

THE LAST KEEPER

Chapter 69: Chapter 69: THINGS GO WRONG I

"Can you stop?!" N'varu yelled for the third time but sagiri did not care for him anymore. He was running faster than he ever did, surprising even nvaru. Even after he scaled the small rock and jumped to the other side he could not find the weird duo. He kept running further in the direction they disappeared. He did not stop even when a yellow flare went off behind him. It seemed team 25 was calling in help to report the intruders. Of course that was the sane thing to do.

He finally stopped after a while and groaned in frustration deep in his throat.

"Stop following me!" another yellow went off a few hundred feet from them. It seemed team 25 were leaving a trail of alarm signals while they chased after him. They had completely broken formation and they were now out in the open chasing after him. "Tell the others to leave me alone too." he gritted. It was around 10 at night if he could guess. As midnight approached he felt even worse than before and there was no way he could stand still. It's not like he could not feel himself coming apart deep down he knew he was losing his mind from the pain, lack of sleep and his own body falling apart. He more than anything did not want to hurt anyone in his moment of weakness. He could understand what was happening to him or what he was but he still knew he did not want to hurt any member of team 25.

"You are losing control. You need to calm down." N'varu chastised but sagiri could feel worry rolling off of him. even him did not seem to know what was happening to Sagiri. sagiri chuckled deep in his throat. His laugh was humorless.

"I know that. I don't even know what I am or who I am or what is happening to me. Now leave me alone." sagiri snapped, turning around to leave but a third flare went off. right behind them. team 25 plus Marana had finally caught up.

"What is wrong with you, recruit? Do you wanna die? Kaka snapped, not looking a thud bit tired. Just irritated.

"Stay away from me." sagiri turned around swiftly, his voice low but full of command.

"Well that is not possible since we are supposed to babysit you." Maita snickered.

"Well if you don't want me to bury you alive you need to stay away from me. now." sagiri snarled the last part. Another wave of pain tore through his body just then so hard he staggered before he fell to one knee, both hands going to his head. It felt as if his own head was bursting open.

"Hey N'varu, what is wrong with 'blind boy' now?" Kiuga asked totally at a loss of words what was happening to him. "Does his condition also drive him mad?"

"So we are now babysitting a mad person. perfect." Kaka said totally ready to beat the madness out of sagiri. "Let us just bind him and carry him until his illness fades." kaka added and the others nodded. They had only once seen him act like that in the dining hall when he first arrived.

"Stay back!" Sagiri warned when they tried to approach. "You all need to leave and get away from me now." he warned again with difficulty. It felt as if he was finally going to burst open. He fell to all fours before crumpling to his belly. He did not know where to hold on to so he just rolled around wailing in pain.

"We are completely out in the open. With the fired flares and commotion we are basically fodder for an ambitious team." Zoliath said, shifting from one foot to another.

"Let's hope the help flares keep them away from this region." Kiuga answered, still not phased.

"What is happening to him?" Marana asked to step forward but Nvaru held her back.

"Don't!" he warned.

"Leave!!" Sagiri groaned in pain. He panted trying to breathe but if he wasn't on fire he was freezing and it fluctuated quickly leaving him a trembling mass of pain. He was in so much pain that he wished he could just die or kill for it to stop. He forced himself to stand to his feet, but did not lift his eyes when he spoke up next. He did not want to lift his eyes to look at his teammates when he cut ties. He did not want them to protect him anymore.

"I want you to leave now. We are no longer a team. And when Principal Senraki asks later, tell him 'I wanted to kill you.'" He gritted the words with.

He did not get to turn around however because before he could even force his feet to move a force hit him so hard from behind. Two daggers entered his skin all at once. They both pierced through his fatal organs. He did not want to admit it but in that moment he had felt their hate as they approached but ignored it. The pain had been too much that he wanted it to stop. When he felt their killing intent he welcomed it. It was like a dream come true. He did not know any other way to escape his pain so he had acted as if he didn't hear them approach. Perhaps he had confronted them and said all the right words to piss them off because he wanted the pain to stop. They were the only people who hated him enough to grant his wish and it had worked. Perhaps it was the reason he had chased the duo. Perhaps he had it coming. All at once

the pain in his body stopped as if registering it as dying. A sadistic smile took over sagiri's face. He had managed to beat his own body. But at what cost?

A sharp scream tore through the air. It was Marana as her eyes widened in horror. There was a moment of silence as every member of team 25 froze. Even kaka who always held a prideful look looked taken aback. The looks ranged from shock, to horror to dumfounded. Galka war academy might have a military oriented academy but none of the guys had ever killed a person. Perhaps the Bami clan had but there were chances that they had not. Watching him die in front of them would be a first for most of them if not all to watch a person die.

The twins pulled the knives out before they lunged them again with as much force in fast durations.

