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Chapter 171: Promotion and Pay Raise

Translator: AtlasStudios **Editor:** AtlasStudios

After leaving Azik's house, Klein took a public carriage back to Daffodil Street.

As he opened the door to his house, he suddenly saw a figure sitting in his dining room.

Klein instinctively tightened his grip on the cane in his hand, but quickly realized what was going on. It wasn't a thief, but his maid, Bella.

Bella was focused on reading a spread-out newspaper on the table. She jumped in shock when she heard the door open, quickly standing up and stammering, "I-I was just done with the tasks for the morning. I was w-waiting for the water to boil so that I could eat some bread."

I'm still not really used to having a maid in the house... Klein mocked himself. He took off his hat and nodded.

"Reading is a good habit. To be able to persist in reading, despite the busy workload, is something that's encouraged by the Goddess."

He used the name of the Goddess just in case Bella took his compliment as sarcasm.

But in reality, only the God of Knowledge and Wisdom would place this much emphasis on reading... Of course, all of the Churches advocate

education... Yes, since she's about 18 years old and believes in the Goddess, Bella's love for reading must be influenced by her parents. Parents like this would send their daughter to receive an education as long as they can afford it. Even if they cannot afford public schools, there are always the free schools provided by the Church. At most, it would just delay her education... Thus, Bella isn't illiterate. She can understand words and read the newspaper... Klein thought as he walked into the living room after setting his cane down.

He had quite a good impression of Bella.

Even though she was a little clumsy and obviously not used to the kitchen, she had shown a willingness to learn.

Bella let her hands hang down and said, embarrassed, "I didn't have the opportunity to read many newspapers in the past. The landlord didn't let us use old newspapers to clean the walls... I stole a glance at it when I picked up the newspapers just now to clean the coffee table. I thought that-that it was rather interesting."

What a pitiful lady. When I transmigrated, newspapers were the least interesting of things... Klein thought as he lampooned. He smiled and took out the silver pocket watch from his pocket. After looking at the time, he said, "As long as you complete your tasks and do them well, you are free to do whatever you want with the rest of your time. You don't need to be too nervous. Of course, if I'm having a chat with Benson and Melissa, it's best that you stay in your room. I will allow you to use the lamp inside and take a few old newspapers with you."

"Oh, please knock at my door at one in the afternoon, then prepare a cup of Sibe black tea, two pieces of soft white bread, a piece of wheat toast, and a small plate of butter for me."

In order to celebrate his advancement to Sequence 8, Klein decided to spoil himself slightly. He was going to eat the white bread ahead of Benson who was planning on having it over the weekend.

Well, I'll buy eight more pounds of bread soon. In the future, we shall make the change in our staple dish, from wheat bread to white bread! As a Sequence 8 Beyonder, my weekly pay is definitely going to increase... To think that the Captain didn't mention this... He forgot again! Klein froze for a moment and decided to clarify it tomorrow.

"Alright," Bella replied in surprise and joy.

Following that, she asked with a little uncertainty, "Mr. Klein, do you mean the Sibe black tea used to entertain guests?"

She called him by his first name as Moretti could be used to refer to anyone in the family.

"Yes, that shall be my usual tea in the future." Klein waved his hand and made his way towards the stairs.

He suddenly noticed that he was in a decent financial situation after becoming a Clown.

This was partly because there were no other large expenses for the time being. He only needed to spend two soli on transport while he was investigating the houses with red chimneys, and on the materials that he needed to purchase occasionally. Claims could be made for the latter most of the time anyway.

Also, there was a sum of 300 pounds in Klein's anonymous bank account. It was important to understand that one are of land in the countryside only cost five to six and a half soli, which was another way of saying that Klein could afford 920 to 1200 ares of farmland, which

was equivalent to 137 to 179 mou 2 back on Earth. Furthermore, this sum of money could allow Klein to buy a house on Daffodil Street on a contract for 15 years.

If I convert all that money into land, I'll get between 23 and 31 pounds a year in rent... That's not bad, but not necessary for the time being. I'll use that 300 pounds for emergencies... I'll have to find an opportunity to tell Benson and Melissa about my true weekly salary! Klein thought as he entered his room.

After locking the door to his room, Klein sat on the edge of his bed and started his Cogitation. He wanted to use this method to slowly control the powers seeping out of his potion. He was very careful and very cautious.

He had thought of the term "losing control" very lightly until he saw the Mandated Punisher who had lost control.

Of course, he didn't know that Mandated Punisher personally. He also didn't know what had happened to him. He subconsciously thought of him as an anomaly, a rare case.

It was just like how an average person would make comments about a murder they saw on the news before forgetting about it entirely.

But what happened to Old Neil shook Klein greatly. It made him realize very clearly that losing control was always a possibility, always around him. Loss of control might descend upon him in ways he had never thought about!

That sure was a bloody lesson... Klein ended his Cogitation and muttered to himself as he opened his eyes.

He had dreamed of that scene many times in the past few days, jolting awake in the process and finding himself drenched in cold sweat.

He wasn't only grieving Old Neil's death, but also worried about his future. If he didn't have Cogitation to help him sleep, he believed that there would be many sleepless nights in his future.

Other than digesting the potion, I also have to try my best to control my emotions and desires. I have to keep them within reasonable levels and not be consumed by them... Klein exhaled and laid down, quickly falling asleep.

On the day that Old Neil passed away, Dunn's actions and words had touched him greatly. It made him critically assess the responsibilities of a Nighthawk for the first time. It made him want to take up his responsibilities and help his Captain and teammates.

Thus, he didn't intend to waste his afternoon. He was going to continue his combat lessons.

...

Three in the afternoon, on a crude training field.

The blond crew-cut Gawain creased his brows as he witnessed Klein slowly familiarize himself with the motions, going from the movements of a decent beginner to the movements of an apprentice knight who had been practicing for a good six months.

All this happened in the short span of forty minutes!

He called for Klein to stop and sized him up. He couldn't help but ask, "What happened?"

Klein had already come up with an excuse. He was prepared to attribute his performance to scientific research when Gawain added, "You don't need to answer if it's inconvenient for you to do so."

It looks like there was some communication between the police department and Gawain... It makes sense; he has to train Beyonders occasionally, so how could he not know? Klein heaved a sigh of relief. He smiled as he said, "Teacher, how long do you think I will need before I can take part in actual combat?"

Gawain crossed his arms and looked at Klein seriously. He replied with a raspy voice, "Two or three days, but that isn't enough!"

He explained, as if in thought, "Being able to take part in actual combat isn't the same as being good at fighting. The latter would take another two to three weeks.

"Furthermore, you need to gain mastery over weapons that you can bring with you, for example, a cane, whips, daggers, and bayonets!"

... There's still so many to learn? Klein was dumbfounded.

Gawain swept his experienced gaze at him.

"Remember, every drop of sweat you lose here might save your life in the future."

"Yes, Teacher!" Klein pumped himself up and answered.

...

On Sunday morning, Klein entered the Blackthorn Security Company and knocked on the door of the Captain's office.

Dunn Smith looked up as if he was expecting this.

"I forgot to inform you yesterday. Your position at the police department has risen from probationary inspector to inspector now that you have

advanced to Sequence 8. I'll get them to issue the appropriate documents and epaulets to you as soon as possible.

“Your weekly salary will also increase from six pounds to ten pounds. The Church and the police department will each bear half of your salary. This salary is the level of an experienced Nighthawk; of course, I mean an experienced Nighthawk at Sequence 9.”

... Captain, are you following the wrong script? Klein was taken aback as he listened to the Captain. His eyebrows relaxed as he smiled.

“That’s more than I imagined.”

He had imagined that his weekly salary would only increase to eight pounds.

Dunn lifted his cup of coffee and took a sip.

“The increase in salary for Nighthawks is firstly dependent on years of service, second on contribution, and third on the level of your job. The third criterion is often highly correlated with your contributions.”

Right, without any contributions, even if one were to digest their potion, they would be unable to apply for the formula and materials... Klein nodded while in thought.

