Gakane's ability to quickly switch from formal to informal speech and become friendly was surprising. When Yuder shook his head, Gakane happily patted his back, saying he'd be able to greet her soon.

"It's amazing that all three of us passed. It must be thanks to your blessing. Which room are you in?"

"Um..."

Yuder glanced at the paper in his hand. His accommodation was in room 36 on the third floor of the building. Seeing this, Gakane let out a small cheer.

"We're in the same room! I wonder who the other two are?"

"Well, we'll find out when we get there."

Yuder didn't care who he shared a room with, but Gakane seemed to feel differently. He couldn't hide his excitement, having never shared a room with anyone like this before.

"It feels like we've really become knights. Living together, training together. Doesn't it sound fun?"

"..."

'Fun, huh...'

Yuder recalled the most difficult times in his memories. For about a month after he first joined the Cavalry, he was pushed to the brink of death. Back then, they hadn't yet developed standardized training methods for each ability wielder.

Kishiar had rolled up his sleeves and experimented with the early recruits to create a system. Thanks to that, by the next recruitment round, the Cavalry had a somewhat structured organization.

Things probably wouldn't be much different this time. Even if Yuder were in Kishiar's position right now, he couldn't think of a better way to establish the newly-formed Cavalry' system.

He'd see if Gakane could still call it fun after a week.

Re to the past wasn't bad, but the thought of going through hellish training again wasn't pleasant. After all, Yuder knew best how to develop his own abilities, and there were hardly any physical methods involved.

But he couldn't explain that to Kishiar, so he just had to endure.

Sighing, Yuder arrived at their room to find two men who would share the room with them had already arrived.

"Are you two our roommates?"

A skinny, freckled man asked nervously. His name was Juan, and his ability allowed him to move at a speed that made him nearly invisible to the naked eye.

"I'm Juan. And that guy over there is Kurga."

Yuder looked at Kurga, who was shamelessly lying on a bed. He looked more like a bear than a human.

In fact, his ability was to enlarge his body and maximize his combat abilities, so his appearance was fitting.

Although Yuder had seen both of them in passing and remembered their faces, they hadn't had any real conversations due to their unremarkable skills.

There was a stark difference between Yuder, who had quickly become a leader shortly after joining the Cavalry, and the ordinary Awakeners.

In the past, Yuder didn't have the leisure to pay attention to others with lesser abilities. Yuder's focus had always been on becoming stronger and protecting his own body, and since strange signs appeared in the world, his focus shifted to discovering and stopping their cause.

But this time was different. He had learned through death that he couldn't solve the problem alone, so he decided to broaden his attention to those around him and never become the leader of the Cavalry again.

"I'm Gakane. This is Yuder. I have the ability to summon my shadow whenever I want, and as for him... Come to think of it, Yuder, I didn't know what your ability was."

Yuder finally remembered the quite useful ability of Gakane Bolunwald, which he had thought of before.

'Right. He could summon a doppelganger through his shadow, using it for communication or combat, and was highly rated for it.'

"I can imbue my sword with fire and water."

"Fire and water? Both?"

"Quite impressive."

The others widened their eyes at Yuder's words. They would probably be more surprised if they knew he was capable of even more, but it wasn't the time to reveal that.

"Alright. Let's get along from now on."

"Uh, yeah. Me too."

After exchanging greetings, they divided the beds and areas to use. Many of them had anticipated group living before joining the Cavalry, so there were no conflicts.

'It must be like a dream come true for commoners.'

Excluding Gakane, the other three who would be staying in this room were all commoners without surnames. For them, it must have been a very unfamiliar experience to live in a spacious room with four beds, clean bedding, and meals provided.

'But they'll get used to it soon.'

Thus began Yuder's second experience in the Cavalry.

Of the 330 Cavalry members, just over 200 were without surnames.

This meant that more than half of them were illiterate. Before the Red Stone fell, they wouldn't even have crossed paths with those who had surnames, but their fate had completely changed now.

