

KEEPER 160

Chapter 160: THE COUNCIL OF NO COUNCILS

Far to the south, in the loins of N'garu, another council had stirred. They rarely had any meetings over the past decade. They always acted as the protectors of N'garu in the shadows. They are like extremists who believe that the people of N'garu were superior and better than all nations and that they should not mix with other people. The council of the south knew of their existence, but they did not care much about what the council in the shadows did.

Tonight, the members gathered. Covered from head to toe. The building was half buried beneath the earth, its black stone walls worn smooth by centuries of wind. Deep within it, a chamber glowed faintly with firelight. Eleven figures sat around a circular stone table. Their faces were hidden beneath dark hoods. No one spoke at first, and the silence stretched long as if to add to the ominous air that already surrounded the people present. Then, finally, one of them broke it.

"The reports are confirmed," he started, his voice trembling with age. He must have been old. His voice was dry and old. "The boy lives," he finished. The council had long ears in itself, and there was nothing the council of the thirteen discussed that they themselves did not know of. A low murmur rippled around the chamber.

"That should not be possible." Another voice spoke, sharper. "The clan was wiped out."

"So we believed," the first replied calmly.

"Why then has he not come forward, and where could he possibly be hiding in N'garu?" another spoke, and it seemed everyone shared the sentiment. The council spies had not found any trace or remnant of the N'folu. They were easy to find because of their distinct features and eyes.

"Yet, they intend to send the keeper of secrets to look for him outside of N'garu. This bloodline has brought nothing but suffering to the south. If he does exist, he should not be allowed back into N'garu," the first and the head of the council said coldly.

"Outside of N'garu? Our borders have been closed for sixteen years. How could one leave the South when it is watched?" another of the eleven spoke.

"What if he left before we closed the borders?" the head asked, and there was silence in the shadow council. "He is now tainted wherever he is, if he exists or she exists. He can not bring any good to

N'garu," the head of the council said. "War, destruction, and madness seem to follow them. If he comes here, war is sure to ruin the sixteen years of peace we have had." The

"Indeed." Another voice agreed quietly. "The desert itself nearly swallowed whatever was in its way. And it did not allow anyone in for two years."

A long pause followed.

"Perhaps they were eliminated for a reason." Then a woman's voice spoke from the shadows. Her tone carried quiet finality. "They were never meant to return." The firelight flickered across the stone walls as the council sat in thought.

"Send the Veil Blades then, they have been dormant for over a decade, " the woman added calmly.

"That clan has already drowned the south in blood once. Even if it was theirs," another said. "We will not allow them to do it again. let the assassins hunt."

"Some bloodlines," the head of the council said coldly, "are better left buried."

Far north in its loins, sir black was kneeling in front of his general. His actions of late had garnered the attention of his general, and he had summoned him. He did not yet know whether the general was happy or mad at what he had done, but he was about to find out shortly.

"Have I let you run so free that you have become stupid?" The general's voice finally came after sir black had been kneeling for a few minutes.

"I deserve to die," sir black trembled. The general was not only mad, but he was fuming. Sir black had orchestrated the murder of a warrior and an assassination without consulting the general. Of course, the general did not always need to know what sir black was up to, yet this time, he had gone a little too far.

"You have one minute to explain to me, then perhaps I'll give you a painless death. A dog is, after all, a dog, and when it becomes a wild dog, it naturally has to be put down," the general said from behind the

veil, and sir black shook even harder. After all, he loved himself and his life above everything else, and he did not wish to die for a mistake.

"Spare my life, my lord..."

"59 minutes remain," a voice cut him off, and he could hear the sound of a blade being drawn.

"I know I went too far by using the time-eating poison. But my lord, I did it for you. We both know that the general Tsaka of the inner circle of the supreme mandra was in charge of making sure the poison and all labs making them were eradicated. He makes sure some of the plants used to make it have gone extinct. My lord, you have been wanting to sit at the inner council of advisers to the supreme mandra. I was only thinking of removing one member from the three besides the Supreme Mandra, so you can sit on it. Tsaka doesn't even allow you into the inner city all these years..." sir black explained.

"You think me incompetent to get into the inner city by my own means?" the general said, and sir black shuffled closer, crawling on his hands and knees to come closer to the veil.

"You even chose the man who is closest to the mandra? Do you think it's stupid to dethrone a man who has saved his life more than a dozen times?" the general asked again.

"That is only part of it. The poison is declared treason to use it," sir black stated.

"So you wish me to be labeled a traitor now?" the general asked, his voice low but full of rage.

"No, my lord. The assassin all died, and the poison can not be traced to you or me..."

"One minute has run out," the general said, and sir black could hear him stand to his feet and hear his heavy footsteps walk towards the partitioning veil.

Sir black bowed his head to the earth. He needed to plead for his life quickly. His general was not a patient man. Not only that, but he hated those who begged the most. If he begged, then he was sure to die.

"What if I told you that this occasion will most likely bring the attention of the supreme mandra to the boy. Many do not know about him, but you only know the most. The supreme ruler of Tagayia has always been sacred of the sooth, and that is why he ordered the mission in the south quickly sixteen years ago. You might have been sent away from the inner council because of the deaths of almost the entire battalion, but what if someone from the south who is strong enough to be used as a target of the time-eating poison is in his lands? Will the supreme mandra, who has always been wary of the south, even after they closed their borders, think they wanted revenge?" sir black said, and finally the footsteps of the general stopped just a whisper distance from the veil. Silence prevailed for a long moment before the general finally spoke

"Continue speaking," he said, and sir black almost fell over in relief. That was a close one. He wanted to keep the rest of the plan secret till it came to fruition, but to save his head, he had to tell.