

## Turning 74

### Chapter 74

Gakane had summoned his shadow clone to sift through the stacked boxes, spreading the cleaner ones on the ground. Once he had arranged some of the boxes to serve as makeshift chairs and a bed, everyone sat down. Then, Nahan started a conversation with Gakane.

"You have a unique ability. Can your shadow pass through walls?"

"Why do you want to know?"

Though Gakane had always seemed friendly, his reluctance to let down his guard in front of Nahan suggested he was selective in displaying his social skills.

After that, an uncomfortable silence lingered, filled only with the anticipation of waiting. Perhaps growing weary of waiting in the late hour, Jimmy began to doze off, leaning against the wall.

By the time the flickering candle inside the lantern had melted down by half, murmuring voices echoed from outside the window. It seemed the villagers who had gone to the back mountain had returned.

"Ah, um... it seems everyone is back...? They'll call us soon, right?"

Jimmy, who had been shaking his head as he fought sleep, perked up his ears and opened his eyes at the sound. Yuder, watching the young boy struggle valiantly against his sleepiness and anxiety, gently tapped his round head.

"If you're sleepy, just lay down and sleep."

"No, I'm not sleepy. I didn't sleep!"

Startled by Yuder's touch, Jimmy made his excuse, his face becoming a vivid red even in the dim light. Of course, no one believed him.

Given the excessive hospitality they had received, the likelihood of the deceased Lord's son calling them right away was fifty-fifty. If nothing was amiss, they would be summoned promptly, but if not, who knew what might happen.

'We'll find out soon enough.'

The murmuring voices echoed from the castle entrance for quite a while, and the inside was also rather noisy. However, no sound of someone coming to call them was heard. Even as darkness gave way to the approaching dawn, the situation remained the same.

Eventually, when the sun had fully risen, Yuder rose from his spot and turned the ring handle on the door.

Creak. Creak-creak. No matter how many times he turned and pushed, the door refused to open outward.

"It's now clear."

Yuder's voice resonated low in the stuffy room.

"It seems they have no intention of meeting us."

"This is truly ridiculous."

Gakane sneered, his eyes showing signs of fatigue.

"So, what's the plan now?"

If asked, Gakane could immediately summon his shadow clone to break down the door. Jimmy was also a boy who, despite his rusty practice sword, could slice through walls like the legendary sword masters in the tales.

"Just say the word. It'll be quick to break down and get out."

But contrary to Gakane's thoughts, Yuder did not immediately try to break down the door. Lost in thought for a moment, he moved to the window and began to whistle in a peculiar pattern.

After repeating the distinctive whistle three times, something flew from afar into the small window. Perched on Yuder's outstretched finger like a torch was undoubtedly the messenger bird he had kept at his saddle side until yesterday.

"...A messenger bird?"

"Let's send a report first, then move."

His soft voice drew attention. Gakane watched as Yuder drew a small piece of paper from his pocket. Just as he wondered how Yuder planned to write without a pen, Yuder lifted a finger and brought it close to the paper.

Moments later, a minuscule flame flowed forth, outlining delicate shapes akin to script, gently searing the surface of the paper. While he had turned his body to prevent others from seeing what he was writing, everyone could recognize the incredible precision involved in his ability, an application so intricate it was scarcely believable even to those watching.

Many besides Yuder could wield the power of flame, but none were capable of utilizing it in such a way, with such control. This level of fine-tuning was even more challenging than summoning a flame large enough to blanket an entire mountain.

Watching the astonishment, not entirely concealed, in the eyes of the bandit leader who had introduced himself as Nahan, Gakane felt a covert sense of superiority.

After awakening their abilities, these individuals had lived out their lives in arrogance. However, once they joined the Cavalry, they experienced a profound sense of defeat in the face of Yuder's overwhelming skill.

Even though Kishiar, the Commander, was the one who had created the Cavalry, it was largely thanks to Yuder that they had learned humility and unified through effort. Regardless of how exceptional the bandit leader's abilities were, Gakane was sure he would be no exception. Feeling this, his nerves, which had been on edge ever since his arrival, began to regain a sense of calm.