Training facilities that only the Imperial Knights could use were now all occupied by the Cavalry. Every day, there were explosions of fire and broken

equipment at the training grounds, but no one found it strange. It was only natural when those with abilities were together.

Commander Kishiar ordered the Cavalry members to undergo physical training, get accustomed to their power, develop their individual abilities, and even study letters simultaneously.

It was an incredibly demanding task, but knowing what a great privilege it was, everyone moved according to the training schedule with a do-or-die attitude.

As a result, after a few weeks, the Cavalry members achieved remarkable results at an astonishing speed. Of course, no one could catch up to Yuder, who did everything twice.

Chapter 8

"Nothing much has changed from the past so far."

Of course, Yuder's roommate and Kanna's acceptance had changed from the past, but the faces of those who had been roommates then were not memorable enough, and the addition of just Kanna did not affect the overall flow, so it did not matter.

The events happening in the Cavalry proceeded as Yuder knew them.

There were only minor incidents, such as the blue-haired twins engaging in a verbal fight with the passing knights or a brief commotion occurring during training due to someone causing a magical explosion.

"And soon, our lodging will change."

They would move from the temporary residence in the Imperial Knight dormitory to the newly completed building dedicated to the Cavalry. That place had been Yuder's true home for a long time before he was caught.

Although the Emperor had given him several houses after he was promoted, Yuder had never felt attached to them.

His real home had always been the small room in the top corner of the building where the Cavalry members stayed.

However, this time he wouldn't be promoted, so he could never stay in that room.

Feeling strangely nostalgic for the place that had not even been built yet, Yuder exhaled softly.

"Yuder, surely you're not tired already?"

Gakane, who had been training next to him, asked incredulously. He had become a famous figure within the Cavalry for his good looks and sociability, but he had never left Yuder's side.

Moreover, he always initiated conversations with Yuder, regardless of whether Yuder responded. It was both amazing and strange to interact with him.

In fact, if one were to mention the most significant change since Yuder's return, it would be his relationship with Gakane.

However, Gakane would die in an accident during a mission about a year later. The event that Yuder had once felt indifferent to now occasionally tormented his mind.

'I intend to prevent the deaths of those with abilities, including Gakane Volunbalt's, but...'

Could he do it? He hadn't yet accomplished something significant enough to save someone destined to die. It was unknown whether his efforts would succeed or fail. The outcome of events that had not yet occurred could not be known.

"I'm fine."

Yuder cleared his thoughts and stood up again.

"That's right. That's more like you."

What did it mean to be like himself? Even though he had behaved the same way, no one had tried to make eye contact with Yuder in the past. However, the Gakane in front of him looked at him with an innocent gaze. It was both strange and peculiar.

A month passed, and the Cavalry members moved from their temporary lodgings to the new building made specifically for them. It was located right next to the Imperial Knights grounds.

The building had been designed with their training in mind, but the knights were furious that the Cavalry members, whom they despised like insects, had better accommodations than they did.

Yuder's roommate remained the same, but the room was much larger than before. When they lay down in their separate beds, their spaces were divided enough to be invisible to each other.

And so, as Yuder remembered, the harsh training continued, constantly changing its methods. There were no dropouts, but there were occasional injuries.

What was surprising was that Kishiar, the commander, also participated in the same training. The members were amazed, but Yuder wasn't. It had been the same in the past.

'For the highest-ranking person to move directly to determine the training method, it's not an ordinary thing to do.'

Unlike the members who were bonding with each other, Kishiar disappeared immediately after training, but just the fact that he was training with them was encouraging for everyone.

After spending three months like this, Kishiar finally called the members of the Cavalry again.

They stood before the commander with a look that was both the same and different from before. The most significant change was the officially issued black uniforms.

When more than 300 of them gathered, all wearing uniforms that looked similar to Kishiar's white uniform but much simpler, the atmosphere became unusually tense.

"First of all, I would like to thank you for following the unstructured training you have received so far."

Kishiar began with a brief greeting, then got to the main point.

