

KEEPER 199

Chapter 199: STRATEGY I

"So chasing them is futile," N'varu said.

"Unless you are faster than them," Sagiri answered. Kiuga paced around, and everyone knew he was cooking up a plan.

"Chasing them will only tire us out, and we have a whole day and a half the night to be vigilant and catch them. Even though Kaka is the fastest, he is too impatient." Kiuga started as a way to tease Kaka, but it turned serious soon after. "A problem, however, comes in because we are not allowed to kill them. Chasing a rabbit and then realising its tag is already gone would be frustrating. This test is perhaps meant to frustrate us. We warriors know how to kill and use weapons, and this test demands we go against all we know," Kiuga said.

"It requires patience and a different strategy than chasing them down. Chasing them down will only tire us, and we have no food or water," Zazarie added.

"Indeed. So chasing them and killing them is out of the question. What other means do we have left?" Kiuga asked no one in particular, and everyone fell deep in thought.

"What a stupid test? How can a warrior hunt without weapons?" Kaka said.

By now, the three minutes had passed, and the shades of the arena were brought down, making the arena darker. It made it easier to see the watchers' circle that was activated. Three other teams had not left yet. Including Marana's team. She kept looking at squad 25. It was clear she was planning to follow them, but no one paid any heed to her. On the display, they could see that the other squads were tearing into different parts of the terrain. The instructors at the top of the pillar platforms all over the perimeter were armed to the teeth, and they were already watching the watcher's circle eyes intently, which was showing different parts of the district, even the watchers on the inner and outer walls.

"I, Wokira, am back yet again to walk you through the test!!" Wokira's voice tore through the arena yet again. It seemed he had been given the chance to talk all day as a commentator to explain what was happening. Most civilians did not know what test it was, and Wokira was about to talk their ears off.

"We need to move out of the arena before we come up with a strategy," Kiuga said, and the squad moved out through the southern gate. Marana's team was hot on their tail, and Kiuga stopped just a distance after the gates.

"Marana, I know you want to marry our suffocation chamber protegee, but this is creepy," Kiuga teased, and the girl's heart dysfunction so much that Sagiri's eyebrows furrowed with concern.

"Kiuga. Don't tease her," Sagiri said, looking at the girl whose heart was beating so loud he could hear it above Wokira's voice over the voice projection innovation devices.

"Marana, this is not a hide-and-seek exercise like last time. You can't follow us. You and your team need to come up with a plan of your own. Our teams can't coexist," Kiuga said in a serious tone. She froze for a moment before she nodded timidly and moved in the opposite direction, her team behind her.

"That was mean of you," Ulekai said. "Here I thought you were the smartest."

"Ulekai the fearful, this is a test, and it's every team for itself. I am indeed the smartest, but I only know how to come up with strategies that fit squad 25," Kiuga said with glee. "Besides, I merely steered the girl out of our way because if she causes us to lose a rabbit, Kaka here and Maita there, would beat her to a pulp," Kiuga defended, but Sagiri knew the boy was not an unnamed strategist of the team for nothing. He always had his priorities straight and only came up with strategies that benefited his squad.

"I don't beat women. " Don't put words in my mouth." Maita snarled, but Kaka just ignored it.

"She is a warrior, not a woman," Kaka said, and everyone sighed in defeat.

"So you would beat her?" Kiuga feigned shock.

"I never said that," Kaka defended. In the midst of the usual bickering, Sagiri fell to his knees, planted his hand to the ground, and pushed his senses out. He was sure he was being watched by someone in the crowd, and the faster he put on a show, the faster his benefactor could make a move.

"Don't push yourself too hard," N'varu said, and Sagiri knew what he meant. The antidote Sikuwa was supposed to make had not been delivered to him yet. Even though it required two ingredients, making an antidote still requires precision. Sagiri knew what he was up against, but he needed to go all out in this test, too. Perhaps the attack by the blades was meant to cripple him or kill him. Both must have been outcomes calculated by the benefactor. Perhaps they planned to slow him down before they attacked. He could not be sure, but he was sure not planning to cower.

With his right eye, he could see the archive as it moved and spread out, covering the whole of the Galka War Academy. Thousands of heartbeats reached his ears, too. His team went silent as they watched his back. He did not need it anymore, but they had made it a habit. With his hand on the ground, he could feel the thousands of lives moving under the ground, too. Since the runner hare species were paranoid and restless, it was natural that they could choose the quietest places with hiding places where they could hide after any minor sound. Sagiri let the markings on his body gather at the tip of his hand. It was daylight, so no one could notice the slight glow of the markings under his combat, but he kept it to a minimum.

Right at the moment, the runner rabbits were easy for the archive to pinpoint. They were running wild, and their agitation was heavy. He listened for a few moments longer. This was, after all, the most important part of the hunt for him, and that had not changed. Wokira's voice was still audible outside the arena, and they could hear him since they were still close.

"... that must be our last team to leave! They are in no hurry!! Could it be because on this team we have two suffocation chamber proteges who beat the chamber before they even turned sixteen?!" The crowd cheered, and it was clear their team was the one currently on display.

"Kaka Asakana, our great chief's son, as you can see, is as powerful in posture as our chief!!

Remarkable!! He deserved his position as the number one cadet of his time!! On the ground covering his eyes is the aged student and suffocation chamber protegee, Sagiri!! I hear he has also mastered all six blade dances!! The only one in the history of Tagayia to do it at this age!! The boy is unbeatable in sensory, not even the Tamelku tribe can beat him, making him a legend!!

"The team has the best strategist of their age, Kiuga Lofekeni!! I have to say this team has the most chances of winning!! They are still the last to leave. Could this be a good move or a bad move by their team strategist, Kiuga Tinega Lofekeni!!"

Sagiri finally moved from his position right on time to see kiuga smiling at the air, obviously wanting to look good for the display the crown was currently seeing.

"We move far south," Sagiri said to everyone, and Kiuga finally stopped smiling like an attention-seeking maniac.