"The dead can't talk." They whispered in both his ears in unison. It was admirable how far the boys were willing to go to save their skin. Sagiri had been standing close to a long shadow cast by a high rising rock and the twins had chosen to stay hidden, pulling the hood of the combat to their face. They retreated as fast as they had arrived and disappeared into the darkness. They were truly vermin who only chose to stay in the darkness. Sagiri fell to his knees and he could feel as blood gushed out of him. The pain had finally stopped and that was a plus. He did not care that he was dying. He only cared that he could not see Rusa and Bakuru again and that made his heart ache for the first time. With something he could only describe as pain. Real pain.

"Sagiri no!" N'varu yelled, moving so fast across the small space to catch him. He could hear him properly and his voice sounded like it was in slow motion. He watched himself fall forward in slow motion but he never landed on the hard ground because nvaru caught him. He could feel life draining out of him and he did not know quite if he had lived well or if he had even lived at all. He was going to die without knowing who he really was and even finding his benefactor sounded like a distant memory he did not care about. He watched as Kiuga physically froze. It was the first time he had seen the guy freeze. When their eyes met for only a moment he saw fear in his eyes before it was gone in a moment as if a switch had finally flipped.

"Banga and Ulekai fire two red flares now!" He gave the order and the two boys who were still frozen were staring at the scene in front of them, staring at him dying. The three yellow flares had not been answered yet and the boys might have not thought about it much before but now panic was beginning to sip in. As they fumbled to retrieve their flares Kiuga turned around

"Zazarie, Bukata, you are the fastest on your feet. Run to the gate and don't stop. Get a healer as quickly as possible. Explain to them that a cadet has been stabbed. Move!" He said tightly. His voice was stable as he gave the order to the two boys whose feet seemed frozen to the ground. Kaka and Maita did not need any instructions because they were already moving into the darkness to find the culprits. The Bami tribe really lived to its name. They did hesitate in battle.

N'varu held onto Sagiri but sagiri avoided looking into his eyes. Marana came to a stop beside him too, wiping tears from his face. She tore the loose ends of the konate combat suit and pressed them to the wound with shaky hands before she placed N'varu's hand on it. She tore the other side and placed it on the other wound. The clothes got soaked quickly and sagiri could tell it was futile to try.

"You will be alright." She encouraged another set of tears pouring down her face. N'varu had not said another word as he stared down at Sagiri with so much emotion that if it could seal wounds sagiri would be walking.

"I failed to protect you keeper." he said lowly more to himself.

"Perhaps it's good if I don't exist." sagiri whispered, feeling his last of strength slipping away. nvaru gasped at his words and moisture formed in his eyes. Just then two the toe red flared shot by banga and Ulekai lit the sky colouring it a beautiful red. Just like the colour of his blood. It was beautiful.

"Carry him, we need to take him back to the gate." Kiuga gave another set of instructions.

"I think not. All of you go to sleep now, boys." A voice cut in barely after Kiuga finished speaking and Sagiri watched in horror as all the boys fell to the ground helpless. It seemed that she could have hypnotized them even during their first meeting in the woods or earlier on in the night but she deliberately waited for this moment. As if they were waiting for him to fall.

"Thought you could put up a fight but it seems someone just made it easy for us," a feminine voice spoke. The weird duo had resurfaced again as if they had been watching the whole exchange all along and they had waited for the perfect moment to take advantage of the chaos.

"Night night boys. He is now ours. she said and the *manboy* carried him as if he weighed nothing just like he had carried the girl and ran into the night.

"Now you be a good boy and stay alive a little longer. We have a good medicine genius on our team." She laughed as if he wasn't bleeding half to death. He should have been scared that they were taking him away but he was dying and he did not feel worried. he

'I really went and did it, thinking I was getting my wish but I have ended up falling into my enemies laps' Sagiri thought weakly before his consciousness faded away and he passed out or away.

Chapter 70: Chapter 70: THE SEARCH

Salka did not know what he felt. Anger or excitement at the thought that someone had trespassed into his turf. It had been a while since the last slot of intruder dared to trespass but they had not been interesting enough. They were too weak. If what the cadets said was true then someone capable of

taking down a grace scale would be even a worthy opponent to kill. He hooked his hooking rope on one of the tall trees and propelled himself. He did not need the hooking ropes anyway but with the excitement coursing through his bones he wanted to get there even faster.

Even when he used the death whistle to call his battalion he wished they could delay so he could be the first to lay hands on the enemy and have all the fun by himself. He moved fast through the trees in the direction the cadets had described. If the intruder could kill a gravescale by themselves he must have been lethal enough to take out even the students and that thought alone made him go faster. It had been hours after the event took place and he knew for sure that with the rain the terrain could have gone cold yet he only hoped the enemy was stupid enough to stay around and watch his kill. Some killers or hunters tended to stay and watch the artistry and skill taken into killing their prey. He on the other hand found the act unimportant. It had long stopped raining but the leaves still held the raindrops and they fell on him, some flying behind him because of how fast he was going.

