

THE LAST KEEPER

Chapter 78 78: 76: CONSEQUENCES II

"So this is where you ran off to?" N'varu's voice cut through the arena above the fourth pentagon arena. Sagiri did not even turn around from his spot, where he was waiting for the terrain far below and far beyond the inner nonagon.

"You should not be here," is all he said, not breaking eye contact with the world below.

"I know, but..." N'varu started, but Sagiri was not going to have it this time.

"Stay away from me," Sagiri snapped with so much emotion the arena trembled slightly. He had come to the only place he could be alone, and after the verdict, he needed N'varu especially to stay away from him.

Hours earlier, after Fuwuka left him in the interrogation room, more like a verdict room. Sagiri had naturally forced himself into conscious slumber, which was less peaceful than usual. His mind kept going back to the men he had killed, but he remembered them like fragments. He can remember the kill clearly. Only the Pressure to act, the Stillness when he finally gave in to the fire, and the Control.

The minutes ticked into an hour and then into hours till he finally registered movement around the area. Apart from the junior instructors fuwuka had left to guard the door, he had not felt another presence for hours. It seemed like half a dozen people were moving towards the interrogation time. He should have felt relieved that he could know what could become of him, but some part of him deep down did not want to leave Galka War Academy just yet. Before he joined, he did not have a friend apart from his parents, and even though Team 25 was temporary, he had enjoyed all the combat exercises they carried out together.

He retained his position on the ground, head low, and did not dare to open his eyes. He could not have missed Senraki's foreboding presence, which he carried ever since he saw him kill, and Salka's dominating one. Even Fuwuka's cold one. The three entered through the door in line with Senraki in the lead. There was a small pose, and he could feel their eyes watching him before they sank into the designated chairs.

Another movement joined in the rare, and he could not have missed the three boys who were giving off all kinds of thick emotion. From Nvaru, it was fear and relief. Kiuga, it was curiosity, and Kaka, it was irritation. Typical of the three. He did not need anyone to define the situation at hand. Only the witnesses of what had happened were in the room, except for one. Lotaga. Sagiri wondered if the worst had befallen the guy. He was young, curious and did not always act his age or according to an instructor's code, yet he could not stop himself from the burning need to punish those who could cut his life short.

Sagiri's combat suit was not brought in with his sash. Perhaps it had been torn to shreds, too, or perhaps it had been on purpose to strip him even of the lowest rank.

"Recruit Sagiri, face the council!" Fuwuka's voice announced. Sagiri remained still for a moment before he finally looked up. The three men were sitting stiff, their sashes tight, but Sagiri could see the tiredness aged into their brows, especially Senraki and Salka. Salka looked more stoic than Sagiri had ever seen, and after seeing how he carried Lotaga and how Tonga called Lotaga Salka's brat, he understood that their relationship must have been deep. Of course Salka did not look old enough to be Lotaga's father, but they were tied with something more than blood.

"List your three names to the council. Your clan, tribe, country, and rank."
Fuwuka proceeded to read a sheet in his paper. It was clear that the sheet was protocol.

"I am Sagiri, no clan, no tribe, a recruit at Galka War Academy," He answered honestly, still maintaining his position on the ground.

"The council will begin now. Do you swear on your life and honour to tell the truth?" Fuwuka opened the disciplinary meeting.

"I swear to uphold honesty!" Sagiri answered, followed by the three in the rare, in chorus, whom he dared not turn around to even glance at.

"Two weeks ago, during a combat exercise between Konate Wild Academy and Galka War Academy..." Sagiri did not care to listen. His mind kept thinking about the man absent in the room, and he could not concentrate on listening to the activities that had conspired on that night. He was there, and he witnessed his life get stolen from him two times. No one in the room understood more about that night than him.

"How is senior instructor Lotaga?" His voice cut through the background noise Fuwuka was reading, and there was a pause as the room fell into Pindrop silence. Salka's eyes burned holes into him, and an emotion flickered through his eyes so fast Sagiri could have missed it before he looked away, avoiding Sagiri's gaze completely.

"It's not any of your business, recruit!" Fuwuka snapped, and Sagiri's eyes turned to him.

"He was among the first people to come to my rescue. I think it is my business captain." Sagiri said, his tone cold. All the warmth he felt when he was remembering Lotaga getting overpowered by the ice in his heart.

"Lotaga has not woken up yet. His life depends on his will to wake up." Senraki spoke for the first time, and another pause of silence followed.

"Then he will wake up." Sagiri's mouth spoke before he could stop himself, and Salka's eyes snapped to him again, another new emotion flickering in them. more like hope. Sagiri could only imagine what Salka was going through, waiting for Lotaga to wake up. It must have been torture. Even so, his statement was true. If there was a man who was careless enough to engage stronger than him and almost die, it was Lotaga. He was so stubborn that Sagiri could not imagine him giving in to death that easily. He sighed with

relief at the thought, and he faced the council this time with a newfound resolve.

