

KEEPER 168

Chapter 168: DEAL OF HONOUR

The rest of the sitting exam went silently without a hitch, and no one dared come near Sagiri's seat or look in his direction, which was weird because he had done something good by releasing a trained beast from its duties. Sagiri did not mind at all, and he had plenty of time to figure out his next move. He had let N'varu in on the situation and Salka, Senraki, and Seyika's knowledge that he might have been from the south. N'varu did not like it at all, but they were both realizing that not many things were in their control. Nothing out of the ordinary had happened in the first week, but there were three more weeks to go.

After a day of rest, they were back in the arena again for the second exams. Marana kept looking away every time her eyes met Sagiri's. Sagiri had not found time to talk to her. The trio had grown even more hostile in the way they looked at him. There were more curious looks thrown his way now, even as they waited for the medical study exam to start. Something else had his attention, however. The girl with misty silver eyes and unnatural dark grey hair was sitting three seats away from him. She could feel her presence but could not perceive any emotions from her, as if she were empty. She was staring at him, and he knew that, but he did not turn for the first half of the exam. He was beginning to wonder if she was concentrating on her exams.

Sagiri turned around to look at her, and her unnatural, misty silver eyes stared at him. He could not tell the emotion behind her eyes. He had always known what people looked at him with, and it made him a little uneasy that he could not understand why he could not understand her. She did not look away, but her eyes narrowed a little as if he was interesting or something. She looked away after a long moment and finally started writing her exam. Her pen was moving so fast when she finally began to write as if she was not thinking as she wrote, and her papers started to fill faster than those who had started before her, a few minutes later. Sagiri finally looked away and finished off the last few questions.

He was among the first to submit his paper right after Kiuga, and the girl was the fourth right after the girl from the Tsanka tribe. She still looked dejected, but hate also rolled off of her in waves. Sagiri walked alone to the arena on top of the pentagon. It is the arena where the third exam was going to take place, and the third-year Pentagon Arena for the schools that were not war-oriented.

He stood at the edge of the arena overlooking the terrain beyond for a moment, but it did not take long before a sensation climbed up his neck. Someone had joined him, and he had not heard or perceived them. That was problematic. Being able to perceive people helped him and his team in battle during training and even on his missions with Salka's team. Sagiri turned around quickly, but there was no one there again. Sagiri looked back at the terrain, but he was now on high alert, and now that he had put everything to it, he could perceive her, but barely.

"Come out!" he said, wheeling around in the wide space, looking at the built-in platforms for sitting. She emerged from behind one of the sitting raised platforms. She stared at him for a long while. She had her blades drawn out, and they were something sagiri had never seen. They were made from a strange material, and something about them made the archive stir. She did not move, and neither did sagiri but sagiri even though he could not get a read on what she felt, her drawn weapons and her stalking style did not indicate anything good.

"Are you here to kill me?" Sagiri turned his head swiftly at the question. Three people had just joined the party. They did not care to hide their intention. The trio from yesterday had arrived, and their intention was clear. They were here to draw blood and take revenge for the snake. Sagiri had come to have some peace and quiet, but it was getting clear that that was not something he could enjoy even if he wanted. The odds had also changed. There were now four against one. He looked towards the direction of the silver-haired, but she was already running in the opposite direction to exit the arena. She was so fast that he almost missed her. So perhaps three against one.

"Yes," the girl from the Tsanka clan answered. "Blood for blood, you killed my beast, and you deserve to die," she spat. They really did treasure their snakes, the Tsanka. She was not carrying her other snake, and she looked a bit naked without the two snakes scrawling up on her. Sagiri had not asked them the question, but what a coincidence that he had two different groups of people with the same intention.

"So you three have come to kill me?" Sagiri asked, looking at the tree from beneath his modified combat hood. He wore more loosely this time because something had started to happen to his hair. The roots had started to turn red, and some parts had some streaks of red. When he asked, N'varu had said that it might be the side effect of his using the archive more. The first streak of red had appeared when he first activated the archive at twelve, but it was easily hidden, and with his choice of clothing, no one had noticed it well except his parents. Now, however, he knew he would not be able to hide them for much longer. Hair colour was also associated with the South.

"If it's a group fight, then I would love to join," another voice joined the group. Kiuga and, of course, like a shadow, a kaka was standing by his side.

"How shameless of the teshini to gang up on one person. Aren't you supposed to be the most honorable tribe in the west?" Kaka snickered, and the teshini girl turned to look at Kaka. She was tall and athletic like Miss Lakiya and bore the same features, but of course, she was still shorter than Kaka.

"I-I, my friend..." she said, avoiding looking at Kaka as if what he had said had gotten to her. Even Kaka was surprised that the girl had some sort of shame in her.

"Shameful," kaka snickered. He was really ruthless. "If your friend wants to pay blood for blood, then you can kill my beast," Kaka said, and sagiri turned to look at him, but the man had his nose in the air.

"I don't want your beast. I want his head," the Tsanka girl insisted.

"Do you think you are capable of beating him?" Kiuga asked. "Even you three are no match for him," kiuga said, and even sagiri froze. Did he really have to exaggerate it? Yes, with the archive at its full strength powering him, he would kill most people easily now, but without it, he could only go against one. Even so, he could not separate his strength from the archive because they were one, and if they ganged up on him, he could have to go all out. There was silence for a while, and the girls seemed skeptical.

"Have any of you ever gone on missions with a captain? Because he has been with Salka," kiuga said again, and the girls now looked skeptical, but they still tried to hold their heads high. "If you three go up against him, you will not make it to your final exam. Take my advice as a warning," kiuga added, and sagiri was beginning to think he was using him to put fear into the girls.

"You did not take my offer. I will not allow someone so immature to kill my beast," Kaka said after a second.

"I have to avenge my beast!" the Tsanka girl said.

"How about when your other beast goes against Kaka's beast? If your beast wins, then you can retain your honour," Kiuga said, and Kaka snapped his eyes at him. Sagiri could already hear the mischief in kiuga's voice, and he suddenly did not like the idea. It was true that Kaka had a beast, but he left his beast back home when he joined. The only man with all types of big cats was Salka.

This was bad.