

KEEPER 144

Chapter 144: KIN

"Myama," Sagiri said her name as if the desert serpent was an old acquaintance. He could have imagined it, but liquid filled its yellow orbs before it shut its eyes and rested its head on the bars and waited.

"Without the Shadow, the Crown will fall into madness. With the Shadow, the Crown may fall in love and perish. To save the world, one must die."

Sagiri lifted his hand slowly and touched it to the head of the beast. The reaction was instant. Unlike when he touched Nakea and Makea's memories, this was more powerful. The moment he touched the head of the serpent, he was sucked into a reality that felt so real. He was suddenly standing on a vast land that was not the desert. He was sure more than anything that he was in Myama's memories, yet it felt like he was fully there and fully present.

The landscape changed quickly, and one after another, he was now standing in a vast waterfall deep in the desert. He was seeing the time of the birth of Myama. Desert snakes, though born to thrive in the desert, could only hatch in a place of many waters and then move to the desert. What an irony that they could be so different and reject the environment that brought them to life.

Then Sagiri saw a man perched at the edge of the waterfall. He had eyes as white as N'varu when he allowed it, and there was no mistaking that they shared an origin. He was tending to the two eggs remaining, and somehow sagiri knew the eggs were the last of their kind. The beast known as desert snakes were myths, and it was only natural that such beautiful and mythical creatures could go extinct.

The man rubbed the two eggs lovingly before he turned around and looked directly at sagiri and just like that sagiri was pulled into the man's memory, although he was not touching him directly. The man reeked of wisdom and something more. familiarity, even more than the one sagiri had felt with N'varu. The landscape changed quickly, and Sagiri found himself sitting cross legged across the man who was looking at him with fondness. He did not know whether the man was alive or not, but from what sagiri could see, it seemed that the man was restrained on his ankles, yet somehow he had managed to use the desert snake to converse with him.

As memories poured onto him, suddenly sagiri could recognize the man carrying him as a child. He could see himself as an infant wrapped in nothing but the man's garments and arms, and he was running. He was running faster than a blur in the desert, and two desert snakes were following him at a distance. They blended with the desert itself, eating away any evidence that he had passed through there. Before the memory could continue, however, it was cut short, and Sagiri was seated in front of the man again.

What relationship did he have with the man? Was the man his grandfather? But N'varu had denied sharing a clan with him, and he had said that sagiri was the last of his clan.

"We meet again, keeper. You have grown to be a strong young man indeed. Seems I did not fail her," the man said.

"Who are you? sagiri asked, wanting to stand up and move away from the man, but now it seemed like the man was controlling the memory.

"Seems you haven't remembered yet," the man said, just the same thing that N'varu had said, and Sagiri tilted his head to the side.

"Why does everyone keep asking me that question? What am I supposed to remember?" sagiri asked, his curiosity piqued. This was the third person, well, counting Myama, to call him keeper, and he felt familiarity with all three that he could not ignore even if he wanted to.

"You will know when you remember, whatever I can tell you, you will know when you remember?" the man said, his face covered with a smile, yet they were filled with sadness, and his voice full of grief.

"Who are you anyway, and what do you want from me? I cannot stay here longer or I'll get in trouble," Sagiri said with urgency, hating to be lost in a memory with no idea what was happening to his body. "As for your first question. I am to your mother what N'varu is to you. A shadow guardian is assigned to you at birth. As for what I want from you, 'Your people bleed, keeper, your throne sleeps, and your fate is nearly upon you. And as for the trouble keeper, you are already in trouble. Myama is protecting you for now, but will you keep hiding and being protected?" The man spoke a lot of words, but sagiri could not understand what he wanted to say to save himself.

"My mother?" Sagiri asked.

"When you remember, you will be able to remember her too," the man said, his eyes filling with another wave of grief that sagiri wondered why just speaking of him and his clan was something that the two men he had met found it hard to talk to him about.

Before he could speak and ask anything else, the man moved quickly, even quicker than N'varu and him currently, and tapped his two fingers to his forehead. The barrier in sagiri's memory groaned before the man moved back to sit where he had been.

A splitting headache hit Sagiri, making him see black for a moment, before his sight cleared again and he was back to normal again.

"What did you do?" Sagiri asked, touching his forehead.

"I am helping you remember. But the rest depends on you, Keeper." The man said.

"Why are you in chains?" Sagiri asked, not able to keep away from the fact that the man was bound at the legs, even though he could see the chains in his memory.

"Well, as your mother's shadow guardian, it was her dying wish that I protect you. That did not make everyone happy that I kept you a secret," the man said, but did not expound further. Sagiri had always thought that his mother might have been alive, but now the man had confirmed that his mother was gone. It made him feel a type of way he could not explain.

"My mother..." Sagiri wanted to ask, but before he could utter another word, he was being pulled quickly out of the memory or whatever he had experienced, and he was back in the dark, cold prison beneath the fourth wing.