

KEEPER 188

Chapter 188: THAT NIGHT

The desert had not stilled for a moment, and the man with a child in his hands had stopped for one two nights and a day. He might have been used to the harsh environment of the desert, but running with a broken heart and with a newborn child at top speed had exhausted him. It was a wonder the child in his hands had not died, and its heartbeat was still there. What a strong child!

Koru would soon break from the desert and enter the woods of the east in no time. Perhaps his body had failed on him, and he had passed out right when he stepped into the cooler environment. When he woke up, it was with a start. The child was not in his hand, and even worse, a northern warrior was holding a blade to his heart. The child was lying under a tree. Koru was too weak to even think of fighting, but if the man dared to touch the child, then he was going to fight with all he had to make sure he killed him. It was his master's wish that the child live. Her dying wish. And he was going to make sure the child lived.

"Who are you?" The man asked, still trembling with a blade in hand. A warrior? Trembling to such an extent. He did not look a day over twenty, but trembling to that extent was just unacceptable.

"Why don't you put the blade down?" Koru spoke. "You don't want to kill an innocent father and his child, do you?" he said, and the man's hand trembled even harder, and the blade he was holding pierced into his clothing. A little further, and the blade would pierce his heart.

As if recalling a terrible memory, the man fell backwards and started vomiting. It seemed like he had been vomiting for a while, and he did not have anything more to vomit, but he still wretched.

"I did not kill any child," the man said after a while of retching air. So that is what that was? He was a traumatised cowardly warrior who had run from battle because he could not take it. Koru could not help but wonder if he was pathetic, despicable, or honourable. To have reached the woods in the east, he must have run away right after the battle and slaughter began. There was some blood on his boot. His first kill? The man had still committed his first kill and chickened out, and ran.

Koru went to stand up, but the cowardly warrior turned swiftly.

"I am not stupid. I know you are not from the north, and he is covered in blood and not long for this world." The coward trembled, and Koru did not know whether to laugh or cry at the irony of the

moment. Running for that long just to end up being killed by a coward. What he had said, however, was true. The child was not long for the world if he did not receive some type of care.

"Are you going to kill me and then the child?" Koru pushed again. He now knew the man was fragile of mind and that could either be a good thing or a bad thing, but he could not know until he tried.

"Shut up!" The blade moved even deeper into his flesh that he was sure he bled. Just one more push, and something was going to give.

"If that child dies, then his blood is on your hands for sure this time," Koru said, and the cowardly warrior's eyes widened. So he had a line he couldn't cross. Was that cowardly or honourable? Whatever saved his master's child was what he cared for right now. And perhaps he needed a traumatised coward who ran away from battle because he drew a line.

"No! Don't say that. It's not my fault. I am only a war innovation warrior. I am only meant to make innovations for war. I should not have been on the..." the coward's lips trembled.

"Aren't your innovations used to kill?" Koru asked, and the man fell to his knees. "However you choose to see it, your hands are not clean. The innovations you make are meant to kill warriors of other states. So, however you see it, war equipment innovators actually have more than anyone..."

"Stop talking!" The man threw away his blade and covered his ears.

"But am I wrong?" Koru asked. The weapons made for battle are made to kill other people. And that was indisputable. The warrior trembled harder, and tears fell from his eyes. He was just another child who thought that war was where he could show his manhood and get many wives, perhaps.

"Stop talking!" he yelled again.

"You say you make war innovations to kill warriors from different states, yet you slaughter unarmed civilians. I don't want you to act as if you did not see it happen. You were part of it, whether you ran away or not. The blood that your comrades spilled is very much blood you spilled," Koru said, and the cowardly warrior fell forward with a wail.

"I deserve to die! I can't surely pay for his but with dying!" the man wailed. Koru was still holding to grieve of his own. Yet he would not shed a tear until he knew the child was safe.

"Yes, you do indeed deserve to die," Koru said, and the man cried even harder. After a while of crying, he retrieved a blade and handed it to Koru.

"Kill me," he said, his eyes looking dead. So he was more than a coward after all. Using any means to escape what he had done.

"Dying is the easy way out. If you wish to die, do it yourself," Koru said, starting to crawl to the child whose heartbeat kept getting fainter and fainter.

"Please kill me, I have to pay for this sin in some way," a faint voice reached Koru's ears.

"Right now, I have to save this child. Killing you is not my priority," Koru said, lifting the child into his hands. It had gone so pale, and the marking on its body had long stopped glowing. Koru started walking west of the woods. If he kept walking, he would reach civilization in a little while

"If you go that way, you will die," the man said after Koru walked a few feet.

"I have no choice," Koru said, taking another step.

"I can show you a healer in the east. She is the best of the best and lives in seclusion," the warrior said, and Koru stopped, but he did not turn around. "I promise, on my life, that I will not harm a child. If this child lives, then I can at least pay for what I have done," the coward said, bowing so low that his head touched the forest floor.