A weekly salary of 10 pounds, coupled with any bonuses would mean a yearly salary of about 540 pounds. Since he didn't need to pay any taxes, this salary was fairly high in the middle-income bracket, just lower than desirable occupations such as esteemed lawyers, famous architects, experienced surgeons, and government workers.

Even the vice president of the Loen Kingdom's treasury only makes 700 pounds a year before tax. That's at most 640 pounds after tax, probably

lower... According to the newspapers, a decent house in Backlund and Hillston only costs about 2500 pounds. With Benson, Melissa, and my current expenditure, we could buy one in seven or eight years... To be able to afford a bungalow in the central area of the capital in just seven or eight years purely through my own efforts, this salary makes me happy indeed... Klein got up and bade farewell. He quickly walked to the basement and took his shift at Chanis Gate.

Before it was ten, he suddenly heard someone approaching Chanis Gate.

Soon after, Dunn appeared at the door.

“There’s a case that requires your help.”

“An incident involving Beyonders?” Klein instinctively asked.

“No, a parliamentary representative of this city, Mr. Maynard, was found dead in his house. The Tingen Police Department is under huge pressure and wants us to use a mediumship ritual to help them pinpoint the murderer. Currently, you are the only person on the team who can do that,” Dunn explained. Then he added, “The Holy Cathedral will send over a Mystery Pryer to our team next week. Actually, it should’ve been done a long time ago, but you happened to join and chose to be a Seer.”

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Chapter 172: “Autopsy”

Translator: AtlasStudios **Editor:** AtlasStudios

“How long has the Member of Parliament been dead for?” Klein asked straightforwardly as he packed up his things.

If it was more than fifteen minutes, the information that he could obtain would decline considerably. If it was more than an hour, there would be very little left to find.

If it was more than a month, contact with the spirit of the dead would most likely fail.

“Regrettably, the initial autopsy report shows that Mr. Maynard died between nine and eleven last night.” Dunn shook his head and said, “You only need to provide assistance and not consider if you can be of use.”

“Alright.” Klein took his coat and walked out of the duty room with his hat and cane in hand. Dunn Smith took his place at the Chanis Gate guardroom.

Theoretically, as a Beyonders, as long as one’s spirituality was enhanced, things like Spirit Vision, divination, and ritualistic magic could be learned. Especially for Beyonders from the Sleepless Sequence who were known for their high spirituality.

But in actual fact, the differences between the various sequences was vastly obvious. Dunn Smith and Leonard Mitchell had learned Spirit Vision, but they could only see faint white or light blue in the auras of others. They were unable to precisely differentiate the status of different body parts. Of course, they could definitely see spiritual things with Spirit Vision, but doing so wasn’t as effective as using their spiritual perception.

That also led to a problem in which Beyonders at the Sleepless, Midnight Poet, and Nightmare Sequences didn't enjoy activating their Spirit Vision.

Similarly, if they were willing to, they could also learn spirit pendulums, dowsing, dream divination, and so on. But their rate of success wasn't something worth noting.

It was the same situation with ritualistic magic as well.

When the two of them walked past one another, Dunn suddenly said, "I forgot to tell you that Inspector Tolle is in charge of the case. He's waiting for you at the reception hall in the security company. Remember to change into your new uniform and grab your new documents."

Klein wasn't surprised and replied with a smile, "New uniform, new documents? The Tingen Police Department sure is efficient."

He had just advanced to Sequence 8 the day before...

"It's because this case is very important, so..." Dunn spread his hands and took up Klein's previous spot.

Klein walked upstairs, but he wasn't in a hurry to go to the reception hall. He entered the Nighthawks' break room and entered the attached bathroom to relieve himself. There was only a toilet bowl, a water bottle, and a bucket in the duty room.

Then, he changed into his police uniform that revealed his promotion to two silver stars and put on his peak cap with the "two crossed swords and a crown."

After transferring his Flaring Sun Charm, Azik's copper whistle, his ritual ingredients, and other items, Klein smoothed out his uniform, took his cane, and exited the break room.

He passed through the partition and saw Inspector Tolle seated in the sofa area.

It had been a while since they last met. The tall police officer seemed to have gained some weight, and his stomach was even more outstanding. With his thick mustache and hair, he looked like a brown bear that had just escaped from a circus.

"I'm glad to work with you again." When Tolle saw that it was a Nighthawk that he knew, he let out a breath of relief. He stood up and extended his bear paw.

No, palm... Klein corrected himself and shook the other person's hand as a polite gesture.

"Me too."

Tolle stole a glance at Klein's two shimmering silver stars shoulder strap and said with envy, "We're at the same rank now, and it hasn't even been a month."

At first, Klein wanted to reply solemnly that "The danger that we encounter is ten times worse than yours," but he remembered his identity then: Sequence 8 Clown.

Maybe I can give it a try... Using his spirituality, he looked at the reflection of his facial expression. He lifted the corner of his lips and replied with a smile, "Maybe in another few months, you'll have to call me 'Sir.'"

“You sure are humorous.” Tolle chuckled and pointed at the door. “Shall we head out?”

“Alright.” Klein hadn’t given up his cane. Now that he had become a Clown, the cane was truly a viable weapon.

After exiting the Blackthorn Security Company, Klein and Tolle walked down side by side, forming a great contrast due to the skinniness and fatness of the two.

“I feel like we could even make an audience at the circus laugh,” Klein suddenly jested.

Tolle nodded in absolute agreement and said, “Yes, I feel our vast contrast brings a comedic effect. Do you know that some circuses are trying to use fat and skinny, tall and short clown combinations in their performances?”

No, actually I meant a beast tamer and a brown bear... Klein, of course, wouldn’t make such a rude remark. He went along with it and replied, “It’s a pity that there are no fixed circuses in Tingen.”

“That’s right, but we have operas, theaters, and music halls,” Inspector Tolle replied wistfully.

They casually chatted until they got onto the police carriage. Then, Klein redirected the topic back to the case.

“Is it confirmed that Mr. Maynard was murdered?”

“We can’t be certain, but his wife and two sons aren’t willing to believe the possibility that he died due to a sudden illness. And there was really

something wrong at the scene. When Maynard was found, he was naked on the guestroom's bed," Tolle said as he deliberated.

"He sleeps separately from his wife?" Klein leaned back against the carriage wall and mimicked the main character in various detective films.

Tolle shook his head and said, "No, his wife hasn't been in Tingen recently. She went to Backlund to attend a very important social ball. You might not know, but she's the leader of a new party. She's the daughter of someone from the House of Commons. She's still on her way back to Tingen via steam locomotive. She merely used the telegram to express her opinion on this matter."

"Maynard is also a member of the new party. He's been a Tingen's Member of Parliament for more than ten years. He intended to run for mayor in next year's election."

"In other words, his death might be related to this?" Klein asked casually and immediately laughed. "I'm sorry, I'm only supposed to be helping with the autopsy. The rest of the matter is not within my area of concern, you don't have to answer."

Tolle didn't mind much but sighed.

"Autopsy... You're very cautious."

"As for your guesses, I would only say that there's a possibility. There was a gathering last night at Maynard's place. There were too many guests, and we temporarily can't find any main suspects. Plus, these guests have decent backgrounds, so we have to be very careful. We can't make any mistakes."

“I understand.” Klein nodded faintly and asked about the details of the scene.

Maynard’s house was a bungalow located in the Golden Indus borough. It was surrounded by gardens and fields, there was a stable, a fountain, and a broad pathway built from cement.

Klein put on his peak hat with its police badge and followed behind Inspector Tolle. They passed through the police streamer and entered the double-story house under the gaze of every policeman present.

In the living room, there were two male and four female probationary inspectors who were talking to people individually to gather statements.

Klein looked around and saw many gentlemen in tuxedos and a few ladies in glamorous dresses and checkered gauze hats.

“They’re the guests who spent the night here,” Tolle explained and led Klein up the stairs to the second floor directly.

