

KEEPER 116

Chapter 116: THE FUTURE

"What did you really say to the patrol leader?" Kiuga asked. "And don't tell me you just asked for a place to sleep, and he gave in."

It was just after midnight, and they had long soaked and showered in the spring and even washed their dirty combat overalls and changed to their cleaner combat overall suits. they could watch the uniforms in turns of two till dawn

They had also eaten and refilled their combat-equipped bags with water and food.

"I told him I don't have a tribe and wished to participate in the zonuvaki festivities," sagiri answered honestly.

"You are more canny than I expected. Your tongue must have been flawless to convince a Zonuvaki warrior to let you in. Don't do it again," Kiuga said, and Sagiri nodded. They had been lucky this time, but even a sweet tongue had its limits. Too much use, and people would start calling you a fox. "Even so, thank you for doing it for kaka," kiuga said, and sagiri nodded stiffly. He was worried that the wind could carry their voice into Kaka's ears, and he would arise like some ancient creature and come to seek revenge.

"I did not do it for him," sagiri said after a while, as if to alert an invisible kaka spy that that was not what conspired. kiuga just laughed. The two were the first to take guard.

"Of course you didn't. The festival was awesome, too bad we had to leave early, and you won't be able to have a full experience," Kiuga said, stretching his hands above his head and yawning. Silence prevailed as the two sat on the roof of the thatched hut they had been afforded to sleep.

"How is he doing?" sagiri asked, finally giving in. He had not stopped pitying the boy after watching how his father trained him. Silence stretched again as kiuga sharpened his small blades against each other.

"he had three broken ribs and a deep cut to the stomach. The bruises all over his body weren't fatal," Kiuga said in a low, dangerous tone.

"Chief Zaka is brutal in his training methods," Sagiri said, remembering how he had been tossing Kaka around like a rag doll. The best of Galka War Academy had been used like a ragdoll. The archive had captured the fight to the tiniest details, and sagiri knew he'd never forget what he had seen for a very long time. kiuga did not answer for a long time and instead sharpened his blades even harder against each other. sagiri could tell kiuga did not like what had happened, yet he had saluted the very man who was attempting to kill his friend more than train him.

"he is. His first son did not survive it," kiuga said, and sagiri peeled his eyes from the darkness beyond and looked at him. He could not believe what he had just heard. He had always thought Kaka was the first son born to the chief. Nothing could have prepared him for the piece of information kiuga had just shared.

Chief Zaka was a minister. sagiri felt another new feeling he had never experienced before. disgust. He felt disgusted at how a person who called themselves a father and a ruler could be so ruthless to their own kin. If Kaka had not gotten any treatment, things could have gotten worse, his lungs could have collapsed, and he could have died. It does not matter how strong a person is. If their body was too wounded, then they could die. Even more disgusting was the revelation that the man was obsessed with strength. How could such a man be allowed to be chief and Grand Zorath?

"Disgusting." The words tumbled out of sagiri's mouth, and he did not regret them in the slightest. The sounds of blades grinding stopped, and suddenly, in their place was the sound of a humorless chuckle. sagiri could tell kiuga hated the situation, and his laughter was a mix between pain and agreement.

"It is so fun to watch you on the rare occasions you get carried away. You know Chief Zaka could kill you for saying that about him," Kiuga snickered. He sheathed the two blades into his straps and lay back down on the thatched surface with both his hands behind his head. A moment of silence stretched, and all sagiri could think about was getting stronger.

"he will be fine. Zonuvaki has good healers too, and they gave him some good stuff, you will see tomorrow," kiuga said, staring at the moon. sagiri furrowed at the last part, but before he could ask what he meant. kiuga beat him to it with a question.

"Hey, Sagiri the blind. Since you are not bound by tribe or clan, what do you intend to do when you graduate from the academy and war college?" Kiuga asked, turning his face to look at sagiri. The village they were staying at was well lit by festival lamps, and even on the roof outside, they could see each other clearly.

sagiri had thought about that question over and over. He knew someone was seeking him out, and he did not know what his future held after graduating from the academy. Would his benefactor wait for him to finish college before he made his move? If he was being honest with himself, he did not know what his future held, and that scared him a little. He sometimes felt like he was running from the truth, and even his life at the academy was a big play to keep him from facing reality. He had always felt like he was playing pretend, and he did not belong to squad 25.

He sometimes felt like he did not belong elsewhere, and instead, he belonged somewhere unknown. Someone inside of him could recognize that once he touched, he did not know what his future held, and he did not dare speculate. However, at that moment, after hearing what Kiuga had said. One thing was clear. Whatever his future held, he needed to be strong.

He needed to get stronger.

"I want to get stronger," sagiri answered with so much fire in his eyes. He wanted to one day beat people like Chief Zaka, who killed their sons in their obsession with strength or a strong heir.

kiuga groaned in boredom at the answer.

"That is not a thing. Of course, it is a goal to be strong, but don't you want to get married or something?" Kiuga asked, wiggling his eyebrows. Marriage? Sagiri had never thought of that. Of course, it was customary in every tribe and clan that young people who became of age would be betrothed or take spouses or just start courting. sagiri did not belong to a clan or a tribe, so he had not been taught many things, clan traditions, or tribal ways because he did not have one. He had never quite thought about the possibility of marrying. He had seen Bakuru and rush co exist together, but that had never tapped any feeling within him to have a partner.

"I have not," sagiri said, and kiuga sulked again.

"You are so boring sometimes. like a child who doesn't know a thing and sometimes like an old man who knows too much," Kiuga pouted. "What about that girl from Konate? She showed you her tattoo," Kiuga said, his eyes twinkling with whatever theory he had come up with.

"She did not do it on purpose," Sagiri said, and Kiuga groaned loudly and slapped himself on the face in exasperation.

"You are so boring sagiri the blind, you are going to put me to sleep before our watch time runs out," kiuga said, poking sagiri's torso.

Silence stretched again as the two boys watched the night before kiuga spoke again.

"It is better that you don't marry her anyway, I want you to marry into my clan so that you can teach my nephews and nieces that dance you did," kiuga said as if already fantasizing about the possibility of sagiri marrying into the clan.

"You already have nieces and nephews. I thought you were the oldest son," Sagiri said, and kiuga could not groan anymore, even if he wanted to.

"I'm going to kill myself. How are you two the same and different at the same time?" Kiuga lamented the last part to himself, and Sagiri could not, for his sake, understand what kiuga had meant.

"What Kiuga means is that he wants you to marry one of his cousins or a woman from his clan, and the two of you will then make babies." Lotaga's voice joined, and Sagiri had not heard him approach this time. The man, though childish, had a couple of skills hidden under his sleeves.

Realization finally dawned on sagiri. make babies? The concept of having a smaller version of himself who shared flesh and blood was appearing, but he could not create the picture even if he wanted to. His future was still unknown, and indulging in fantasies would just put him in misery.

"What are you doing here?" Kiuga whisper yelled, jumping swiftly to his feet.

"I did not kill them, relax. We just got drunk on festive wine, and they allowed me to come here," Lotaga said, but he was not drunk one bit, even with his confession.

"You mean you got them drunk and you escaped?" Kiuga said, falling back to sit on the roof once again.

"It is not my fault they can't hold their liquor," Lotaga pouted. "Isn't that right, Sagiri?" he said, coming to sit close to Sagiri.