"For the past three months, I've been testing your limits. The reason was to establish and complete the structure of the Cavalry, and now it's over. So, based on the training experience you have received, you must make a choice."

"A choice?"

Hinn, the older of the blue-haired twins, asked. If the knights had been there, they would have glared at her for daring to question the duke, but there were only Kishiar and the Cavalry members there. Kishiar nodded with a smile, showing no sign of offense.

"That's right. You will choose the divisions within the Cavalry. There are three choices in total. One is the Shin Division, the second is the Sul Division, and the third is the Jung Division."

The explanation Yuder had heard long ago was repeated.

Kishiar divided the huge group called the Cavalry into three smaller groups. The Shin Division gathered those who focused on physical abilities, the Sul Division gathered those with magic-like abilities like Yuder, and the Jung Division gathered everyone else.

"I'm not asking you to choose right here, right now. Make up your mind and let me know within a week."

Kishiar used the entire top floor of the new Cavalry dormitory building all by himself. Once everyone answered, the announcement was over.

"Yuder, which division will you choose? Obviously the Sul Division?"

On the way back to the dormitory, Gakane spoke to Yuder.

"What about you?"

Unable to confirm his decision right away, Yuder instead changed the direction of the conversation. Fortunately, Gakane didn't suspect Yuder's intention and immediately changed direction.

"I'll go with the Shin Division. I thought about the Sul Division, but during the training, I felt that this ability might not be the end for me. If I can improve more... I think the Shin Division would be the right choice."

Yuder looked at Gakane, slightly surprised. It had been only three months since he joined the Cavalry, and he had a feeling that his abilities could develop further? It was a remarkably rapid progression.

It was even more so in a situation where the academic world had not yet announced that the abilities of awakened individuals could develop depending on their efforts and conditions.

Though he died early and didn't know it, Gakane's talent might have been even more exceptional than Yuder had thought.

'Where should I go, then?'

Yuder fell into deep thought. During the three months of quietly undergoing training, he became convinced that this situation wasn't a dream and that he could truly change the future if he did well.

In the past, he had entered the Sul Division without hesitation and quickly became the deputy commander representing it. However, doing so wouldn't make much difference from the past. He wanted to avoid repeating an already predetermined outcome.

'Then, the only option left is the Shin Division.'

The Shin Division... Yuder repeated the name several times in his head.

Although his greatest ability was manipulating all natural attributes, he could also freely handle weapons, so there was a high probability he wouldn't fall behind in the Physical Division.

Of course, he might not rise to the rank of deputy commander as before, but that was actually what Yuder wanted.

'And if I go to the Shin Division... I'll see Kishiar La Orr more often.'

Yuder thought of Kishiar La Orr's abilities. His abilities, which nobody knew yet, were specifically suited for the Shin Division.

'He can freely control power and speed while demonstrating outstanding physical control, excelling in both physical and attribute-based defenses.'

The most special aspect among them was 'physical control.'

In the past, when he had been part of the Sul Division, he barely met Kishiar, the commander, as he was busy taking care of his subordinates. They did eventually meet regularly, but it wasn't what Yuder had desired.

However, things would be different if he joined the Shin Division. In the past, Kishiar had often personally supervised the members of the Shin Division and provided guidance on their training direction.

Kishiar was an incredibly skilled leader, even if Yuder didn't want to admit it. The fact became even more apparent when he went back in time.

He hadn't just formed the Cavalry based on short-term judgments. Yuder often found himself at a loss for words when he saw Kishiar's actions overlapping with future events.

'But why?'

Why did Kishiar La Orr pass the position of leader to Yuder at that time?

And without any hesitation, as if it had been planned from the beginning.

"..."

Yuder decided that he had to go to the Shin Division and find out the reason.

Most of the Cavalry members made their decisions about which division to join within three days.

Even those who initially had no idea eventually gained an objective evaluation of their abilities after three months of training and education.

Those who manifested strong physical abilities went to the Shin Division, and those who manifested abilities similar to magic went to the Sul Division. Those who didn't fit into either category chose the Jung Division, but there were fewer than ten of them among the 330 total members.