"Am I going to be kicked out of Galka War Academy?" he asked the same question he had asked Fuwuka. There was no need for all the protocol and questions if he was going to be kicked out anyway.

"You will only answer when asked a question," Fuwuka said, and Sagiri held his tongue. only for a moment before he asked the next one. He had not done anything wrong.

"To answer your question, your answers depend on the outcome. If you are a threat, you won't be making it out of the academy. The school is mandated to render punishment to some level." Fuwuka answered, and Sagiri's skin prickled with that statement.

"I was the one who was almost killed. I wonder what my fault could be," Sagiri said, the coldness in his heart becoming more profound. Unlike before he turned sixteen, he now hated being accused.

"The statements from your other team members are that you had made contact with the intruders when you were twelve," Fuwuka said, ignoring his outburst. Senraki was painfully silent, and Salka was no better. It is like they were letting Fuwuka take charge because he was the neutral party in the situation. After all, he was the only one in the room not there when the fight took place, and the only one with a higher rank to be let in on what had happened.

"And as I told them, they came to seek me first, to which I almost buried them alive. I'm sure team 25 was kind enough to tell you that too," Sagiri said, hating being questioned as if he was on the wrong. He did not seem to have a seal over his fluctuating feelings, and he did not know how to stop them either.

"I trained you myself, recruit. You even fainted when I pushed you too hard. There is no way you could have killed two men, one with a rank equivalent to a junior instructor and one equivalent to a senior instructor. How do you explain that then?" Fuwuka asked, and Sagiri was silent to that. It was the first time he had killed a person, and he could not even properly remember how he executed the three. He knew he had done it, but he could not remember exactly how he did it. It was as if his mind was filtering the incident.

"I don't know," he answered honestly, looking into the eyes of the three men. That was half the truth because in that moment, he had felt another heart beat inside of him, powering his veins with not blood but searing power. It was,

however, the truth because he could not explain what he was and why he was capable of moving life threatening wounds and healing faster than everyone.

"You can not know, you killed that man as if you knew the moves from practicing for ages," Senraki said, his voice slightly accusing, and Sagiri felt irritation rising in his bones.

"My adoptive parents never taught me to fight. I can not explain something I don't know. I had never killed a man until that day. That is true. " Sagiri snapped, losing his cool, and got to his feet. He could just go home and help his mother make portions. He would find another way to explain who he was and why he was of interest to some people.

"Sagiri, calm down." N'varu's voice cut through the situation.

"I was forced from home and asked to join a school. I can't explain why, I'm not less human because I lack a tribe or a clan or joined late. It was not my fault for being attacked and stabbed by my comrades." The last statement made filled his chest with the need to punish, and his eyes changed. "I will kill them first if they try to kill me again." He completely lost it, and everyone in the room stood. All in the room already knew he was different, and he did not need to hide it anymore.

"Sagiri, please stop!" he could hear N'varu beg, but he was tired of not being accepted because he was a little different.

"Sagiri?" An additional voice called his name suddenly. He must have missed his approach. He could, however, not have mistaken the voice for anyone else's.

Sagiri turned around, and Lotaga was standing there. He was wrapped in gauze all over, but he looked just as carefully as always.

"Lotaga!" Salka said, almost standing from his seat, but barely managed to contain himself at the last second. "Why are you here?" Salka asked, trying to act like he had not been worried sick for days.

"Well, nobody invited me, and when I woke up, I immediately thought of thanking my savior," he said the words slowly and with meaning before he saluted sagiri.

"I could have surely died if you had not intervened. I do not care how you did it, but I owe you." Lotaga continued, and warmth spread inside Lotaga's chest.

"You came to save me first. No debts between us," Sagiri said, and he meant every word. Lotaga might have been careless, but he was there to save him even if he was outnumbered. Sagiri saluted him deeply with a knee to the earth and a hand across his heart.

"You are not planning to send away a boy who saved an instructor's life, are you, Marshal?" Lotaga pretended to be surprised.

"The boy lied about his skills, and he had neither clan nor tribe," Senraki said. Sagiri could understand the man was skeptical because Galka War Academy was the backbone of the upcoming warriors of Tagayia, yet he still could not stomach being accused.

"You think I am a spy?" Sagiri asked, not willing to back down.

"I will find that out for myself. For now, you are to be under surveillance, and you are not to mix with the others until this is sorted out." Senraki said, yawning. It seemed he had another plan behind his plan, and the false

interrogation was just for show. Perhaps he believed there was a spy inside the wall of the Galka War Academy. That was the only explanation sagiri could come up with. No one, after all, understood what went on inside the mind of Senraki.

"What happened that day and today is not to leave this room. kiuga, kaka, and N'varu, you do not mention a word of that day, and you, especially, are to stay away from sagiri until I allow it," he said, leaving no room for questions. Something was telling sagiri that this was not the end yet.

"Everyone is dismissed!" he announced, standing to his feet.