Whatever the intention of the intruder was, one thing was for sure. If he was still in the woods he was going to find him and kill him. Whatever his intention was, he was going to die anyway for daring to walk into his turf. After almost an hour of moving at top speed, he finally caught it. The smell of blood and death was so thick it made the intention of his heart grow even bigger. He pushed himself even faster and he could see the scars of the scene long before he reached it. The dagger marks curves onto tree barks and on the ground no doubt from the students trying to fight it. It must have been futile considering the hardness of the gravescale's skin and the quality of the exercise daggers. They were of the lowest quality considering they would only be used to burst flask. He needed to punish them after he got back. They must have been very lucky to escape the scene but they had ignored the use of the red flare even after they escaped. that in itself called for punishment.

He did not have to go far to see the scene of crime. What the students described they saw at night was totally an understatement. Now in broad daylight with the morning sun breaking through the tree shadows the scene was quite a sight. guts were spattered everywhere. The gravescale lay still in the middle of the gore. it was massive and a beautiful creature or was before it

was torn into shreds. Now it lay mutilated, cut deeply in different parts of the body. Its massive coils were carved open in long, deliberate lines, scale after scale peeled back as if the blade had been curious. The ground beneath it was ruined, darkened, slick, trampled into mud and blood caused by its thrashing.

The killer did not rush. Wounds were placed deliberately where pain lingered, not where death came fast. The serpent's body twitched long after its strength failed, nerves firing uselessly, jaws opening. Its tail smashed stone and bark, as if it had tried to beg for death. Whatever killed it had taken its time. And enjoyed every moment. Salka watched from his position perched on a branch for a long moment analyzing every detail of the kill. He wanted to understand the motive behind the display but all he could see was the results of a fun kill and that disgusted him more than anything. Just like the boys had described it as dishonorable, it was far worse, this was a perversion. The opponent was obviously stronger and could have delivered the kill in a few swift moves but he had intentionally taken its time.

Salka breathed sharply retracting the hooking ropes and rolled them around his hands. he jumped down from the branch to take in the scene even more closely. he landed gracefully in a crouch before straightening to his feet. The cuts rendered to the beast were precise and deep. They had even torn through the hard skin of the beast like it was made of wet wood. He moved even closer and stretched out his hand to touch where the object had cut. It was one of a kind. Not many weapons he had seen were that sharp and powerful. He had heard rumors about weapons that could cut through metal and stone before but he had never wielded one. His weapons were of good material, sharp and durable but the weapon used against the gravescale was even sharper. He needed to tell Salka as fast as possible.

The cadets still had another exercise at night and whatever the intention of the intruder was, they needed to cause much less panic as possible. he held onto the scales and propelled himself to stand on the head of the beats, it had the hardest set of scales to protect its brains bit it even those had been crashed violently.

"Hey captain, you didn't have to cause all this mess killing a mere beast." Yavaga's voice was the first to reach his ears. He had heard his team coming but ignored them as he crouched to touch the scars of the blade yet again.

"Are you dumb? Why could the captain kill the beast? Besides, this thing has been dead for ages." Matasi groaned.

"Captain, what have we got here?" Kolu spoke, parched on a branch as the other two. Only Lotaga was missing from the team because Salka had him on pet-tending duty till he fixed his behavior. The other three lowered themselves to the ground coming to stand beside the captain on the beast's head.

"Some cadets were attacked by it at night." Salka explained.

"Which team was it? They are pretty fierce if they beat it like this." Yavaga chimed in and everyone groaned. Him and Lotaga were the youngest of the team but even Lotaga did not have such bad analyzing skill.

"It wasn't them, look at the blade scars." Matasi explained.

"The students managed to get away but when they came back again the beast was dead. The ground supervising instructors only carried bows and arrows last night, but look at the wounds on this thing." Salka said and only then did Yavaga nod as if he was finally understanding what was happening.

"I see, so one instructor carried a sword and killed it." Yavaga analyzed again and it took Salka all his might not to beat him to death. Sometimes he wondered why he allowed the two delinquents into his team. Their skill in battle was unrivaled by many but they both had a way of getting under his skin.

"I should put you on pet-tending duty with lotaga." Salka said on a serious note and Yavaga's eyes widened with fear.

"so it seems we have an intruder." Kolu said crouching low to touch a scar where the weapon had cut so deep smashing the gravescale's head in. He was the calmest and the strategist of the team. His eyes did not miss anything.

"We have an intruder!" Yavaga exclaimed looking around as if he was expecting the person to fall from the sky.