Along the way, when the police constables who were searching through the rooms saw the two, they revealed a look of respect without stopping them. Perhaps it was the effect of the inspector epaulets.

“This is the guest room where Maynard’s corpse was discovered.” The brawny Tolle stopped by the crimson wooden door.

Klein thought and asked, “Which guest was assigned to this guest room?”

“Nobody. There are too many guest rooms in the house, so it wasn’t used.” Tolle put on his white gloves and turned the knob of the crimson wooden door.

He made the constable who was keeping watch leave temporarily. Then, he nodded at Klein and said, “Inspector Moretti, I’ll leave the rest to you.”

“May the Goddess bless us, and I hope that we find something.” Klein put on his white gloves too and locked the door behind him.

He walked to the side of the bed and saw that the crimson bedsheets were abnormally messy. The corpse laying on it was covered with a white cloth.

At this point, Klein could be considered to be quite experienced. He pulled away the white cloth without fear and looked at Member of Parliament Maynard.

The man was in his forties. His blond hair was trimmed short, and his expression was a mixture of pain and happiness.

Klein took two steps back and took out the ingredients he needed. He quickly finished the setup for the mediumship ritual.

As the faint calming fragrance swirled around him, he recited the divination statement that he thought of long ago, “The cause of Maynard’s death.”

“The cause of Maynard’s death.”

...

As he recited the statement, Klein retreated to a nearby high back chair and sat down slowly.

His eyes darkened, then he leaned back and quickly fell into a deep sleep.

In the illusory and blurry world, he suddenly saw the gentleman from earlier.

With his opened blue eyes, Maynard was laying prostrate above a woman with an outstanding body and fair skin. He was thrusting hard against her body.

He first displayed an expression of extreme satisfaction and happiness. Then, he suddenly clutched his chest with his right hand. His expression then grew contorted.

Pa!

As Maynard fell, the image quickly shattered. Klein opened his eyes and woke up from his dream.

I can't believe I can actually watch porn in such a manner... So, Maynard had an affair and died of exhaustion? Klein chuckled and massaged his temples.

He took out a pen and paper before doing another ritual. He drew a portrait of the lady he had seen in his dream with the aid of the ritual. Of course, everything below her neck was omitted.

It was a woman whose age was hard to tell. She had the mature vibe of a woman in her thirties, but there was a remnant of innocence to her. Her eyes were crystal clear, and she had a delicate look.

Klein looked at his work, then put away his ritual ingredients, and dispelled the spirituality wall.

He leaned sideways to grab his silver-edged cane.

Suddenly, he heard the reverberating sound of someone clearing their throat. He immediately got goosebumps!

Klein looked towards the bed and saw Maynard gripping the crimson bedsheets so tightly that the tendons on the backs of his hands were protruding out.

With a swoosh, the Member of Parliament who died between nine and eleven the previous night suddenly sat up. Saliva drooled from the corners of his lips as he opened his vacant eyes wide.

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Chapter 173: Zombification

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Before Klein could come up with any new ideas, he saw the rigid Maynard lift both his hands up. Its body lunged forward to his left amidst the sound of hurtling wind!

In the past, his dulled reactions under such sudden, unexpected situations would've made it hard for him to avoid this. Even if he had noticed the attack ahead of time, he would have had to roll away to avoid the fast-moving corpse.

But now, Klein could nearly react on instinct. He stomped down with his bright, buttonless leather boots and jumped diagonally onto the high-back chair.

As it had only been a day since he advanced, he was still getting used to his power, agility, and speed. He had accidentally leaped too high into the air and landed on the top of the chair's high-back!

It was a narrow edge. Klein's heart tightened as he quickly controlled his body and adjusted his center of gravity.

He wavered for a moment and surprisingly managed to stabilize himself, like a black cat flaunting its balance and poise.

As he was wavering, he flailed his left arm, swinging his cane into the zombie's ribs as it pounced forward. The strike caused it to lose its balance as it staggered and fell onto the carpet.

Klein was standing on top of the chair as he felt for his revolver by raising his right arm. He attempted to pull it out from the holster so that he could deliver a silver demon hunting bullet at the zombie in front of him.

But in that instant, he suddenly wondered about the aftermath.

If he were to blow a hole in Member of Parliament Maynard's corpse, how was he going to explain the cause of death to the deceased's family or Members of Parliament who were focusing on the matter?

All I did was double-tap his corpse?

As he was thinking, Klein reached into the pocket of his police uniform and felt for a triangular plate.

The Requiem Charm... He quickly made a decision. He took out the silver amulet without hesitation and let out a low shout in Hermes, "Crimson!"

As the incantation reverberated within the room, the charm started to release a peaceful aura. Klein quickly infused his spirituality into the amulet and tossed it to Zombie Maynard who was struggling to get up.

A cold blue fire appeared, enveloping the triangular plate. A serene and gentle black aura spread forth rapidly, eliminating the anxiety and worry of the soul.

Zombie Maynard stopped there, his eyes staring blankly at the ground. His saliva dripped onto the carpet.

Klein heaved a sigh of relief and planned to take out the materials and set up a ritual to purify the desecrated being, but suddenly, Maynard once again let out a groan, his blank eyes focused on the left pocket of Klein's police uniform again.

Shit... Klein leaped from the top of the chair to the ledge of the oriel window.

At the same time, he heard the sound of the chair breaking.

Klein had no choice but to take out a rectangular silver plate.

The Slumber Charm!

It wasn't only living things that could be put into a deep sleep. The dead were in a state of eternal sleep and would only be woken up under unusual circumstances!

In certain books on mysticism, there was even such a description regarding zombies: They slumber by the day and wake up in the night.

“Crimson!”

Klein once again recited the incantation in Hermes. He intended to disregard the consequences and shoot the corpse with his revolver if that failed again.

The problems that came later wouldn't matter if he was dead!

As he felt the silver rectangular plate in his palm turn cold, Klein injected his spirituality into it and tossed the charm out.

A dark red flame illuminated his eyes as the sound of a light explosion reverberated around the room.

A gentle power spread forth, bringing with it a fatigue that affected every living being. Zombie Maynard had just propped himself up using the chair when he wavered. His eyes closed, and he fell on his back with a plop.

With what had just happened, Klein didn't dare to relax. He immediately took out the Amantha extract distilled from Night vanilla, Slumber flower, and Chamomile, as well as the bark of the Drago tree, and the Full Moon Essence Oil made from Moon flowers. He quickly set up a sacrificial altar.

Right on the heels of that, he sealed the surrounding area with a spirituality wall with the aid of Holy Night Powder, encompassing the altar and the sleeping Zombie Maynard.

After silently reciting the incantation and lighting three corresponding candles, he dripped a few drops of essential oil extract and scattered various powders onto the flames. Klein then took a step back and cautiously looked at Zombie Maynard. He then recited in Hermes,

“Oh Evernight Goddess, nobler than the stars and more eternal than eternity.

“I pray for your loving grace.

“I pray that you look over your loyal guardian,

“I pray for the power of the crimson.

“I pray for the power of sleep and silence,

“I pray that you purify the unclean being around me, the gentleman once called John Maynard.”

...

“Moon flower, a herb that belongs to the red moon, please bestow your powers to my incantation!

“Slumber flower, a herb that belongs to the red moon, please bestow your powers to my incantation!”

...

It was as if a midnight breeze blew within the wall of spirituality. A thin veil of black steam started to billow from Zombie Maynard.

When everything settled, Klein used his Spirit Vision and divination to repeatedly confirm that the zombie wouldn't “awaken” once more.

After seeing the results, his worries eased. He ended the ritual and dispelled the wall of spirituality.

“Why would he suddenly come back to life?” Klein stood in front of Maynard, who was on the carpet. He knitted his brows as he looked down at the corpse.

To a Beyonder with high spiritual sensitivity, there were obvious signs to note if a corpse would come back to life or not, much less Klein, who was a Seer. He often had a premonition of similar matters, but what had happened just now completely took him by surprise.

