

Turning 95

Chapter 95

Nahan immediately woke the next person according to Yuder's demand. However, the others could not answer the same question at all.

The only thing Yuder could find out was the fact that the family had given more rewards than usual when they caught an Awakener with a certain condition, and there was a box containing a small amount of correspondence they had exchanged with the family.

"They gave rewards when you caught a certain Awakener? Say it again."

Yuder asked the same question again to the last person Nahan had woken. The man, who had gone mad after seeing the illusion shown by Nahan, replied, laughing with his mouth wide open.

"Whether it's Alpha or Omega, that. Hehe, hehehe. Especially when we handed over those who were in heat... So they told us to leave them alone until they were in heat and then send them, the Warden did. Hehehe. Kehehehe."

His babbling seemed insane, but the information that could be understood from his answer was clear.

The priests who were said to be conducting research while staying in the Apeto family were looking for awakened individuals who had manifested their second gender.

'Child. And the second gender....'

For some reason, he had a bad feeling about it. Yuder grabbed the collar of the man who was laughing madly and then shedding tears.

"Hey. There should be some remaining contracts here too, right? Find them."

After finding the remaining stack of contracts, Yuder rose from his seat holding them.

"Make sure these bastards don't mess around until I return."

"Are you going to that guy in the prison?"

Nahan asked in a soft voice.

"All I have to do is make him write the contract."

"It doesn't seem like a great idea, contracts are not absolute. That guy will someday repay today's mercy with enmity. Wouldn't it be easier just to kill him?"

"That's not your concern."

At Yuder's words, Nahan chuckled lowly. His smile still bore the cold and brutal traces, giving Yuder chills.

"Yes. It's none of my business."

As Yuder turned his body, Nahan's low voice echoed as if grabbing him from behind.

"But it was just advice from a brother."

"Eh, uh, ooh!"

Kiolle squirmed in fright when he saw Yuder's face spattered with fresh blood. Yuder couldn't be bothered to explain that it wasn't his blood, but the blood spurted from the dead Warden, so he thrust the contract he was holding in front of Kiolle's eyes.

"Quiet down and put your finger or something on here."

"Uh...?"

Kiolle stopped struggling and looked at the contract. There were a few sentences written in thin flame by Yuder while he was coming.

[One. Kiolle Da Diarca shall not tell anyone about the event that happened today.

Two. Kiolle Da Diarca cannot give unilateral commands, challenge to duels, or insult Yuder Aile or any other person.

Three. Kiolle Da Diarca shall help Yuder Aile within his capabilities.

Both parties will leave a contract mark on these matters.

If Kiolle Da Diarca violates any of the above, the contract mark will signal and notify, and the violator will fall into eternal sleep immediately.]

"What... what is this?"

As soon as Yuder untied the ropes and the gag, Kiolle screamed.

"Eternal sleep? What does that mean? Does it mean you'll kill me or not?"

"If you don't want to sign, then I'll leave immediately..."

"Damn it! I'll do it!"

Kiolle, his hand marked by rope burns, held up his hand, closed his eyes tight, and pressed his finger down. The moment he did so, a black smoke burst from the contract and in an instant, it had crept into the wrists of the two, leaving a mark behind.

"For your information, even if you leave here and try to kill me, it'll be useless. Because of the third clause, if you try to indirectly kill me, it would breach the contract."

"..."

Perhaps he had thought of it before, for Kiolle's eyes slightly trembled.

"So, what happens if you just happen to die in an accident?"

"If I die due to reasons unrelated to you, the contract will lose its power. The mark of the contract on your wrist will disappear."

"That won't affect me, will it?"

"Right. So, get up now. Surely you aren't pretending you need someone to help you stand."

At those words, Kiolle gritted his teeth and, with some difficulty, managed to push off the ground and stand up.

"So where are we headed now? Have you seen my sword? Where did you leave your companions? Don't tell me you killed all the dogs of the Apeto family? Or..."

Who on earth would believe that this noisy fool was a senior knight of the Imperial Knights? As Yuder, who had been leading, turned his head to say something, he suddenly felt a chill run down his spine.

Reactively gripping his sword and turning around, Yuder found himself halted at the sight of Nahan, a boy standing behind him, and the mercenary Awakeners with vacant expressions.

"Ah. You've already finished? That was quick."

"Where are the ones I told you to guard?"

"That's the thing. There was an unfortunate accident."

Nahan, his face spattered with blood like Yuder's, grinned quietly.

"I was just trying to keep them quiet for a bit, but they didn't seem to like that and ended up dying."