"Yuder! Yuder! Wait a moment, please."

Kanna, who had called Yuder now, was also one of those ten people.

Chapter 9

"Yuder! Yuder! Wait a moment."

Yuder halted at her call, just as he was about to escape the tedious reading and writing class.

In the world before Yuder died, Kanna was one of the few who had adapted better to the current Cavalry unit than anyone else, even though she hadn't been part of it.

It was no ordinary feat to maintain a somewhat friendly relationship with everyone among the Cavalry unit members, who were diverse in terms of social status, age, gender, and even their places of origin.

Despite not having exceptional physical abilities in exchange for her special powers, the fact that she never complained during the grueling training was enough to win the affection of many.

As if her tense and rigid expression when they first met was a lie, Kanna as a member of the Cavalry unit was praised for being sociable and competent.

Kanna never forgot her gratitude towards Yuder, who had helped her pass the entrance exam for the Cavalry unit. Although they hardly had a chance to meet due to the different training schedules, they always exchanged warm greetings whenever they crossed paths.

Thanks to Kanna and Gakane spreading stories about Yuder's advice on the Cavalry unit test as if it were a mysterious experience, Yuder received much more friendly attention from his colleagues than before.

It was a strange experience for him, who used to be alone among the Awakeners with the same power, as he was considered to be quiet and unlucky.

"Phew. It's so difficult to catch a glimpse of your face."

Kanna, who had called Yuder, panted with a smile.

"What's the matter?"

"Oh, nothing much. I was just wondering if it's true that you haven't chosen your division yet."

Yuder looked into Kanna's blue eyes and nodded slightly.

"It's true."

"Is there any reason? The commander was curious about it."

At those words, Yuder paused for a moment.

"The commander?"

Why was Kishiar La Orr's name mentioned here? Yuder's face, which tilted its head and asked back, had subtle emotions that Kanna could hardly perceive.

"I went to the commander's office earlier with Jodie to report on our division selections. He asked if I had any idea which division you might choose."

"..."

"I actually thought you would've chosen your course on the first day. Do you have any concerns? If you need advice, you can tell me anything. I'm confident in reading information, so if you need help, I'll do it for free."

Kanna occasionally used her ability to help her fellow unit members. Her ability to read the information of objects was surprisingly helpful to many people.

It was like fortune-telling, helping people find what they had forgotten or making them realize things they didn't know themselves.

It was only natural that many people wanted to see it for themselves, even if they had to pay for it. Everything was just as Yuder had expected.

"No, I'm fine."

However, Yuder had no reason to ask for her help. Not yet, anyway.

For him, the most important thing right now was not to lose the valuable human resources he had once forgotten and passed by.

'However... that man's intentions do bother me....!'

Yuder hesitated for a moment before opening his mouth towards Kanna.

"Did he say anything else besides that?"

"Anything else?"

Kanna seemed to be recalling her memory for a moment, then shook her head.

"I don't remember anything in particular."

"I see."

"Maybe he thought I was the one who talked the most with you and just asked without any particular meaning. After all, you only have to decide by tomorrow, so don't feel pressured."

Although Kanna said that, Yuder didn't think so. She didn't know what kind of person Kishiar La Orr was.

Most of the members had a bottomless faith and affection for Kishiar, who underwent tough training with them and showed a fair attitude. However, that man was not as fair as they thought. Rather, if they knew...

Yuder furrowed his brow as he recalled several memories related to that man. Most memories of him weren't very pleasant.

'But the person I need to save and bring to my side first is still that man.'

Although he was the man Yuder had killed in the past, it was different this time. He was still alive and would not die in the future. Not only that, but Yuder also had to make sure that he remained alive and continued to hold the position of the commander of the Cavalry. Because Yuder would make it so.

Yuder composed himself. As he bowed his head lightly to Kanna to convey his gratitude, her face briefly showed a hint of wanting to say something more.

"Oh, speaking of which..."

"Yes?"

As he looked at her as if to ask if she had anything more to say, Kanna slightly furrowed her brow.

