

KEEPER 166

Chapter 166: SITTING EXAM

The first week of exams came and went quickly. It stretched a week, but with one day of rest in between the three days of exams. Since sagiri got rest between the exam days this time, he was not tired during the written exams, even though they ran for the whole day from dawn to dusk. After another day of rest, it was the second week, and all students gathered in the fourth-year pentagon, where the written exams for the compulsory subjects of the Tagayia High School curriculum were held. The first day's exams would be in War Studies, The Art of Hunting, and Tagayia languages.

The Tagayia language study test was the first, and it ran from six in the morning to twelve noon. It covered all five Tagayia national languages questions, and it took a lot of time. The school was divided into five schools, and the exams were taking place in the combat arenas that had been modified into exam halls. The combat arenas of Galka are huge, and so even with more than a thousand people sitting together, they still had plenty of space between them. Galka, Konate, Kafika, Yalami, and Zoli were sharing an arena, and the tensions spiked pretty quickly. It was a written exam, and it already felt like war.

A couple of dozen instructors filled the arena, and even Salka was present. The instructors did not seem to care about the tension, and they arranged students anywhere, no matter their school. The arena ended up being a mixture of the different combat suit colours. Sagiri ended up sitting at the centre and not far from any of his squad. It was as if the instructors had done it intentionally to separate squads and schools. Sagiri did not care much anyway. He was not one to fall into nervousness, but he was weary because of the odds that were against him. Even a student could be an enemy. He was not going to underestimate his benefactor. He had a feeling they were going to make real contact soon, and these exams held a double task for him.

The exam did not start when they sat, which was 5:30, and being out away from your schoolmates and squad mates forced the arena to silence. Perhaps this was another reason they were randomly placed, or rather strategically sat.

"Sagiri," a voice said, and sagiri looked up. He was lost in thought, but he had felt a presence move toward him. Only he didn't know if the person was going to pass or stop. After all, some students were moving around for some reason, asking some last-minute questions.

Sagiri snapped his eyes up, and his eyes met with Marana, the girl from Konate who had been on their squad. Her calling his name in the silent room had drawn quite a lot of looks his way. His name as the suffocation chamber protege was already known among the school, besides Kaka Asakana's.

"So he is the boy," whispers started, and they spread pretty quickly, and pretty soon hundreds of eyes were looking at them, and some had now turned around in their seats to look at him. They must have excited someone huge like Kaka, but their looks were not disappointed. He had grown bigger, but he was not huge in the least. His masked face was the one that drew more attention, and gossip spiraled from a low murmur to a full-on discussion.

Marana had not expected the shift, and she was suddenly shy and uncomfortable, and Sagiri could feel it.

"Marana," sagiri greeted back, and Marana finally looked back at him. She seemed relieved to see him. Now looking back on that, say when he had been attacked, the last picture Marana saw of him was him bleeding half to death, and when he woke up, the Konate cadets had already left. "Long time?" sagiri said, ignoring all the eyes on them. He did not care for Marana more than a friend, but she had seen him stubbed and he could only imagine the horror. All the others had punched him, and he could only imagine the girl had left Galka, not knowing if he had lived or died.

"Y-You are okay," she said, shuffling at the attention and the full-on discussion that had begun. He had already accepted that he couldn't keep a low profile, but now it was even clearer. After this week, all the cadets gathered at Galka would know his name.

"Yes, it was not my intention to worry you," sagiri said.

"I am just glad you are okay..." Marana was still speaking when she was pushed to the side. Sagiri had seen the three behind her approach, but again, he did not think they were going to push Marana out of the way. His hand shot out and caught Marana before she could go flying. He steadied her, not looking at the trio yet. Marana steadied herself quickly with the help of Sagiri's hand on her waist. Sagiri did not move his hand, making sure she was okay. She seemed to freeze for a moment when she finally stood steady.

"Are you okay?" Sagiri asked, but Marana seemed frozen, and Sagiri could perceive a different emotion from her. It was warm and fuzzy, and her heart was beating so loud he could hear it. What was happening to her?

She jumped back after a second, and sagiri's hand withdrew finally.

"Hey, suffocation chamber protegee, can't you see we want to talk?" an irritated voice reached his ears, but sagiri did not pry his eyes off of Marana. Marana looked at the three new arrivals before she looked at sagiri once, and then her eyes returned to the floor.

"Is that his girlfriend?"

"The suffocation chamber protegee seems like a ladies' man. Are the four fighting over him?"

Marana must have heard the whispers, and her heartbeat went crazy. Sagiri could not tell the reason for her spiked heart rate besides the fact that she was scared after being pushed aside or just the adrenaline of the surprise shove, but he could not perceive any fear. Not at all. His eyes did not leave her waiting for her answer, just like Rusha always waited for her patients to explain to her about where they ailed, no matter how long it took.

"I- I am okay, see you later," she said, avoiding sagiri's eyes before she turned around swiftly and ran away. She ran across the arena to the other end and sat in her chair forcefully before covering her eyes. She did not seem hurt, and sagiri could not perceive any feelings of pain from her, so he assumed perhaps her reaction had to do with the three new arrivals.

Sagiri finally tore his eyes away, and his eyes landed on the three in front of him. They reeked of pride and condensation and aggression. Too much aggression. The three top cadets of the Kafika Rift Academy. The snake lady, the teshini, and the one from the Anku tribe. She did not have her eagle, but the Teshini had her snakes around her.

Sagiri could not find a word to say to them, and he just looked at them. Waiting for a reason for their forceful arrival. They seemed like they had a lot to say.

When they did not talk but stared at him with hostility, he cocked his head to the side and finally parted his lips.

"Do you mind moving back to your seats?" sagiri asked. He had a lot to think about, and if they were just going to stare, then they could leave. He had a lot to think about.