"The boys did not fire the red flare even after seeing this?" Matasi wondered. "And why did they purposefully come back if they had just escaped its jaws?"

"One was injured by it and the recruit said he knew about healing so he came to get herbs here." Salka explained and there were sharp inhales.

"How careless, even I, couldn't engage it if not necessary or come near its nest after I escaped." Yavaga said and unfortunately what he said made sense and it could have been the wise thing to do for the boys, yet they didn't.

"I will punish them later. Let us spread out and see if we can find a trail." Salka said, itching even more to find him.

"It seems that the killer just enjoys killing. Stay on alert and don't engage if you find him." Kolu added and they all nodded before they scattered in different directions.

Salka proceeded in the direction deep in the woods. He searched and searched for hours but it was as if the intruder had disappeared. It was almost midday and yet there was still no sign of him. He blew the whistle to end the search and gather his team back at the gate. They needed to search other places too. It seemed the intruder could be anywhere in the outer district nonagon and that did not sit right with him. After the team gathered he released them to rest for two hours before they resumed the hunt. All he needed to do now was inform Salka and gather all instructors to brief them and take countermeasures before the gate at night.

"We have an intruder?" Senraki shot to his feet after Salka explained to him what had happened.

"It could seem so." Salka said, itching to go out and search once again. "Even his weapon is rivaled by yours or sharper." Salka said and Senraki's lips pulled back in excitement.

"So if I kill him I get to have such a deadly weapon?" Senraki rubbed his hand together as if he had not heard anything else except how deadly the weapon was.

"We need to take countermeasures. Get your head from between your legs." Salka snapped standing to his feet. "I'm going back to the woods to search again. get fuwuka to debrief others. Salka hated that someone had broken into his turf and he had not found him yet. He did not have time to deal with senraki and his empty head.

"Salsal you..." Salka didn't care what senraki wanted to wine about before he pulled the door open and smashed it. He had intentionally said more about the weapon to make senraki curious. The man had a lethal weapon and just imagining a better sword than his, did not sit right. His mission with senraki was done and so he went searching in another section of the woods. No matter how hard he searched he could not find anything and as night drew by he chose to head back.

A commotion drew his attention as he walked through the fourth year pentagon. It was almost time for the exercise to begin and he wanted to rest for a bit before he headed out again. He was not going to rest until he found the intruder no matter how long it took. He did not care much about whatever had conspired between the recruit and the Tameku twins at the moment but even he could tell that things were going to be even more entertaining in the hunt. He had not also expected Lotaga to be there but he again was too tired to punish him at the moment. Besides, they needed all hands on deck tonight.

"You boys should join the others at the central pentagon. And recruit you better have a better explanation after the exercise or we are going to have a problem. Again. Your teammates, involved." Salka said and he meant it. He was going to punish them anyway for failing to use the red flare but there was no need of causing even more tension before they started the exercise.

"Yes captain!" All the boys answered in unison including Lotaga. He was trying to get away from Captain Salka too. Salka did not have much patience after the search and as he watched Lotaga try to escape it was all he could do not to break him in half.

"Lotaga, if you leave through that door you will not only be tending the pets but you will sleep in the kennel too." Salka groaned, not even turning around.

Lotaga stopped and turned around quickly.

"I was just escorting the boys. What did you need, captain." He ran back in front of Salka and saluted. Salka wanted to rest and so debriefed him quickly.

"You might not already know since you were on pet-tending duty but we have an intruder or intruders I can't tell. We have been searching the whole day but we haven't found even a trail."

"Why didn't you tell me sooner?" Lotaga accused and salka could smell the excitement coming from the guy. He was good at finding trails and he never lost one.

"That is why you will be one of the watchers tonight. we need all hands on deck." Salka instructed. After seeing the damage the intruder caused to the gravescale more than anything he did not want lotaga to go looking for him alone. he was the youngest of the team. he was curious and careless and if salka appointed him as a supervising instructor the guy could for sure go looking for the intruder alone and he was still not a match for the amount of damage the intruder was capable of. he could be able to hold his own but salka was not going to put the boy in the front line. Only seasoned senior instructors were going to be ground supervisors and that was undebatable. he had not talked to fuwuka but he knew the man could assign duties the same way.

"A watcher?" Lotaga's voice was full of disappointment.

"Yes. unless you want to be on pet-tending duty." Salka said and lotaga nodded vigorously.

"I know you want to be out there but I need you on the wall to watch the backs of those supervising on the ground. You will be in charge of the watchers." Salka said with finality leaving no room for debate.

"Yes sir!" lotaga saluted before running off. salka sighed lowly. He needed to freshen up, eat a whole cow and rest for an hour or two before he went out again.

"I just hope nothing goes wrong" he breathed before he headed to the instructors wing in the central pentagon