"The commander thinks that you and I are close, but isn't it a bit too much that you still don't speak comfortably with me? You speak comfortably with Gakane and your roommates, so why do you keep using formal language with me?"

Caught off guard by her unexpected words, Yuder momentarily froze. It was the first time someone had ever said that to him, from his previous life to the present. Why did he use casual language with some people and formal language with others? Well...

"Since you started using formal language first, I just use it too."

"Oh, so it's not a big deal then?"

Of course, it wasn't a big deal. Yuder had always been terrible at building relationships with people, perhaps due to his years of living alone in the mountains.

The reason he was able to lead a group for nearly ten years was that the Cavalry was a unique organization that promoted people based solely on the strength or weakness of their abilities.

"Actually, I was really concerned about it. I was curious about the reason. But if it's simply for that reason, I'll use informal language from now with you. Is that okay? After all, the members usually use casual language regardless of their status."

"Do as you please."

As Yuder slowly replied, Kanna's expression brightened.

"Great. I should have asked earlier. It feels refreshing. See you later, then!"

Yuder turned his head, watching Kanna's retreating figure disappear.

He couldn't have imagined that many Cavalry members who had found it difficult to talk to him properly due to their thoughts about him would, upon hearing Kanna's words, begin using informal language with him from the next day.

At that time, there was only one thought that filled Yuder's mind. As soon as the day's tasks were over, he would go to where Kishiar La Orr was staying and deliver the news of the decision he had made. That was all.

The training of the Cavalry ended around sunset. After finishing dinner, Yuder managed to shake off Gakane, who was clinging to him, asking to play cards together, and headed to the upper floor of the dormitory building.

After climbing the seemingly endless spiral staircase for several floors, he finally reached the fifth floor. There, a white, antique door appeared, adorned with a golden lion's head as a door knocker. It was the symbol of the imperial family - the lion that swallowed the light.

Yuder stopped for a moment as he saw the door knocker. He felt a strange emotion. Once, he could have entered his room through that door.

After Kishiar La Orr handed over the position of the leader of the Cavalry to Yuder, he used the original structure of the room without any changes.

The only difference was that, unlike Kishiar who had used an entire floor for personal purposes befitting his high status, Yuder had converted the remaining space, except for a small bedroom, into a place that could be used for public purposes.

People found it creepy that he could use the space of the former commander, rumored to have been killed by him, without any problem. But for Yuder, this was the only place where he could breathe without having to worry about others' eyes.

It felt as if the room he had used for nearly ten years would appear as soon as he opened that door. It was a familiar yet very strange feeling.

Yuder suppressed his emotions and reached for the door knocker. However, before he could knock, the door opened from the inside, revealing a tall man.

"...Hmm?"

"..."

Apparently about to go somewhere, Kishiar, dressed in simple clothes with a long coat over them, momentarily widened his eyes before his expression returned to its usual state.

Perhaps it was because they had encountered an unexpected situation, but Yuder felt his heart beating a little faster, even though he thought he had mentally prepared himself for the visit.

Since his return, this was the first time he had properly faced Kishiar, and it was also the first time they had met alone.

During the Cavalry test, Kishiar had used a transformation spell on his face, allowing Yuder to maintain an objective emotional state. Apart from that, there had been no reason to worry about him, as they had barely glimpsed each other occasionally among the 300 Cavalry members.

But now, it was different. Would this be the feeling of facing a monster waiting for him in a dead-end alley with no other place or reason to turn his gaze?

Yuder looked up at Kishiar and took a thin, deep breath. Finally, his racing heart calmed down a bit.

Despite knowing that the other party wouldn't have any thoughts about it, the constant intrusion of uncomfortable emotions and unnecessary feelings must have been due to the strong memories of the past.

Kishiar La Orr. In reality, Yuder had known him for less than two years. However, his existence had left an indelible and powerful mark on Yuder's life, whether it had been a short or long time.

Chapter 10

Kishiar La Orr had taught Yuder many things.