Unless-unless there is a more mysterious influence at play... Just like what happened with the suited clown. Klein recalled the scene in his head and faintly sensed the problem:

Zombie Maynard had been trying to attack the left pocket of his police uniform!

Left pocket? Klein transferred his black cane to his right palm, then reached for the pocket with his left hand. He took out the ancient copper whistle that was inside.

It was a copper whistle carved with many mysterious patterns. It was the copper whistle used to summon Azik’s messenger.

This copper whistle zombified Maynard? That’s quite plausible. Even if Mr. Azik isn’t a descendant of Death, he definitely has a certain connection with Death. It’s logical that the objects that he carries with him would produce such an effect... Klein nodded in thought. He took out a copper penny and did a quick divination about his conclusion.

As he was at the scene of the incident, holding the relevant objects, and had ample information, he quickly got a result. He saw the copper penny fall into his palm, portrait facing up.

This means yes. To think that Mr. Azik didn't remind me to be cautious that these things could happen... Well... He's an amnesiac, so it's not uncommon to forget this. Besides, the copper whistle might not have had negative effects when it was on him. There's a high possibility that it was suppressed. I shouldn't take this copper whistle with me when I'm at cemeteries or ancient castles, places that are prone to hauntings. Otherwise, I'll just be finding trouble for myself and crazily court death...Klein silently made a mental note. He then carried the naked Maynard back onto the bed without much effort.

Looking at the obvious mark on the corpse left behind by the stroke of the cane, Klein sighed. He covered the corpse with the piece of white cloth and pretended not to notice.

I'll leave this problem to the police department to vex over it! Oh, and the two charms I used just now can be considered mission-related expenses, so I can get compensated... He thought as he packed up. He then took the portrait and unlocked the door.

The door opened with a creak and Klein saw Inspector Tolle, who had been guarding outside, not allowing anyone to come near.

"What happened just now?" Tolle asked in doubt and worry.

He could faintly hear the action going on in the room.

Klein smiled and deliberately said with a little exaggeration,

"Member of Parliament Maynard came back to life and tried to give me a passionate hug."

"Don't joke like that..." Tolle looked into the room in exasperation.

“Why so serious?” Klein said, throwing up his hands. “Due to an unconfirmed reason, Member of Parliament Maynard became a zombie. Well—the kind of things that would happen in ghost stories. Fortunately, I hadn’t left yet, so I used ritualistic magic to purify the desecration, allowing him to return to his eternal slumber.”

“Is this related to his cause of death?” Tolle asked, his expression stern.

“I cannot give you an answer to that. I don’t even know what the problem is. You should know that in our field, unexplainable things are a common occurrence,” Klein said. He then looked at the portrait in his hand, “When I was doing the mediumship ritual, I saw the scene of Maynard’s death. He was engaging in some activities that should only be done between a husband and wife with this woman. And at the climax of his joy, he clutched his chest where the heart is.”

“You mean that... that is the cause of his death?” Tolle gave him a “nudge nudge” and “wink wink” look.

“In theory, yes, but you should wait for the autopsy.” Klein handed the portrait over to Inspector Tolle.

Tolle had only glanced at it when he exclaimed, “Madam Sharon!”

Klein looked at him, lost.

“Is she very famous?”

Yea, judging from her looks and figure, she should be famous... He lampooned in his heart.

Tolle looked around and introduced her in a somewhat excited manner, “Madam Sharon is the prettiest widow in Tingen City. She’s the most

sought-after lady in social settings. She was the second wife of Baron Khoy, but unfortunately became widowed.

“She is welcomed by many amongst the nouveau riche merchants and aristocrats, someone who can be invited to banquets by both the Conservative Party and the New Party.”

“It’s rumored that she and her stepson, the current Baron Khoy, are on ‘friendly’ terms with many nobles and senior civil servants in Backlund. She’s a powerful lady. To think that she and Member of Parliament Maynard had such a relationship... Hehe...”

Simply put, she’s an exceptional socialite... Klein secretly concluded. He turned around and pointed into the room.

“The next part is not included in my job description. How you interrogate Madam Sharon is none of my business.”

“Also, I hit Member of Parliament Maynard with a cane before the purification. You’ll have to deal with it and think of an explanation.”

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Chapter 174: Madam Sharon

Translator: AtlasStudios **Editor:** AtlasStudios

“What?” The bearlike Tolle jumped in shock and looked at Klein before looking into the room. With agility that wasn’t suited to his body, he dashed in.

He pulled back the white cloth that covered the corpse and after examining the body carefully, he heaved a breath of relief.

“It’s better than I imagined. It’s not that serious a problem.”

Maybe I should’ve drawn my revolver and shot Maynard five times with demon hunting bullets. Let’s see if you find that serious or not... Klein lampooned inwardly and pointed outside the door.

“That’s all that you need me for, right?”

“No!” Tolle shouted. “Wait a moment.”

Klein asked, puzzled, “Why?”

Tolle explained seriously, “We have to prevent any accidents from happening. After we talk to Madam Sharon and get her testimony, I’ll send you back to Zouteland Street.”

If Maynard can resurrect after being dead for ten hours, what else couldn’t happen? What would I do if you leave? Tolle added in his head.

“Alright.” Klein massaged his temple and said, “Find a quiet room for me to rest in then.”

He wasn’t feeling his best in every aspect as he had just advanced a day ago. Having just performed multiple ritual ceremonies, used two charms, and suffered a nontrivial scare, he needed to enter Cogitation to eliminate any problems.

Klein was now extremely cautious about losing control.

Tolle covered the dead body with the white cloth again. He obviously relaxed and replied, “No problem.”

He brought Klein to a guest room that was closer to the sunlit side of the house. He pointed and said, “Inspector Moretti, don’t worry. No one will disturb you. I’ll be paying Madam Sharon a visit first.”

Klein nodded slightly and watched him walk away. Then, he closed the door and drew the curtains.

In the dim and silent bedroom, he slowly walked over to the rocking chair and sat down comfortably. He allowed his body to rock back and forth rhythmically.

There were countless spherical phantasmal lights overlapping in his mind. The buzzing sounds in Klein’s ears and the throbbing ache in his head slowly vanished, bit by bit.

When his situation stabilized, he opened his eyes and looked into the darkness. He outlined a bed, cupboard, and other furniture. Then, he calmly thought about his earlier attempts.

There isn’t much feedback from a few exaggerated jokes...

Maybe I have yet to control the powers of the Clown potion, as there are still remnant negative effects... Of course, I can’t eliminate the possibility that such “acting” has little effect.

Personally, I’m not quite willing to play the role of a clown. But since I picked the Sequence pathway, I can only bite the bullet and continue...

Actually, everyone has to act like a clown at one point or another in their lives. I don’t have to be so uncomfortable with the idea.

I have to quickly understand a Clown's core elements...

As various thoughts churned in his mind, Klein suddenly took out a brass halfpence.

Mostly out of habit, he divined if Maynard's death was due to supernatural influences.

Maybe it's an occupational hazard... Klein shook his head and laughed. His eyes grew dark as he recited repeatedly, "John Maynard's death was due to supernatural influences."

...

Ding!

He flipped the coin as he slouched into the rocking chair. He watched its brass luster twinkle as it rotated in the air.

Pak! The coin fell right into Klein's open palm, revealing the number $1/2$ facing up.

A negative answer. In other words, there weren't any supernatural influences involved in John Maynard's death. I guess that man died of orgasmic pleasure. The deceased shouldn't be laughed at, so I won't be using an insipid Chinese phrase to mock him... Klein put away his coin and allowed his thoughts to wander before he nearly fell asleep.

Knock! Knock! Knock!

Under the slow and rhythmic knocking, Klein tidied his clothing, put on his policeman's peak cap, and walked to the door.

Just as his right palm touched the knob, a scene appeared in his mind.

The bearlike Inspector Tolle was standing outside the door and pulling his collar. His expression looked disturbed and helpless.

