

THE LAST KEEPER

Chapter 80 80: 78. NEW BEGINNINGS

It had been two days since the interrogation meeting, and Sagiri had been kept in the secluded medical room for checkups, they said. He had been eating and sleeping, and the old healer could not let him leave. It was as if Senraki and his minions planned to drive him mad with boredom.

Torena was the one who came to pick him up on the night of the second day. He had gone back to wearing white combat, and he almost felt like Senraki in the combat. He did not know how long he would go without being allowed to wear his combat and sash, but that did not matter now. He had stopped himself from going on a rampage in the days he was in seclusion, and now that he was out, he planned to make the most of it. N'varu was not around to tame his stupidity, and he needed to grow up.

He walked behind Torena in silence through the twists and turns of the central pentagon, which was massive compared to the other four.

"You will be sleeping here," is all he said before opening a door to a room. It was massive compared to his room 246, and he wondered why they could go so far to make him comfortable. It was as if they were fattening a cow for slaughter, and he did not like it. Even so, he just saluted Torenna before entering his new furnished prison. The bed was three times the excuse of a bed in the dormitory wing. There was even a study chair and table, and the window held a nice view of the fourth year pentagon and even the outer nonagon district. It was indeed a nice view, which was way above his rank.

His combat suit was laid out for him on the bed, together with a new one and a brand new ash grey sash. At first, he had thought he was not going to be allowed to wear one, but it seems he had underestimated Senraki's ability to play mind games. Torenna had long left, and he did not give him any further instructions about what he was to do next.

sagiri had slept enough in confinement and eaten enough to feed a small village, so he did not feel sleepy at all. In fact, he had never felt more energetic in his life. On the other hand, however, his hunger had not ceased for a moment, and his stomach grumbled. He could still feel his bones lengthening and widening, and he did not want to imagine the consequence of his rapid growth.

He took a bath that was much more improved than he had ever seen before he changed into his new combat suit. It had been made a size bigger as if the

one who ordered it to be made also realized his growth or intended him to be fattened for slaughter in the foreseeable future. he did not have time to dwell on his fate however, he had a lot to catch up on and two weeks were a long time in galka war academy and it could get others way ahead of him.

it was almost dark outside as sagiri could see from the high-rise window. The other four pentagons lacked windows, and it was a pleasing sight to see night falling over the horizon, without having to listen to the gong or look at the time counting innovation on every hallway and arena.

Speaking of hallways. When Sagiri stepped out of his designated room, there was no one in sight. It was deadly quiet. The archive had memorized the path they took with Torena from the healing wing, but of course, he did not wish to go back there. He took another hallway and just hoped it did not lead to Senraki's quarters. As much as he wanted to get on his good side, walking into his quarters was not the right road there.

He had only taken the first turn when he felt it. Their presence was faint, but he was sure someone was following him. They must have been following him ever since he left his new room. They kept their distance, however, to not be obvious, but that was futile unless they were Salka or Senraki. He could always know someone was following him. He turned around swiftly, but there was no one in sight. It was only natural that there was someone following him because he was still under watch.

As much as he wanted to call them out, he breathed deeply to calm himself. just like N'varu had instructed. He needed to keep a cool head if he wanted to get on Senraki's good side and not get sent to the warrior's guild headquarters, where no one could ever hear of him again.

He tried to follow the fourth pentagon's structure to get to the dining wing or classes, but he must have deeply underestimated the architects who made the complex fortress, because he ended up in the library. barely because he almost missed it. Its entrance was hidden, and he only managed to see a junior instructor walk out of it with a book pushed to his waist. He was out of breath from just the walk. Two weeks of just lying around and eating had reduced all his hard work to get fit to ashes.

His life felt like he was always striving to get ahead, but every time he somehow ended up in the healing quarters, either retching blood or half dead. Something needed to change, and quickly. He took a step into the library, and only then did the presence following him disappear. sagiri could only guess that that meant it was all right for him to access the library. Perhaps Senraki was allowing all devices to him so he could watch him properly and find out whatever he wanted. sagiri pulled his mask up on instinct and stepped further into the massive place.