How to stand in the position of the Cavalry commander, how to endure in a court filled with hyenas, and even how to live as an Omega and an empowered person after awakening.

There had been times when he resented him for unilaterally passing on too much burden to him, but his thoughts changed slightly when it was about time for him to die.

Kishiar La Orr had definitely chosen Yuder as the commander among the more than 300 members with some kind of will in mind. However, it was unclear what he hoped for in making that choice.

Did he really not know that Yuder would become the lion to take his life when he handed over the position of the Cavalry commander? Could he, who was well aware of the imperial and noble families' circumstances, have not known that such an order would come down?

With Kishiar's abilities, he could have certainly escaped death by running away beforehand or, on the contrary, killed Yuder. But he didn't. Yuder discovered that fact too late to ask him why he had acted that way. The dead couldn't speak.

However, now he might be able to understand his intentions without receiving the burdens he offered. To do that, he first had to avoid killing him as before.

"I'm wondering when will the top Cavalry candidate finally arrive? It's about time you showed up. Did you finally make your decision?"

Kishiar spoke to him casually with a smile. His tone was far too relaxed for an imperial noble to address a commoner, but Yuder was not surprised. He already knew his personality.

"Yes. But if you were about to leave, I'll come back another time."

"No, it's fine. I didn't have any plans, I was just about to go out for a while and come back."

Kishiar stepped back a few paces with a smile.

"Come in."

Yuder had an unusual experience of stepping into the place as a guest, where he had once used it for a much longer time. The space, hastily constructed but considering it was for an imperial family member, showed the efforts of the artisans to match its dignity.

The high-domed ceiling was above the floor covered with the highest-grade carpet from the Southern Mountains without any gaps. The central furnace, fueled by magic stones from the North, looked more like a beautiful sculpture than a furnace.

The majestic bookshelf that filled an entire wall and the black marble desk beneath it exuded an awe-inspiring presence that one would hardly dare to touch.

What about the beauty of the dozen or so paintings depicting ancient myths handed down in the Orr Empire?

The white annular stone walls adorned with the paintings shone brilliantly in five colors even without light. Visitors who witnessed the spectacle were naturally drawn into a sense of awe, as if they were standing before a temple altar.

Of course, Yuder, who was all too familiar with the scenery, merely glanced around once without feeling any surprise.

Instead, his gaze was drawn to the upper part of the stone furnace that emitted red and blue flames.

A transparent gemstone, carved to appear as if it were floating in the air, served as a sword stand, and on it rested a single, massive sword.

'The Divine Sword Orr.'

At first glance, it was clear that this was not a sword meant for ordinary people to use. Despite being stored within a scabbard that contained all manner of sacred power, magic, and the technique of different races, the energy it emitted was extraordinary.

The sword, which merely observing seemed to sharpen one's senses with its keen aura, was none other than the Divine Sword Orr, said to have been bestowed upon the first emperor who founded the Orr Empire by the messenger of the God.

Those without imperial blood could hold the sword. However, being able to hold it did not mean they could wield it.

The Divine Sword was famous for being extremely particular about its user's abilities and qualities. Throughout the thousand-year history of the empire, there had been fewer than ten people who were able to wield the sword.

And Kishiar La Orr was the only person of his time chosen by the Divine Sword Orr.

After his death, no one else had appeared who could wield the sword even until the day Yuder died.

The proud Divine Sword, which even Yuder, who boasted unparalleled abilities, couldn't touch. Since no one but the chosen one could move the sword, it remained forever in the Pelleta Duchy's estate, where Kishiar La Orr had last resided.

Due to its demanding nature, even the nobility rarely knew what the Divine Sword looked like. It was only natural, as Kishiar had not frequently carried or used the sword even after being revealed as the chosen one.

Why did the Divine Sword choose Kishiar if it wouldn't be properly used by its chosen master? If the sword knew that it would part so quickly with its owner, would it have made the same choice?

Occasionally, he wondered about this, but it was as unknowable as Kishiar's intentions.

"Is the sword fascinating?"

