

KEEPER 139

Chapter 139: BETRAYING ONESELF

Sagiri knew that Felunka was up to something when he said that the cadets would be sharing a dormitory wing with their new squads for the next week, but he did not know to what extent. Now, however, after two days of working with Riogi, he was finally beginning to understand the intensity of his problem. He could not breathe, eat, or sleep without someone breathing down his neck.

That was not his only problem, however. The desperate call kept getting louder and louder in his mind. His heart was pulling him to follow the call. He had not been able to sleep in the past two days because of how restless he was. The archive had kept the images of Loku opening the four doors, and he had memorized them. There could, of course, be more doors in the lower levels, and he still does not know how to navigate that. He was not sure whether he could wait any longer for Kiuga to come up with a plan. The desperate call was turning into a pained one.

"Hey, why are you zoning out. This is a watch, not a fantasy zone," his partner said for the third time, which was a pain in the neck, and he made him miss working with eight. This one was perched on the edge of the wall carelessly, yet he expected sagiri to stand the whole night.

"I hear a cadet caused the death of a warrior?" the man said after sagiri ignored him for the third time.

"This is a watch, not a storytelling time," Sagiri answered him back the same way he had been talking to him half the night. He was more irritable from the lack of sleep and being watched all the time, and one thing was going to give at some point. He had also learned to treat people how they treated him.

silence befell them before the man shifted from where he had been sitting and stood up.

"Is that a way to talk to your seniors?" The man asked with anger coating his voice. Sagiri ignored him.

"I hear you are the one who caused the death of a warrior. You are the one who was in Squad Chera," the man said, coming to stand beside sagiri who was staring at the wall opposite the sixth wing.

"I was not the one who launched three arrows in his back," Sagiri answered, and if anything, the man seemed to get angrier at the answer.

"Weren't the arrows meant for you?" The man said, his voice holding meaning and hostility.

"Would you rather I had died?" Sagiri asked, cold settling in his heart. When he left home, he had a different view of people, but right now he was beginning to change it. Some were worse than the beasts held in the containment wing.

"He was a good man, and he died because of you." sagiri turned around to look at the man. He was especially irritated because he had not slept in days, and the archive had not stopped stirring. He was exhausted, and at the moment, he was tired of listening to the man yap.

"Would. You. Have. Rather. I died." Sagiri articulated each word this time. The man got more irritable and angry at that moment, and sagiri could taste his intent to hurt him go up a few notches.

"Yes, I would rather a scum I do not know die than a good man, although he was not in my squad," he spat with venom. So that was the logic. Everyone cared about those they deemed worthy, and those they didn't were just supposed to die.

"I am afraid he is already dead, and he won't be back," Sagiri said, and the man went red before his hand shot out and held Sagiri by the throat.

"What did you say? You little rant! Did you kill him?!" He spat loudly, his voice trembling.

"If I were in two places at the same time. Then yes." Sagiri said, wondering why the man could choose such a time to come for his neck. He was on edge, and the cold inside him was turning to ice, and his realization of humans was making the ice turn dark.

"You..." the man unsheathed a blade with his free hand while tightening the other around sagiri's neck. Nokai stirred but still waited for his command. Sagiri wished the man could go ahead and stab him so he could throw him over the wall as an excuse. He could feel the archive expanding and powering his veins.

"Yugo, put the boy down." Captain Riogi's voice cut through the air suddenly. Yugo let go of him immediately and stepped back.

"Is this a way for you to teach the cadet to be a warrior?" Captain Riogi asked in a strict voice.

"No captain but..."

"But you let your feelings take over. Warriors die all the time. Can you tell me the fourth rule of a warrior?" Riogi said, stepping closer to the pair. sagiri was fixing his clothes, but the storm inside of him had not calmed one bit. If the captain had not shown up, the Yugo was for sure going to die. He did not know whether he liked the fact that he could not keep his cool at all when threatened, and kiuga and Nvaru's words had gone in one ear and come out the other. Well, no one knew what his life was like, and they could just talk, but they had not lived his life even for a day.

"A warrior should not let their personal feelings cloud their judgment," Yugo said.

"Apologize to the cadet now, then go wait for General Felunka in the punishment chamber," Riogi said, allowing no room for debate.

"What..." Yugo started to speak, but Riogi cut him off.

"Are you going to disobey your captain, too?" Riogi asked, and Yugo froze.

"Don't punish him, we were just playing around, it won't happen again," Sagiri said. Right in the moment of need for Yugo, an idea popped into his head. He was sure the captain had heard the whole exchange, but more than anything, he could perceive the feelings of Riogi. He didn't want to punish Yugo, but he had to. Even though he did not like punishing his men severely, it was his duty. Saving Yugo this time could get both men out of a hard spot and present him a window.

They had been wary of him and watched his every move, but sometimes good deeds could go unpunished.

"Is that so?" Riogi asked. "You will not dare lie to your seniors, will you, cadet?"

"I dare not. Punishing him will not be just." Sagiri said, but deep inside, he wanted to punish Yugo. And he would when the time was right. Yugo getting punished could only have had a good partner who would resent him more for the death of a warrior and the punishment of another, and in turn watch him harder.

"I apologize, Captain, cadet." Yugo apologized hurriedly to both of them.

"Okay then. If I find you two 'playing' around instead of watching the wall, I will punish you both." Riogi said, looking between the two of them before he turned to leave.

When the captain disappeared down the thin corridor above the wall, Yugo immediately turned to Sagiri, his perfect apologetic demeanor fading.

"Why did you lie?" his voice trembled.

"Would you rather be punished by the general. If so, you can call back the captain and call my lie." Sagiri said, his fingers clutching to the edge of the wall till his knuckles turned white. Betraying himself to achieve something was harder than he had imagined.

"If you expect a thank you, you are not going to get one." Yugo spat, going back to launch on the back platform at the top of the wall.

"Suit yourself," Sagiri said, keeping his darkened eyes to the darkness. He was not going to be able to hold back till the end of the week for Kiuga. It was impossible. He was losing his mind, and with the archive stirring all day, all night because of the call, there was just too much even he could take.