"What?"

"Really sorry about that."

From Nahan's calm expression, there was no sign of remorse typically associated with someone who had just caused an 'unfortunate accident'. Nahan, who had come close to Yuder, held out a box that had been hanging on his waist.

"Here. I brought this, so take it."

It was a box containing the letters through which the people of Apeto house there had communicated with their main house. Amid a stifling tension, Yuder slowly reached out and took it. At that moment, Kiolle, who had locked eyes with Nahan, froze like a herbivore in front of a predator.

"Let's free the brothers trapped in the prison now."

Nahan, with his smooth demeanor, approached the prison and re-emerged, leading the three mercenary Awakeners whom Yuder had imprisoned. He was unsure what ability Nahan had used, but they all had vacant expressions and were unusually docile.

'I can't see a trace of rationality in them. If he has such abilities, why didn't he use them before...'

Why did Nahan choose to act now, after waiting so long? Were the members of the Apeto family, whom he claimed died in an unfortunate accident, really just victims of an accident?

'Of course not.'

Yuder's caution heightened a notch further than before. Sensing his guarded eyes, Nahan turned around and gave a faint smile.

Facing his strange smile - one side horribly scarred, the other beautifully sculpted - Kiolle unwittingly took a step back, halting suddenly. Nahan, seemingly amused by his reaction, turned his head and opened his mouth towards Yuder.

"Aren't you leaving?"

"You go ahead."

There was no good to be found in exposing his back in such a situation. At Yuder's words, Nahan shrugged his shoulders and turned.

"As you wish, brother."

The way out was eerily quiet. Yuder didn't know what had become of Devran and the Awakened escapees they had encountered along the way, but at least no one was springing out of nowhere.

Even Kiolle, perhaps paralyzed by fear, had begun to quietly follow behind. The only sounds echoing through the darkness that half-shrouded them were the rhythmic footsteps as they trod the cave floor.

'...Footsteps.'

Suddenly, Yuder halted and looked to his side. Kiolle's flashy, high-quality boots brushed past him.

Catching sight of Kiolle's face, eerily illuminated by the light streaming from the magic stones embedded in the wall, Yuder immediately grabbed Kiolle's arm and started running forward.

'...Damn. Just as I thought.'

Despite Yuder's sudden grab and run, Kiolle showed no reaction. His expression was vacant, just like the mercenary Awakeners who had emerged from the prison and stood behind Nahan. There was no doubt that he had fallen prey to Nahan's illusion ability.

'He wasn't one to keep his mouth shut just because he was a bit scared.'

When had it started? Was it from the moment Kiolle tried to step back when they crossed paths at the prison? Recalling as he ran, Yuder gradually slowed and stopped.

"You had me wondering where you were going, brother."

Despite running a good distance backward, they found themselves once again before the vacant-faced mercenary Awakeners, the young boy, and Nahan. Nahan looked at Yuder with a composed expression and opened his mouth.

"I'm not sure why you're so guarded, but I don't think there's a need for that now that everything's over."

"Wouldn't you be guarded in this situation?"

Yuder asked coldly, looking around.

"Have you killed all of Apeto's people? Who are you going to kill next? Who the hell are you?"

"You already know who I am."

"I find it hard to believe at this point."

What certainty can there be against an illusionist who could suddenly twist the path ahead? To what extent was the Nahan that Yuder saw the real one?

Was he truly just a somewhat cruel bandit leader who gathered wandering Awakeners? Reading the whirl of suspicion in Yuder's eyes, Nahan chuckled.

"You're quite suspicious."

"Well, that's not so bad, either," Nahan muttered and turned his gaze to Kiolle's arm, held by Yuder.

"I mean no harm to your brother. Just let go of his arm. That's all."

'...Was Kiolle the target?'

In response, Yuder gripped Kiolle's arm even tighter.

"Kiolle Da Diarca."

"..."

No response came to the whispered name. Kiolle, with a vacant look like a puppet, merely swayed weakly as Yuder shook him.

"Kiolle!"

Even a slap that echoed loudly against his cheek did nothing. With a sigh at Kiolle's uselessness, Yuder looked back at Nahan.

"Don't tell me he stays like this forever unless you release him."

"Of course not. My ability isn't that powerful."

But Nahan's eyes said he had no intention of revealing the condition. If it had been usual, Yuder would have used his power to get rid of Nahan right there and then, but now his throbbing hand was a distraction and he couldn't immediately do so. Yuder held his silence for a moment, then opened his mouth.