Klein turned the knob and opened the door leisurely.

Inspector Tolle appeared before him as he pulled at his collar.

“Sorry for making you wait so long.

“We’ve already found Madam Sharon and obtained her statement. You can return to Zouteland Street.

“I’m really sorry for taking up your precious time.”

Klein didn’t ask the reason for his current emotions but he smiled and said, “Madam Sharon admitted that she was with Maynard last night?”

“Yes. She said that under the influence of alcohol, she and Maynard didn’t manage to control themselves. When she found out that he died of a heart attack, she was very afraid so she fled the room after she tidied herself up. She then hid in her own guest room. We don’t have enough reason to raise charges against her right now, so we had to let her go while restricting some of her freedom. We’ll have to wait for the autopsy,” Inspector Tolle explained in detail.

Klein leaned his head sideways and smiled.

“Who are you explaining this to?”

Tolle shook his head and forced a bitter smile. “Oh yeah, I don’t have to explain it to you. I’m just frustrated by Madam Maynard, and I started blabbering without realizing it.”

“Maynard’s wife is back?” Klein asked in response.

“Yes, unfortunately. There was something abnormal about the steam locomotive. It wasn’t late.” Tolle gave an affirmative answer in a joking manner.

Klein didn’t ask further but checked if he had all his personal belongings, before following Inspector Tolle down the stairs.

“Why aren’t you arresting her?”

“She’s a murderer! I want to sue her, and I want to sue all of you for negligence of duty!”

“I’ll hire the best lawyer to sue you!”

...

Harsh remarks entered Klein’s ears, and he looked over subconsciously. He saw a voluptuous and fair middle-aged lady staring angrily across her. Despite having two young men holding her arms, she continued yelling at them.

A very trendy regal gown in Backlund this year... Having frequently read the magazine, Ladies Aesthetic, the first thought on Klein’s mind was something unrelated to the situation. He then saw a few gentlemen protecting a lady behind them.

The lady was in a long black dress with fair smooth skin, waterfall-like brown hair, and brown eyes. She looked as pitiful as a fawn in the woods. It made people want to protect her involuntarily.

Madam Sharon... Klein suddenly thought of the “porno” she had starred in. He quickly lifted his right hand, covered his mouth, and coughed twice.

Out of habit, he tapped his left molars twice and observed the people present with Spirit Vision.

There's some sort of problem with Mrs. Maynard's body. The colors of her aura are thinner. From the colors of her emotions, she's definitely feeling anger and hatred, which is consistent with her outward appearance...

Huh? The color of Madam Sharon's emotions are shaded in blue, which represents rational thinking and calmness... This is totally contrary to her appearance of panic and nervousness. As expected, a socialite ain't no innocent bunny... Her body is very healthy.

After examining her, Klein was about to retract his gaze when he suddenly saw Madam Sharon lift her head and steal a glance in his direction. Then, she lowered her head again and put on a trembling trepid look.

If I couldn't see your emotion colors directly, I might've been fooled by your act... You should consider working as an actress... Klein lampooned. He didn't stay any longer and left Maynard's house with Inspector Tolle. They took the carriage arranged by the police station and returned to Zouteland Street.

After taking over the shift from the Captain, he continued to stay on duty at Chanis Gate. He took the opportunity to write a claims application.

After an uneventful night, Klein returned upstairs and received the breakfast that he had requested Rozanne to buy for him.

"I love this pastry!" he complimented.

He had already passed her the money for breakfast ahead of time.

“Really? I can try it tomorrow then!” Rozanne replied happily.

The corner of Klein’s lip twitched as he focused on his battle with the milk and pastry.

At twenty-five minutes past eight, he yawned and fought back the urge to fall asleep, he arrived at the nearby Shooting Club.

He had made an appointment with the asylum doctor, Daxter Guderian, a few days back.

...

Bang! Bang! Bang!

In the small shooting range, Klein and Daxter aimed at their own targets and finished their cylinder of bullets.

Clink! Clank! Daxter flipped and released the empty shells and examined Klein in interest.

“You’re much more confident than before.”

Of course, I advanced to Sequence 8. I now possess actual combat ability... Klein reflected on his own facial expression and body movements in his head and deliberately acted arrogantly.

“Because I only used about a month’s time to master the power of my potion completely.”

Daxter pouted slightly and said, “Although that is something to be proud of, there’s no need to say it all the time.”

Hey, as a Spectator, you didn't see through my performance... From the looks of it, a Clown has the power to suppress a Spectator's ability. Klein smiled at his discovery and asked, "How's Hood Eugen recently?"

"... He's gone insane for real." Daxter paused and continued, "I probed him with various methods. He really has gone insane. I'm considering whether to begin medicating him, to see if I can treat him."

As a Sequence 7 Psychiatrist, he actually pretended to be a mental patient... Even though he was giving treatments to other patients, it doesn't align with the core element of the potion's name. That was an incorrect way of using the "acting method." It's no wonder that he went insane... Klein thought and said, "Before he went insane, did you find out who got in contact with him?"

"Besides the doctors, patients, nurses, and odd-job workers in the asylum, there were no outsiders that had contact with him," Daxter confidently replied.

Klein briefly acknowledged that as he said, "How about even earlier? Is there anyone that visited him, or did he leave the asylum regularly for a period of time?"

In order to follow through with his initial promise, Klein never asked anything about Hood Eugen in his first few meetings.

Daxter fell into deep thought. It took him some time before he said, "Besides the members of the Psychology Alchemists, there weren't any more than five people that visited him. One of them came thrice. His name was El."

Without Klein asking, he continued, "But I heard from Hood Eugen that El was a pseudonym."

“His real name was Lanevus.”

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Chapter 175: Deduction

Translator: AtlasStudios **Editor:** AtlasStudios

Lanevus? That criminal who cheated both money and sex? To think that he had a connection to Hood Eugen from the Psychology Alchemists... Klein froze for a moment when he heard the name. He immediately thought about the implications the name “Lanevus” had.

He’s the cheat that escaped with more than 10,000 pounds!

Just a providing a clue would earn me 10 pounds. And if I help in capturing this moving treasury, I’ll earn 100 pounds!

He’s a scum that took advantage of the bodies and feelings of innocent women!

To think that he knows Hood Eugen and went to visit him three times at the mental asylum. Does this mean that he’s connected to the Beyonders circle, or that he’s a Beyonders himself? Klein suddenly recalled the name of a potion: the Marauder pathway Sequence 8—Swindler!

These Beyonders took pleasure in swindling others!

It’s very possible! Klein nodded in thought. He controlled his facial expression and body language, feigning nonchalance as he asked, “Then, when was Mr. Lanevus’s last visit to Hood Eugen?”

“Early July. I would have to check the registration records of the mental asylum to give you a specific date,” Daxter Guderian replied after a few seconds of thought.

Lanevus’s scam hadn’t been exposed back in early July and he hadn’t left Tingen...Klein then asked, “Does Hood Eugen mention this person usually?”

“No. You should understand that a Sequence 7 Psychiatrist would never reveal something by accident. Every word they say has been deliberated over thoroughly. It would be impossible to learn their secrets unless they have some other hidden motives. I was only able to get the Telepathist formula after Hood Eugen went mad. Oh right, have you determined the authenticity of the formula?” Daxter expertly hid his feelings of pride toward his pathway’s potion.

Klein laughed and replied, “It’s authentic. When you need to advance, you can use that to concoct your potion without worry. We can help if the Psychology Alchemists are unable to provide you with the ingredients. Also, how have you been lately?”

“Not too bad. Other than being a little worried about Hood Eugen’s condition, I feel rather relaxed. I no longer have symptoms of a split personality. You’ve helped me greatly in this regard,” Daxter Guderian said, full of emotion.

Klein wore a humble expression.

“It’s only right.”

“Let’s return to the topic at hand. Since you said that a Psychiatrist would deliberate over their every word before uttering it and wouldn’t easily

reveal their secrets, why did Hood Eugen tell you that El is Lanevus? Was he hinting at something, or was trying to warn you of anything?"