Kishiar spoke to Yuder, who was staring solely at the Divine Sword.

"Normally, people are first captivated by other parts of this room and don't pay much attention to it."

Indeed, it wasn't the reaction expected of an ordinary commoner.

Yuder murmured inwardly. Although the sword was a legendary Divine Sword, it appeared to be nothing more than an ordinary ceremonial sword for high-ranking individuals.

It didn't look like a sword that could be used in actual combat, and with the surroundings so grand and extravagant, it was reasonable that people didn't focus on the sword first.

'But for me, that sword always bothered me the most.'

Yuder recalled a memory from long ago. Now, knowing the appearance and abilities of the Divine Sword and the events tied to it in the future, it was natural for his gaze to be drawn to it. However, before he traveled back in

time, when he was just a young member of the Cavalry, Yuder had first looked at that sword.

It was possible because his senses, which could feel mana, were so keen that they could penetrate the protective barrier of the scabbard that hid the sword's aura. Back then, Kishiar had shown great interest in Yuder for the first time.

Only then did Yuder finally turn his gaze away from the Divine Sword Orr and look towards Kishiar. With a soft, enigmatic smile playing at the corners of his lips, Kishiar watched Yuder intently.

So far, the gaze on Yuder, who was slightly above average, was one of mere curiosity.

"I just looked at the sword because it gave off an unusual vibe."

"Unusual? In what way?"

At this point, Kishiar hadn't yet publicly announced that he was the owner of the divine sword. That revelation would come later, when he was assigned a top-secret mission to collect the Red Stone.

So for now, it was crucial to feign ignorance while piquing Kishiar's interest.

"Just looking at it, I feel an energy as if it's targeting me. The sword sheath seems to be blocking it, but it can't completely hide it."

It wasn't a lie. In fact, at that moment, he was feeling the sharp energy flowing from the sword throughout his body.

'Somehow, the energy feels even stronger than what I felt before... Am I imagining things?'

In the past, he had felt unusual energy from the sword, but it was never enough to make his entire body feel sore.

Yuder used to possess extraordinary abilities, powerful enough to make people believe that he had no equal in the world. Could the reversal of time have heightened his senses beyond their original level? It was an unknown matter.

Upon hearing Yuder's words, Kishiar's gaze shifted to the sword. A moment later, the energy that had been directed at Yuder disappeared as if it were a lie.

"Hmm. Can you feel the energy diminishing?"

Seeing Yuder's shoulders stiffen, Kishiar spoke with an amused expression.

"It seems you're not lying."

"I've never seen a sword with such power before."

"Really? Haven't you heard of something similar?"

For a moment, Yuder worried that Kishiar had noticed something. Even though he knew it was unlikely, he was briefly tense.

"Everyone knows the story of the founding Emperor and his Divine Sword Orr."

"...Ah."

His worry had been unnecessary. Yuder exhaled softly and nodded.

"So are you saying that sword is the divine sword?"

"Yes. To be exact, I'm the twelfth owner. It's a fussy thing, not allowing anyone but the chosen one to wield it."

Yuder already knew the story. Nevertheless, he feigned surprise as if hearing it for the first time. Kishiar did not doubt his reaction and continued talking.

"I've seen many awakened through the power of the Red Stone, but you're the first to sense energy so keenly. Was it like this since your awakening? Or did you feel more sensitive to mana or other energies than others during your daily life?"

"It's been like this since my awakening."

"I see."

Kishiar nodded, rubbing the area below his lips.

"I should have mentioned this earlier, but I was one of the examiners when you first took the Cavalry test as number 423. Did you know that?"

"You were the one on the far right."

"Yes. You have a rare talent for distinguishing things so precisely. You truly are sensitive to energy."

The main reason Yuder recognized Kishiar was not his sensitivity to energy, but because he had seen Kishiar in that form before. However, Yuder decided not to reveal the truth.

"Back then, I thought your talent was exceptionally suited to both the Shin and the Sul Divisions. But if I had to choose, I thought you would be more suited to the Sul... Was I wrong?"