Prologue: Doubts

Gadra felt troubled.

It was mainly for two things.

The first thing that needed no elaboration was the identity of the person attempting to kill him.

I'm surprised that I can't even detect his breath, there are very few opponents like this. Though in my heart…

‘…I dare not admit it,’ thought Gadra.

This was because, if he had guessed correctly, it meant that all of his and Yuuki's shenanigans were now in the hands of Emperor Rudra.

—No, it's possible. After all, His Majesty Rudra has lived longer than me and possesses wisdom and power beyond reason. Even if I had foreseen things coming to this and prepared for it decades ago, it would not be a surprise. However, in this way…

Now that he had left the Empire it was a different matter, but it was assumed that Yuuki would be in danger. That’s what Gadra believed.

So, what's next? Should I warn Yuuki? Or just leave it alone? That's the problem.

The two of them weren't completely unfriendly with one another, and he was personally quite fond of Yuuki. But even if Gadra felt that way, he was now on Rimuru’s side. That could not be taken lightly.

Instead of worrying about that here, there was another option, and that was to explain everything to Rimuru and go to him first. However, if he revealed such uncertainties and he was wrong about everything, Rimuru's trust in him might fall apart.

After all, Gadra had betrayed the Empire. If his credibility continued to decline, it would affect Gadra's position in the future.

Part of that was taken into consideration here, and that's why Gadra still hadn’t put it into action.

Furthermore…

There was a second doubt that messed with Gadra's thoughts.

That face, that domineering air—it was certainly true, just like His Majesty Rudra. However, seeing how he didn't falter in the slightest, and how he really seemed to know nothing about it…It didn't feel like he was pretending to be him, but…

Under normal circumstances, Emperor Rudra could not have been in that location.

Whichever way one looked at it, no other correct answer could be found—this was the conclusion that Gadra drew.

In that case, that person was really just someone else who looked a lot like Rudra.

If that man was His Majesty Rudra—no, that's a stupid thing to say. What's more important now is that the person who assassinated me is definitely ‘that guy.’ If that's the case, Yuuki is in danger. If I didn't give a little warning, I would probably have a bad conscience. In that case, I’ll report to Lord Rimuru as well.

As a result, Gadra decided to put friendship at the forefront.

Other people's opinions of him might falter, but that wouldn’t hurt.

In this country, strength is everything. For Gadra, the weak are the strongest.

He came to that conclusion and put it into practice immediately.

“It’s me, Yuuki. A word of advice to you. Actually…”

It didn’t matter if it was now convenient for the other side, Gadra unilaterally made his point.

“Hey, hey, hey, this is so sudden.”

“No way. Just put yourself in my shoes, too. Lord Rimuru may be suspicious of this matter, so I don't have time to discuss it with you here. I will work in my own way, so you too must be careful not to be taken advantage of in secret.” (\*\*\*Gadra seems to have a habit of referring to himself as “this old man”

but I just switched to the word “I” because it didn’t flow well in english) After that, Gadra ended his "magic communication" with Yuuki. Then he went forward and reported to Rimuru.

The reporting, liaising and negotiating were now done.

After such a decisive movements, Gadra deserved to be called an expert in training ministries

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“So the old man is safe and sound. And the situation is so good that he seems to have run off to join Mr.

Rimuru's side.”

Yuuki looked out the window and smiled bitterly.

It had been raining today, and it was foggy outside the windows. However, Yuuki's eyes still accurately caught the suspicious figure that used the rain to hide his tracks.

That move looked well trained and must have been monitoring Yuuki's movements. Despite discovering it, Yuuki only had a smile on his face.

Seeing Yuuki like this, the other figure in the room, Kagali, responded.

“Are you talking about Gadra? That's for sure. Even I, a former Demon Lord, looked at him and thought that the old man was too cunning to take lightly. So it's better for us to just help each other.”

Yuuki echoed Kagali's statement.

“Yeah. It is thanks to that old man that we have this status. And he also seems to have brought us quite the favorable information this time.”

If it was Gadra, he would have brought favorable intelligence from the Jura Tempest Federation. Yuuki calculated as such.

There is a fake "hero" named Chronoa. It is not yet known whether the man is alive or dead. Since Rimuru was safe and sound, the other party must have been knocked down…

If Rimuru absorbed this tyrannical force, word would have surely spread somewhere. Yet nothing was heard at all about this.

There is also no mention in Gadra's report, which suggested that the other party may be dead. So Yuuki thought about it for a moment, thinking that perhaps he was worrying too much.

The immediate issue that must be confronted was the urgent message from Gadra.

“Oh, yeah. So what did Gadra tell you?”

“He says Masayuki looks exactly like the Emperor Rudra…”

“What?”

Kagali unitentionally asked back in an unpolished tone as soon as she heard, which made Yuuki show a bitter smile. This was because he thought he probably had the same reaction himself when he suddenly heard something like this.

“It's a mystery, isn't it? On the one hand I felt like the old man was saying something silly, but on the other hand it didn't feel like a joke at all. However, the emperor pretending to be Masayuki—it’s hard to deny that completely…”

The smile on Yuuki's face disappeared as he thought about his encounter with Masayuki.

In retrospect, Masayuki was not called to this world. He had told him, ‘As soon as I looked over, I was here.’ Yuuki originally thought he might be an "otherworldly visitor" who came to this world by chance…

I can’t find any evidence that Masayuki is "from the other world". If magic or skills work…

He was about to think in a different direction when Yuuki's thoughts suddenly stopped. He began to think of something else, and the next thing he knew, he was speaking out.

“—Forget it. It's more important now to keep an eye on our gang.”

“Geez, it's been a long time since we've had such an interesting conversation. Still, what you said is true. I'm always being watched, and I'm a little out of breath.”

“Right? This would put a damper on our plans, and until then it seems necessary to abandon everything else."

“How can you say that?”

“I mean it literally. If what gramps says is true, then we can say that we are in a crisis.”

If Gadra's words were true, it would not be good to send out the hybrid legions that were being laid out against the Dwarven Kingdom. How that will play out in the future—no, before that they’d have to decide who was friend and who was foe. Maybe they’d have to go back and start all over.

That's what Yuuki was forced to think.

“…so it is. In that case, there's really no time to think about that kid right now.”

Kagali didn't doubt Yuuki's words.

If Yuuki thought there was danger, then there was no doubt about it.

“Gadra wanted to see the emperor, but I heard he was assassinated from behind in that place.”

“Wasn't it Kondo?”

The person who asked this was Kagali, who then went on to deny it herself.

“No. Who else but Kondo could have killed Gadra, but if it was the ‘Double 0 number’ that never shows up, it wouldn't be surprising if there was an unknown genius among them.”

That said, if Tatsuya Kondo really did it, then it would be only natural that Yuuki wouldn't be surprised.

“I think so, too. But there were other reasons why I was surprised. It was Gadra who said that he probably guessed who the prisoner was.”

The room fell silent at once.

Kagali exhaled and stared into Yuuki's eyes, questioning him.

“…does it mean that the other person is someone we also know well?”

Kagali gestured with her eyes to stop Yuuki from talking about him.

Still with a bitter smile, Yuuki nodded lightly.

“It's unbelievable, but it is what it is. Of course, it's also possible that the old man thought wrong. But it's not something that can be brought up simply by admitting the wrong person.”

Kagali opened her eyes wide.

"Does that mean that the other side is important among partners?”

The smile on her face disappeared completely.

“Exactly."

Yuuki nodded.

In contrast to Kagali, Yuuki's smile deepened as she replied.

“So the name of the traitor is…”