

KEEPER 123

Chapter 123: THE SHIFT

"Run?" sagiri had not stopped thinking about Nvaru's words even after they finished the first lap.

N'varu was so cruel as to put him in a hard spot. If he chose to stay, he would not tell him about his home, and if he gave in to running, which was the most logical solution than staying in the fortress and waiting to be toyed, there was a chance that things would go sour. What if the benefactor had foreseen this, and if he escaped, he would be walking into his trap. What if he stayed and things got worse, and he was used as a guinea pig for the magical wing for research?

Why did Tagayia even have a magical wing when no clan secret arts could qualify to be called magic? It was just secrets at the core of the clans passed down, which gave their members an extra advantage and magical-like abilities, like the Tamelku's ability to see in the darkness. In the real sense, the clans just trained their young one since they were infants. The Tamelku were put in dark rooms from birth and trained to operate without light.

Was the wing used to study secret arts?

sagiri could not shake off a bad feeling about that wing.

It had taken them more than an hour to circle the fortress, even at top speed. sagiri was still lost in thoughts when they started the second lap, and he was just realizing that it was impossible to do ten laps in one go without rest. Who runs around a city ten times? wasn't once just enough to master the perimeter. Darkness had now blanketed the horizon, and it was clear that they were going to run till morning.

Maybe running wasn't so bad.

If he decided to run, just like nvaru had suggested, they needed a plan. The archive had not stopped stirring since they stepped into the place. It must have been acting according to his restlessness. Perhaps running right now, while he could, was the best decision. That was not the only reason, however. Staying was not going to grant him any benefits. Leaving however, had many benefits. He would know his home and perhaps get to learn about it from N'varu.

"Let's run," sagiri said, catching up to N'varu. nvaru stopped; they were on the third lap now, and they were starting to pant and sweat.

"How are we going to get out of here anyway? The place is air-tight," Sagiri asked the crucial question that came with agreeing to escape.

"I will find a way when they put us on patrol, you just have to act quickly when I give you a signal," N'varu said.

"What signal?" sagiri wondered. He was not planning on shooting a flare, was he?

"What if that doesn't work?" sagiri asked. The plan was badly cooked, and it had way too many loopholes. If General Felunko found them, there was a chance he would feed them to some beast under the fourth wing.

"Then we kill them," N'varu said, and sagiri froze.

Killing a warrior of Tagayia would no doubt brand them as traitors. That was too messy, and it could definitely brand them as traitors. returning to Tagayia could be impossible, and getting out could be even harder. The stunt could put the entire squad in jeopardy, and his step-parents were still in Tagayia. It should have been sagiri not thinking properly, because it was his life being threatened, but it seemed that N'varu was even worse. He had entered a fight or flight mode, and he was behaving like a wounded beast.

"No," sagiri said after a moment. That was the worst possible plan he had ever heard.

"You still care what Tagayian dies or lives? They are planning to kill you!" Nvaru's voice rose an octave. He was clearly much more restless and on edge than sagiri had ever seen.

"You are acting on impulse. Have you even thought about the squad?" Sagiri's voice was level. He rarely raised his voice, but he was on the verge of doing so if N'varu kept acting like a caged beast.

"And you are acting stupid, no wonder you can't remember, you are still delusional, thinking you need to protect everyone," N'varu said, his voice full of hidden anger and disbelief. This was the first time sagiri had felt the visible anger rolling off of the guy in waves.

"I might not be normal, but they have not wronged me, and my parents have not wronged me either," sagiri tried to pump some logic into the boy.

"When they learn what you are fully capable of and not just what they have seen, do you think they will still consider you just to be abnormal or a monster?!" N'varu snapped his voice full of rage.

His words were, however, uncalled for and brutal. It's not as if sagiri had not thought of himself as those words for a long time. Perhaps he had been delusional to think he could fit in with the squad. Perhaps he was living a fantasy and a dream that could go puff at any moment, yet, hearing those words said to him in such a way made something deep inside of him.

Something cold. He had felt that cold manifest when he woke up after the fight in the clearing while he was half dead, but somehow the warm part of him and being a part of a squad had suppressed the cold. Now, however, it had resurfaced violently.

"Is killing everyone the price I have to pay for you to tell me my origin?" Sagiri's voice when he finally spoke again was cold, and Nvaru's eyes widened a bit. Even he could feel the change in the air. Something had shifted within Sagiri.

"I don't mean you have to, but we need to if push comes to shove and..."

That is all Sagiri needed to hear. The ice somehow always trumped any feelings he might have felt.

"When you give the signal, I will be there," Sagiri said in a level and cold voice that N'varu almost regretted asking him to escape, and even more so calling him a monster. Sagiri did not look at him again as he turned around and fell into a run. His pace was even faster now, as if he hadn't just run three laps around the fortress.

colder.

Well, whatever got him out of the fortress, or rather cage with no good intention, was fine by him, for now.

They each had a role to play, and he was ready to play his part no matter the cost.