Daxter froze for a moment, then creased his brows.

"This is really weird, to think that I didn't notice this... Other than that, Hood Eugen didn't mention anything else. Could his motive be for me to tell the upper echelons of the association about the name Lanevus should he meet with any problems?"

"The association's reaction seemed strange, too. After I informed them about Hood Eugen's insanity, they did send a liaison. But after I described every detail, including Lanevus's name, there were no more replies from the upper echelons. It was like being a stone cast in the ocean. Could this mean that they've figured something out?"

"A reasonable deduction." Klein took out his demon hunting bullets and stuffed them into his revolver, then took aim at the target.

"If we follow this deduction, Hood Eugen might've long anticipated that he would become insane or die... And this has an untenable connection with Lanevus? But since he already anticipated it, why didn't he ask for help from the upper echelons?" Daxter gazed blankly ahead. He thought hard as he said, "Unfortunately, he's insane now. There's no way to effectively communicate with him now."

"Perhaps some kind of temptation made him choose to take the risk." Klein made a guess.

At the same time, he felt that it was regrettable that Hood Eugen had really become a mental patient. This compromised much of the information that he might have otherwise gotten.

Sigh. Even a dead person is better than a lunatic. I can use mediumship rituals to make the dead talk, but what can I do with a lunatic? Oh right, Madam Daly once tried to use mediumship rituals to call upon my lost memories. The theory behind the mediumship rituals seems to have been derived from the Psychology Alchemists... This means that I can also use the mediumship rituals on the living and create a scenario where I interact with his spirit directly using my spirit... I wonder if Hood Eugen would still be insane under those conditions.

Unfortunately, I'm not advanced enough in this field, so I don't think I would be able to do it... I'll call upon the messenger and ask Madam Daly about it first. I'll see if she can provide me with any techniques. If she thinks that only she can accomplish it, then I'll tell the Captain and get him to send a telegraph to Backlund to request for assistance...

I'm definitely not taking this troublesome course of action just because I want to learn the technique and attempt the ritual to summon the messenger...

Many thoughts ran through Klein's mind before he gradually narrowed it down to a single line of thought that could solve the problem.

Daxter Guderian approved of his guess.

"Greed always makes one foolish. Even when a person knows that there's only the abyss in front of him, he'll still attempt to walk to the edge and take a peek."

This is called crazily testing the limits of fate... Klein lampooned.

"Try your best to treat Hood Eugen after returning to the mental asylum. Try to keep him sober for a period of time and get some clues out of him."

“Also, don’t hide your worries and anxiety. Establish more connections with the Psychology Alchemists and put pressure on them to solve Hood Eugen’s problem. That’s the most normal and reasonable reaction.”

Daxter nodded seriously.

“I’ll try my best.”

Klein didn’t say anymore and, after some deliberation, he asked, “Has there been any abnormalities with Hood Eugen’s body recently? For example, thin scales growing on some parts of his body?”

“Near-insanity,” “true insanity,” and “losing control” were all descriptions of varying levels for a Beyonder when something was wrong with them. The least severe of the conditions were when their attitude changed as if they had become a new person, but were still capable of rational thoughts and actions. That was “near-insanity.” “Insanity” was more severe in that the person would lose all logic, becoming a maniac and was difficult to communicate with. Those that couldn’t be saved were those whose body and mind had become monsters, completely “losing control.”

Sometimes, if the problem wasn’t dealt with promptly, insanity would lead to losing control.

Before this, to avoid exposing the informant within the Psychology Alchemists, Dunn instructed the Nighthawks not to immediately deal with Hood Eugen. Instead, they switched to surveillance to ensure that Hood Eugen didn’t lose control. But if there were signs of him losing control, they would have to deal with him immediately.

Daxter shook his head and let out a bitter laugh.

“No, you can ease your concern. I’m also very afraid that Hood Eugen will lose control, so I’m paying very close attention to detail. After all, I’m at the mental asylum six times a week.”

After exchanging a few more words, they left the shooting range ten minutes apart.

Klein fought back his intense desire to sleep and took a public carriage back to Daffodil Street.

He opened the door and saw his sister sitting on the sofa. She was neither reading nor was she fiddling with machinery parts. She was just staring blankly ahead as if she had lost her soul.

Tapping his molars gently, Klein activated his Spirit Vision and asked, puzzled, “Melissa, did something happen?”

She looks healthy based on the colors of her aura, not malnourished like she was before...

Melissa retracted her gaze and pursed her lips, then looked at the kitchen which was producing some noise.

“Bella has been recommending the way that her family prepares breakfast back at home, she said that it’s very delicious. I agreed to let her try it out this morning.”

“What method is that?” Klein had an ominous feeling.

“Cooking all of the leftovers in a pot, then adding water and bread...”
Melissa repeated softly.

T-this is the standard recipe for food of unknown origins... Klein pinched his forehead.

“And so?”

“We shouldn’t waste food...” Melissa bit her lips and nodded.

Sis, I feel like you are questioning life... Klein cleared his throat and suppressed his desire to laugh. He then asked, “Where’s Benson?”

“In the bathroom.” Melissa broke free of her daze, as her eyes regained their luster.

At that moment, he heard the sounds of flushing from the bathroom. Benson came out with a newspaper in hand.

“My dear Klein, shall we get you a portion of breakfast?”

“No, I’ve already eaten.” Klein shook his head resolutely, feeling lucky that he arranged to meet Daxter in the morning. Otherwise, he wouldn’t have gotten Rozanne to buy breakfast for him.

“How regrettable. Otherwise, you would change your views on my culinary skills and be filled with confidence about it.” Benson let out a self-deprecating laugh.

At this moment, Melissa noticed something. She turned to look at Klein and said, “You’re back rather late today.”

Sis, be more innocent and lively. Don’t worry about me all the time... The state you were in just now was great! Klein immediately smiled.

“I have good news.”

“You passed the examination of the police department and can obtain an increased salary?” Melissa asked without thinking.

Benson also smiled and nodded.

“...” Klein grabbed his hat and stood at the edge of the living room. He said in amusement, “How am supposed to surprise you guys like that?”

After that, he added with a dry cough, “Yes, my salary has increased severalfold.”

He hid his recent increment of four additional pounds a week. He intended to save up a small piggy bank for himself. After all, he couldn't just rely on the money in the unmarked account. Furthermore, mentioning that his salary had increased severalfold was enough to scare his siblings.

“Six pounds?” Melissa exclaimed in shock, finding it bizarre.

“I really need to change my job.” Benson stroked his hairline.

With the information Klein provided him, he had been putting a lot of effort into his studies.

Without waiting for Klein to speak, Melissa said with a delighted expression, “In that case, after deducting our normal expenses, you'll be able to save up enough money in two or three years to meet the standards of a marriageable gentleman. Well, it was Elizabeth who told me about the standards.”

“...” Klein said at a loss, amused, “That's something to be considered far into the future. Shouldn't we celebrate? I hereby announce that from today on, our staple food shall become white bread. After my workload decreases, we shall go try out delicacies from different restaurants.”

Melissa glanced at him, and, as though she did not hear what Klein had said, she said, “Benson and I are attending Mass at the Saint Selena Cathedral, do you want to come?”

I am praising the Goddess everyday... Klein laughed.

“I need to catch up on sleep.”

He slept until half past twelve in the afternoon. After he had lunch with Benson and Melissa, he continued on with his mission of searching all the houses with red chimneys.

When it was late at night, he sealed his room with spirituality and prepared to try the ritual for summoning Spirit Guide Daly’s messenger.

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Chapter 176: Letter

Translator: AtlasStudios **Editor:** AtlasStudios

For Klein, setting up a simple ritual was as easy as breathing. Very soon, he was done preparing the ingredients, and he lit up the candle that represented himself.

Looking at the flickering candlelight on the desk, Klein had an amusing thought for some baffling reason.

Would this be considered holding a candlelight vigil in memory of myself?

