

KEEPER 192

Chapter 192: TRUTHS AND SCALES

Just ten minutes into the run, Sagiri suddenly stopped. Something was tearing him that the present uneasiness of the archive had nothing to do with the poison. He listened intently, but as if he had imagined it, nothing moved again yet. Perhaps it was the senraki principal following him again. He brushed it off and ran back to the inner pentagon. He was the last to arrive, and it was a few minutes before dark.

He was still receiving weird looks because of the sash covering his eyes, but it was not like he was tripping and falling. Warriors were always taught to be able to function even with one sense missing, so it did look like he was just taking it seriously.

"You finally show up?" Salka said. He had been perched at the top of the gate and landed behind sagiri right after he passed through.

"How do you do it?" Sagiri asked, wheeling around. Even with his heightened senses now, he had missed Salka yet again. That should have been impossible.

"Do what?" Salka asked his towering form, moving closer to sagiri.

"Hide your heartbeat and presence?" sagiri asked. People like Salka were still a problem for him, and if he met more like him, then there was a possibility he would be in trouble. Even though he had grown much stronger after accessing half the archives' power or more, how was Salka able to stay invisible?

"I will tell you right after you tell me the reason for your visit to the endless pool and the sash on your eyes. You know, Torena has been itching to punish you." Salka said, falling into step with Sagiri as they started their walk in the direction of the hellpool entrance. "Lotaga stole a pass from me," Salka asked.

"It is no cause for alarm. You will see soon," sagiri said. The two walked in silence for a while until they were past the underground entrance.

"Well, I was not always a captain. I used to serve under the supreme mandra." Salka spoke after a while, and sagiri paused. There was only one unit that served under the supreme mandra. The shadow unit or the stealth corps, which were known to be silent but deadly. They operated unseen, and their faces were always hidden. They eliminated any threat to the mandra in silence, and if a person suddenly

disappeared without a trace as if they never existed, then it could be that they had encountered the shadow unit. They were the most lethal warrior corps.

"You were a..." Sagiri started saying, but Salka cut him off.

"Now your turn," Salka said, and there was silence again as the two walked.

"Your parents will be coming to watch you during the final week. I have people to escort the north," Salka said after a while. They had now burst into the cave open space before the hellpool. "I asked them to stay hidden, but they said they were not going to miss watching you become a warrior."

"Rusha is stubborn, and Bakuru can't say no to her," Sagiri said, walking closer to the pool. He knew step-parents very well, and Salka was prone to fail to ask them to stay put in hiding. He did not want his step-parents to be in danger, but he also knew Rusha would not listen to stay away. "Will they reach here safely?" sagiri asked, stripping the sash from his eyes while with his back to Salka.

"I can not promise that if they insist on coming," Salka answers honestly. Sagiri turned around in the dim light, and his pupils fell on Salka, the normal amber and the red. Salka did not jump back in surprise like Lotaga and N'varu, but his brows furrowed deeply.

"Those eyes? In the Tagayia legend..." Salka stopped. The legend of the north scared their young ones of the red-eyed woman Taliga, whom they met in the south. The bewitching red eyes.

"If he touches my step-parents, I will scour the very vast lands to find them," sagiri said before he turned around and jumped into the water. This time, he allowed himself to sink even deeper. On one of these fine days, he was going to go to the depths of the pool and see where the damned pool ended. He could guarantee his parents could not be targeted of he himself. One thing he knew now was that if his benefactor wished to do something, he was going to accomplish it no matter what he did. All he could do now was wait and see how far the man was willing to push him, and then he would know how far he was willing to go too. Many things now lie on an unbalanced scale. Only time would tell.

The harmony between him and the archive was in disarray yet again. The poison was really persistent, and it seemed that even not using it and just using his own strength still caused the residual of it to affect his system and thus affect the archive as well. What a cursed poison. The archive pushed out of his body once he was underwater, and now, underwater, the harmony began to be restored. This was the worst, and he did not like it at all. He wanted the poison out of his body before anything major happened.

Salka was still waiting when he finally emerged from the pool.

"Now, care to tell me why you have suddenly fallen in love with a pool used to punish?" Salka asked when sagiri came to a stop in front of him and secured the sash in front of his eyes. "Is your eye the reason?"

"I have residual poison inside of me from the blades used to stab me. It still makes my body burn," Sagiri explained.

"We did not find any poison in your system. The healers didn't, at least," Salka said.

"It must be an undetectable poison then. I figured that much. That is why I have asked for help from someone who could know about it," sagiri said.

"Who? And where is the blade?"

"Let's meet on the roof of the administrative pentagon the night after tomorrow, I will come with the blade," sagiri said. He could tell that Salka was not pleased, but something was telling him not to mention Sikuwa. If the man hated senraki, there was a possibility he hated salka, and this meeting required all three. No matter Sikuwa's intention and whatever enmity they had, he needed them all in what followed. Sikuwa to decipher the poison, and salka and senraki to keep him in check. Killing two birds with one stone yet again.