Sagiri understood its scale only after stepping inside.

The doors alone rose three stories, forged from layered ironwood and dark metal, their surfaces inlaid with faded runes and catalog markings instead of decoration.

Shelves climbed endlessly upward, tier upon tier arranged in a perfect pentagonal spiral. Walkways connected them at varying heights, suspended by steel supports and thick chains anchored into the walls. Ladders were fixed at intervals, narrow and steep. Some levels were accessible only by narrow stairwells tucked into the angles of the pentagon, others by lifts operated through manual counterweights.

The air was cool and dry, carrying the scent of old paper, binding resin, and dust so fine it never settled. Light filtered down from above through narrow skylights cut into the high ceiling, angled to prevent direct sun. Between them hung artificial lighting innovations, casting long shadows across the floor. It was a knowledge heaven, if sagiri could describe. It made all the other libraries in the Galka War Academy seem like a joke.

The floor itself was stone, etched with concentric rings and directional lines. Catalog routes. Study zones. Restricted paths. Sagiri paused instinctively,

aware that stepping across certain markings would place him where he did not belong.

Instructors of different ranks were present, but few. They moved quietly, their footsteps soft, their voices kept low. Senior instructors mostly occupied the inner desks and elevated stations. Sagiri walked forward, the sound of his boots echoing farther than he liked. He could stop himself as he moved to the first shelf as if he were in a trance. If there was anywhere he could find what he had been searching it could only be in here.

As he moved deeper, the shelves changed. General doctrine gave way to combat theory. Combat theory gave way to historical campaigns. Further still, the bindings darkened, older texts, sealed volumes, works cataloged by era rather than subject. Some sections were enclosed behind iron latticework, accessed only through keyed gates.

It was as if his eyes had fallen under a spell, and he could not decide what to read. He thought he could maybe read theoretical fourth-year topics since he had already finished the lower-year topics. But now standing in the biggest knowledge den he had ever seen, he did not care about catching up.

He told himself he would only look to orient himself, understand the paths, the sections, the rules of the place. One shelf became two. One title led to

another. He pulled a book at random, then another beside it, then one further down when a phrase caught his eye.

He did not read deeply. He just drifted through the covers, soaking in the feel of the hard covers on his fingers

Treatises on siege psychology. Old navigation logs from desert campaigns. A thin volume on bone-setting techniques written in a cramped hand. A ledger cataloging extinct beasts, some as big as the gravescale, and their weaknesses.

Only silence snapped him to reality. There was no one else in the library. It seemed instructors did not have a gong to signify the start and end of periods. Footsteps had faded, and the quiet thickened. Sagiri only noticed the ache in his legs when he leaned back against a shelf and felt the cold of the wood through his uniform.

Sagiri exhaled slowly. His chest felt tight, as if he did not wish to leave his newfound haven. He pushed himself to leave, however, and saluted the middle-aged librarian in a purple combat suit.

He followed the etched memory in the archive of their earlier journey back toward the instructors' wing. Here, the architecture felt intentional in a different way, as if the designer wanted to create a maze. It must have indeed been a war fortress long before it became an academy

It was quieter here than he expected.

Sagiri sat on the edge of the bed and removed his boots. Only then did the fatigue reach him. His body sagged, the delayed weight of healing and strain pulling him down. His mind, however, refused to settle. Images from the library surfaced uninvited. Diagrams, lists, fragments of sentences he hadn't finished reading. It was as if his archive was growing together with his body, and he did not even feel mentally exhausted.

He lay back and stared at the ceiling. He somehow felt lonely for the first time. He did not realize how far he had gotten used to the hullabaloo in the fourth-year pentagon till in that moment, and he would do anything to go back there.

He must have fallen asleep at some point, but his sleep was not peaceful at all. He woke up from a nightmare he could not remember in cold sweat. It was still dark outside, but he could tell the central pentagon had woken up. No one was giving him instructions, and being left free to do whatever he wanted right after living a life filled with order for the past two months was not odd.

He needed to create his own order, or he could go crazy and kill himself before Senraki did.