F**k, what the hell am I thinking!?

...

He reined back his thoughts and picked up the Black Rotten Flower powder that belonged to the domain of Death and sprinkled it onto the candle. In return, he caught a whiff of a smell that was akin to formaldehyde from his previous life.

Immediately after that, he dripped Full Moon Essence Oil, a favored item of the Evernight.

Amidst a sizzling crackle, his surroundings suddenly became quiet, and there was a shapeless, magical surge.

Klein took a step back and softly recited in ancient Hermes, "I!"

Then, he changed into Hermes, "I summon in my name."

"The spirit that wanders about the unfounded, the higher-dimensional creature that a human orders, the messenger that belongs to Daly Simone."

Whoosh!

The wind wailed and the dim candlelight was tainted with a blue luster.

Under its illumination, the wall behind the desk produced translucent ripples, and a creepy face surfaced. Other than its mouth, it had no eyebrows, eyes, or nose.

Its thick lips parted, and a long red tongue was extended. There were sharp, irregular teeth that lined its mouth. In addition, the tip of the tongue had five delicate fingers. They were constantly extending and retracting, as though they were waiting for a delivery.

This is Daly's messenger? Compared to Mr. Azik's, it's just like a child. No, I can't accurately determine their differences. Yes, one is an adult Giant, and the other is a human baby... I wonder if it's due to the magical item, or if it signifies Mr. Azik's strength? I have to reevaluate my understanding of him. Perhaps, he's a High-Sequence Beyonder...

Crap, I forgot. In the letter, I should've asked Madam Daly for the names of the Sequence 4 and Sequence 3 Corpse Collector pathway. Mr. Azik most likely belongs to that pathway. Of course, he might've not advanced via potions. Yes, perhaps it's a gene that's passed down from his ancestors... I'll ask next time, the messenger is waiting...

Klein looked at it seriously for a while and passed the neatly folded paper into the messenger's "hand." Then, he watched as the hand gripped it tightly.

Whoosh!

The messenger retracted its tongue and swallowed the letter. The translucent, creepy, and wriggling face shrank back into the wall and disappeared.

I've got to say, this magic is quite cool. Rather convenient too, but it can't be spread...Klein looked at the candlelight that had returned to normal. He shook his head and ended the ritual.

...

Monday morning. Backlund, Empress Borough.

In a hidden corner of the municipal garden built by Duke Negan, Xio Derecha with her unkempt blond hair and Fors Wall with her languid bearing were gawking at the liaison before them in a daze. They were momentarily at a loss at which language to use for a greeting.

The petite Xio, who was slightly over one and a half meters tall, looked at the golden retriever that had extended its tongue and was wagging its tail. She smoothed out her trainee knight attire and weighed her words before she said, “Are you Miss Audrey’s messenger?”

“Oh my Goddess, why am I asking a dog so seriously...”

Fors was holding a thin cigarette with her fingers as she chuckled.

“Maybe it’s a magical creature?”

“I’ve never seen a magical creature that looks so much like a dog...” Xio replied in all seriousness.

Susie sat down and closed her mouth. She then pointed at her belly with her paw.

There was a leather pouch tied around the dog’s body amidst her long golden fur.

Xio looked to her left and right, making sure that there was no one watching before she quickly moved closer. She bent down and removed the pouch.

Fors watched curiously when her expression suddenly turned weird.

“It’s made of crocodile skin, and it looks like the work of the fashion designer, Mr. Sades... She’s actually using such a pouch for the transaction...”

“... In other words, it’s very expensive?” Xio raised the leather pouch.

Fors pursed her lips tightly and nodded seriously.

Xio instantly lowered her speed in an exaggerated manner. She carefully opened the zipper and took out the letter inside, as though she was carrying an antique vase in her hands.

After she read it, she passed the letter to Fors.

Fors burned it with her cigarette after reading it carefully. She watched as it turned into ashes and scattered onto the soil.

“There’s no extra information provided.” Xio pouted subconsciously. She took out a neatly folded paper from the pocket of her trainee knight attire.

She looked at Susie in an imposing manner and exhorted subconsciously, “This is the investigation report for the past few days. You must pass this on to Miss Audrey Hall directly.”

Susie quivered and sat up straight, her tail was wagging vigorously.

Xio nodded in satisfaction, stuffed the stack of papers into the leather pouch, and tied it around Susie again.

Susie howled and ran off very quickly.

...

In the Hall family’s luxurious villa.

Audrey was sitting on the sofa of her own living room. She was holding a letter opener and was trying to open the letter before her.

It was a letter sent by one of her brothers from the Balam Empire in the Southern Continent. There was a parcel that came along with the letter.

At that moment, she saw Susie push open the half-closed door. The dog dashed over quickly.

Susie sat on the carpet before Audrey and pawed at the leather pouch.

“You really are an excellent messenger!” Audrey wasn’t stingy with her compliments.

Susie looked back at the door. It induced vibrations in the air and said softly, “Your friend is very serious. When I saw her, she reminded me of the time when a hunter came to train us.”

She had been a complimentary gift when Count Hall bought hunting dogs.

Susie, your Loen is getting more and more fluent. There are just a few problems with your logic in using the language... Audrey watched as her golden retriever took off the pouch on her own and skillfully pulled open the zipper.

She gave Susie a look and immediately understood. She stood up and ran to lock the door.

“... There’s no result so far, but we found that some vagrants disappeared around the Backlund Bridge borough. Though, we can’t know for sure that it was Qilangos. Perhaps the vagrants merely changed their movement patterns suddenly...” Audrey flipped through the investigation report and seriously wondered how she should reply to Xio and Fors.

I’ll tell Xio that as long as she can track down Rear Admiral Hurricane, Qilangos, I’ll buy the Sheriff potion formula for her... No, that’s not friendly enough. It would make her feel an inferiority complex. Yes, I shall say, “Xio, I’ve prepared your reward. As long as you can complete the task, four hundred and fifty pounds will be yours...” Sigh, as far as

the main ingredients for the Telepathist formula, I've only found the Farsman Rabbit's spinal fluid. I still need the Rainbow Salamander's pituitary gland... Glaint, Xio, and Fors have yet to find it...

Audrey, cheer up. At least you've digested the Spectator potion completely!

Once you put together all the ingredients, you'll become a Sequence 8 Beyonder!

...

Audrey reined in her thoughts, picked up a pen and paper, and quickly wrote a reply. She stuffed it back into the leather pouch and entrusted Susie to make another trip.

She watched her golden retriever as she opened the letter that her brother had sent. She read it with a smile.

"My dear sister,

"I think you should come to the Southern Continent too. Come over to the colonized regions of the Balam Empire. There's abundant sunlight, fresh air, a clean environment, freshly caught seafood, various unique cultures, and the very kind and obedient Balam people who make good servants, as well as the smell of freedom.

"On the contrary, Backlund is cold and moist, the air is bad, there's always dust, and it's always gloomy. Plus, it's highly populated which leads to all sorts of problems. Hmm, and the endless balls, banquets, and salons... The social events are so boring and insipid that I wouldn't want to stay for a minute. Dear sister, I believe you share the same feeling.

“I’m not running away from home. I’m merely seeking my own place in life, but our brother definitely doesn’t think so. He’s always been a selfish person. Of course, he wouldn’t be stingy with you, because you can only claim a tiny part of the family wealth, while I would be his biggest competition in the fight for the inheritance within the ranks of nobles. After all, our father is a Duke who takes a long view. He definitely wouldn’t be restrained by the rule that the eldest sibling will inherit the rank of nobility.

“As long as he feels that it’s necessary, he would do anything. Just like when he sold off half the farmland and pastures to enter the banking industry, regardless of the strong opposition.

“I miss Backlund sometimes, mostly Father, Mother, and you. I miss the smile that you put on my face during those few years. You must’ve become the most dazzling gem in Backlund, but unfortunately, I’ll only be able to return after two years. A career is a man’s pride, while the outstanding young people in the Loen Kingdom treat the world as their stage.”