Yuder, who had seemingly premeditated his words, swiftly crafted the letter. He then rolled up the paper and placed it in a small pouch attached to the leg of the messenger bird. As he approached the window and reached out his hand, the bird gave a low cry, unfurled its wings, and flew away.

"We're done here. Now... let's go."

Yuder, having turned his body around, fixed his intense gaze on the closed door. His eyes bore a coldness that made one feel as if they were experiencing winter.

"Sir, Sir Zakail! Sir Zakail!"

A few days ago, the youngest son of Lord Hartan, Zakail Hartan, who had unexpectedly passed away, had been incredibly tired from attending the funeral till late into the night.

However, the hand shaking him awake, despite having been commanded not to disturb him, was insistently rough, as if it couldn't care less about his state.

"Sir Zakail! Please wake up. Master Zakail!"

"What is it?"

"They... they're here."

"..."

The tremor in the voice, laden with loathing and fear, was unnaturally intense. Zakail felt sleep abandon him instantly, his heavy eyelids snapping open as he reluctantly sat up.

"Who are you talking about?"

"Well, last night, some uninvited guests showed up, and the steward locked them in the storage house. Those bastards just broke the door down a moment ago and are causing a ruckus demanding to see you...!"

Zakail harshly slapped the servant, who was babbling on nervously.

"Ouch."

"Didn't I make it clear yesterday? I am no longer a young master. Soon, I'll be a lord! Make sure to use the correct title!"

The events of last night hadn't just entailed Zakail performing the last rites for his deceased relatives. He had shown those who had been mocking him as an unworthy shell of a noble since birth what he was truly made of and had succeeded in carving his own destiny.

'Of course, my elder brother is still around, but he'll leave soon.'

If his brother hadn't foolishly disclosed his plans of leaving everything behind for a commoner woman, Zakail might not have achieved the victory he was relishing now.

The raucous bunch had all been cleared away, and he had just been considering finally getting some well-deserved rest when the servant woke him up, still using the old honorifics. It didn't sit well with Zakail.

As Zakail stared down at the servant, trembling from the smack on the cheek, and pondered his fate, the door abruptly swung open again.

"Master Zakail."

Simply from the sound of the voice, Zakail knew it was the old attendant's son. He pressed his throbbing head and spoke sharply.

"Leave. I will rest some more. Did I not say not to disturb me while I'm sleeping?"

"It's not that, Master Zakail. The thing is..."

"Out of the way."

A strange voice interjected, pushing aside the attendant's son. Thereafter, several sets of footsteps neatly filed into his room.

"Are you Zakail Hartan?"

"...Who are you?"

He tried not to show fear, but Zakail involuntarily felt a chill. The aura emitted by those who stood before him was excessively cold and sinister. The man with black hair standing at the forefront made his spine tingle just by his gaze.

"I thought you would recognize us immediately by our uniforms, a shame."

Yuder, standing before Zakail, could easily sense all the emotions he was experiencing. Every servant he had encountered on his way here, since breaking through the door, wore the same expression.

It puzzled him why people always acted defensively even to those who approached them with respect. He'd experienced this many times in his past life, and it was no different now.

"We are Cavalry members from the capital under the command of Duke Peletta. We came to see you, Zakail, on behalf of your late father, but there seems to be some misunderstanding..."

As Yuder trailed off and looked around, the servants meeting his gaze quickly retreated, which caused a slight smirk to tug at the corners of his mouth.

"Despite waiting all night, no one came to see us. We couldn't wait any longer in a room without a chair, so we took the liberty of coming here first. Is now a good time?"

"This..."

Zakail's furious gaze was pinned on the servants peering in from outside the door. However, he quickly calmed himself, biting his lip and standing up. The young and ambitious nobleman didn't forget that the first thing he needed to maintain in this situation was his dignity.

"So...that's how it is. Everyone was in a state of chaos due to the fire incident a few days ago, causing the death of my father and brother. I too fell asleep from exhaustion as soon as I returned at dawn... I apologize for being discourteous to our guests. I hope you will understand. Could you please wait in the drawing-room for a while? I will get ready and join you shortly."

Zakail was still in his sleepwear, having just woken up and not even washed his face. It was embarrassing to be seen by others in this state. He clenched his teeth and tolerated his shame. The man with black hair, who looked at him indifferently, gave a small nod a moment later.