

KEEPER 155

Chapter 155: DEPARTURES AND GOODBYES

The squad was to be escorted by elite warriors after the attempted assassination on sagiri. According to Senraki, the case against him had been withdrawn since things had gotten complicated. Even so, he could not guarantee what could happen after he graduated. He had told this to him alone after the group meeting.

"The poison that killed the assassins is a state secret. This will for sure reach the ears of the supreme mandra. Do you understand what that means?" Senraki asked.

"It means the supreme mandra will know the reason for its appearance is to assassinate me," sagiri said.

"That is part of it. He will also know about the kidnapping by intruders behind the walls. He will also know about the trail of deaths following you. He will be curious, and the supreme mandra is not a man to be trifled with. Having his attention in most cases is a death sentence, and he will surely believe you are important enough for someone to want to assassinate you. Do you understand? You are special, I know that you know that. You would be stupid if you didn't realize that most of the things you are capable of are bizarre. And I'm not talking just about your heightened senses. Do you understand now?" Senraki said with urgency.

"Will I be watched now?" sagiri asked, although he knew the answer. He already knew his benefactor was watching him, but now it seems he wanted to put him under the very eye of the very ruler of Tagayia. Why could he go so far as to put him in the spotlight?

"Yes, and he is the supreme mandra, so he has eyes everywhere. I don't think as your Grand Marshal, I can protect you for long," Senraki said. Sagiri knew the man was cold and mysterious, but he had not expected the man to protect him.

"Why do you protect me? What is in it for you?" sagiri asked, and Senraki cracked a smile.

"You are getting smarter. You are not the naive kid I brought into the academy. That is a very good way to think. Everyone always wants something. I, as your Grand Marshal and the principal of Galka War Academy, protect all cadets. I could have found a way to protect even the tamelku twins from themselves if they had not run. I knew they could get themselves killed in no time. What I want is to defy everyone who said I could never amount to anything. You should know that you are not the only one who someone wishes to see fall into their trap," Senraki said, and sagiri paused to think about what he had said. Perhaps there was a lot he did not know about senraki.

"What are you two even talking about. We are leaving. You two can walk north if you don't stop whispering." Salka's voice broke through the hallway, making Senraki jolt dramatically as if they both hadn't heard his heavy footsteps down the hall. Salka was silent whenever he wanted and loud whenever he chose.

"Salsal, you almost scared me to death. Can't you see the grand marshal is talking to a cadet?" Senraki asked, faking seriousness.

"Grand Master, my foot. If you keep yapping, I will beat you to a pulp," Salka said, and Senraki flinched but started walking behind Salka. How had the two of them even met?

"You should start showing me some respect. I have become someone people look up to," Senraki said, his voice fading as the two took a bend, and sagiri started walking to catch up.

"I won't argue with your delusion," Salka said, not caring what senraki had to say.

The three finally poured out of the first wing entrance gate, and the others were already waiting. Many council members were scattered, ready to get into their carriages and get escorted because of the assassin's attack. Soldiers moved quickly across the stone grounds, loading supplies, checking weapons, and securing the war carriages.

Squad 25 was already sitting on two different carriages. Six sat on the war carriage at the back with two warriors at the ends of both sides of the opposite seats. Zolinka, Maita, Maita, Banga, Ulekai, Ulekai, Zazarie, Zazarie, and Bukata. One of the warriors was Lotaga, and he looked away quickly when his eyes met with sagiri's. Sagiri could tell something was bothering the man, but he chose to let it go.

N'varu, Kaka, and Kiuga sat on the front one, and no warriors sat with them. Sagiri assumed he was to sit in the front, and so he made his way to the carriage. He was about five feet from the carriage when he suddenly froze. He had never felt such horror and pain, and it washed over him and crippled him.

The courtyard vanished. For a moment, he stood somewhere else entirely. No, it was not him; it was the echo images. It was a memory so strong that it did not belong to him. A memory where someone wanted to spend their last moments, even in memory. As if he had been hypnotized to see it that way, too. Endless sand lay before him. Endless dunes beneath a burning sky. And there she lay.

Myama

The great desert serpent that had spoken to him from the depths of the fortress. She was lying in her own fantasy. In her created illusion, she was no longer the terrifying creature wrapped in chains. So this was how powerful her illusions were. She, however, looked broken. Her massive body lay coiled weakly across the sand, scales dull, great wounds tearing through her length. The golden light in her eyes flickered like a dying flame. Now that he could see her in her illusion, she was more beautiful, but she had also been hurt beyond measure. Being kept in chains for long had also weakened her. How had she not noticed it before? Myama had used the last of her strength to hang on and to deliver her message.

Sagiri's breath caught.

"Myama...?"

No one else reacted.

The dying serpent lifted her head slowly. Her voice brushed against his mind like wind across sand.

"Child, farewell," she said with a smile, and sagiri staggered back and fell to the ground.

"Myama!!" his scream tore through the place, suddenly bringing all the attention to him.