...

“You can tell our dear aunt that the coastal regions in the Balam Empire are very suitable for vacations, and especially suitable for her, given how her joints ache and swell in the winter. I sincerely invite her to be my guest. If you can come with her, that would be even better.”

...

“I didn’t send you too many gifts. They’re mainly things that are rich with the traditions and styles of Balam, such as the unique yellow silk, and the ornaments that are filled with traits related to the worship of Death.

“I remembered that you loved things regarding mysticism so I’ll look around for you. The culture here is full of mystery.”

...

After reading the letter, Audrey picked up a pen, paper, and writing board. She leaned back into the sofa, pursed her lips and wrote seriously, “My dearest Alfred,

“Although it has been less than a year, the little girl in your memories has grown up. I don’t like mysticism anymore, so you don’t have to search for those kinds of things.”

Because it’s very dangerous... Audrey puffed up her cheeks and added in her head.

She had heard of too many tragedies related to mysterious objects when participating in Beyonder Gatherings and from stories Xio and Fors recounted.

She thought and declared excitedly, “I’m now interested in biology. Recently, I’ve been in awe of the Rainbow Salamander. Can you ask around for me and find out where I can find one of these creatures, or if they have a complete corpse that has been preserved?”

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Chapter 177: Sudden Turn of Events

Translator: AtlasStudios **Editor:** AtlasStudios

Audrey stopped writing after she finished sharing some interesting news and scandals about aristocrats. She then adopted a serious pose as she recalled something.

With her exceptional memory as a Spectator, she arranged the information that she had received from her father's teachings, as well as the news she heard during banquets and salons into paragraphs.

After creating a draft in her head, Audrey penned, "As for the political situation in Backlund you asked about, it's not within my area of interest. I can describe it to you only based on my own impressions and the details that I happen to know.

"Some time ago, Father told me that after the abolishment of the Grain Act, the prices of crops were declining rapidly. The rent of farmland and pastures were also plunging, but I don't know the exact magnitude. I can only explain it to you with this example.

"As you know, Duke Negan is an aristocrat who owns the most land outside of the royal family. It's said that he owns more than 12,000,000 pounds worth of farmland, pastures, and forests. Last year, his land earned him a historic 1,300,000 pounds in rent. But this year, it's forecast that his rent will only be 850,000 pounds, a whole 450,000 pounds less. That's more than the entirety of the assets that I'm entitled to.

"Without any further explanation from me, I'm sure that my dear brother will understand the behavior of most old-fashioned nobles. They're proud of being landowners, and their income is derived mostly from rent. They place a heavy emphasis on their appearance and would maintain their current lifestyle even if they have to go into debt. They spend tens of thousands of pounds on the upkeep of their castles each year, many more thousands on clothes and jewelry, as well as their persistent hunting

activities, social banquets, and the occasional lavish weddings and funerals, etc, etc.

“With the decrease in rent, according to my knowledge, a good portion of the nobles have met with financial difficulties. Because of this, Count Wolfe has sold 84,000 ares of land in the countryside and gotten 29,000 pounds in return. Viscount Conrad has also sold his art collection worth 55,000 pounds to a national art gallery.

“Other than a few visionary nobles who had long shifted their focus to steel, coal, railroads, banks, and rubber industries, the rest of the nobles have been severely affected by the Grain Act. Let us praise our dear Count Hall!

“Father told me that the financial distress will loosen the control the nobles have over politics. As you can imagine, the number of ministers with blue blood will decline from the next year onward.

“In a bid to secure funding, the Conservative Party and the New Party have promised to confer upon anyone the noble titles as long as they donate a sufficient amount of money and lack any criminal records. Of course, the caveat is that the person who donated the money must own an amount of land befitting of a noble.

“One example is the rich Mr. Syndras. He purchased the lowest area of land expected of a baron, 60,000 ares, then donated 100,000 pounds to the Carleton Club and 400,000 pounds to the Conservative Party, and donations to charity amounting to 300,000 pounds. Finally, he succeeded in receiving conferment from His Majesty and became a highly-regarded baron. I’ve heard that there’s a price list to this, 300,000 pounds to become a baron and 700,000 to 1,000,000 pounds for a hereditary baron. There is no clear price for the title of viscount or count, but I’m sure those are sufficiently ridiculous.”

...

“This year, many nobles who are facing financial difficulties are starting to seriously consider the possibility of marriages with wealthy merchants. There have already been three marriages like this over the last two months. The betrothal gifts the noble women received are something to be envied.

“Also, the workers who protested the Grain Act did experience a decrease in the cost of living, but the quality of their lives has not improved. Instead, it seems to have deteriorated as the bankrupt farmers have entered the city and stolen their jobs by requesting lower wages. Thus, the wages of the laborers are dropping rapidly.

“I remember the day when Father asked me who I felt was the winner of the Grain Act.

“My dear Alfred, you must know the answer. You would definitely be able to obtain a hereditary baron title through your own efforts.”

...

Xio Derecha and Fors Wall were returning to the Backlund Bridge borough after they received Audrey’s reply.

Xio, with her messy blonde hair, was looking out the window of the carriage, her eyes were bright like two burning balls of flame.

She muttered the term “450 pounds” to herself repeatedly, as if reciting an incantation. Her strength and courage grew every time she repeated the term.

“Darkholme hasn’t reported the status of the investigation today. Let’s make a trip to his house!” Xio suddenly turned to look at Fors.

Darkholme was the leader of a triad in the Backlund East Borough and had control over many beggars and thieves.

Even though he looked very friendly with his chubby face that was perpetually adorned with a warm and amiable smile—Xio knew that he was a merciless scoundrel. He once broke the arm of a thirteen-year-old thief because the boy had hidden his profit.

Unless it was necessary, Xio was unwilling to meet Darkholme, but Darkholme was one of the few people who were most familiar with the vagrants in the city.

Fors pushed her slightly curly hair back behind her ear.

“As long as it doesn’t delay my lunch.”

“No problem! Perhaps I could treat you to an Intis feast after this week!” Xio promised in complacency.

“Must I thank God?” Fors asked as she laughed.

Unlike Xio, Fors was a moderate believer of the God of Steam and Machinery.

As they conversed, the two ladies switched to another public carriage and arrived at the Backlund East Borough, and arrived at Darkholme’s house.

It was a terrace house located in a narrow alley. There were green plants hanging from the walls, the exterior looked relatively unkempt.

Xio walked to the door, raised her right hand and knocked in a unique rhythm.

The unlocked door opened with a creak following her knocks.

Xio's apparently confused expression immediately turned stern, like a wary lion's.

She took out a bayonet she carried with her and cautiously pushed open the door. She then slowly stepped inside.

Fors also stopped looking nonchalant, having produced a dagger of unknown origins.

They didn't smell any peculiar scents, but their rich experience told them that something was off.

One step, two steps, three steps. Xio and Fors entered Darkholme's house.

Then they saw a pale limb on a gas lamp, internal organs on a coffee table, as well as strips upon strips of flesh strewn on the floor and hung on the clothes rack!

Pieces of bone had been stripped clean and piled up near the door.

And amongst the bones was a head, its vacant eyes open. It was none other than Darkholme.

His chubby face still maintained the amiable smile, as if everything was normal. Furthermore, there was no stench of blood in the house.

As a former clinical doctor before becoming a best-selling author and Sequence 9 Beyonder, Fors has seen many death scenes more disgusting than this. She patted the tense Xio, who was on the brink of vomiting, as she surveyed the surroundings.

“Qilangos? Rear Admiral Hurricane Qilangos?”

“He realized that Darkholme was investigating the missing vagrants and tracked him back to his house?”

“Or could it be said that Darkholme had tracked him down, but ended up being caught?”

Xio fought back the urge to retch and said with a serious expression, “He sure lives up to his name as a merciless and crafty pirate admiral. The strangeness here also fits the description of his treasure.”

“Crafty...” Fors was suddenly alarmed as she blurted out, “Could he be waiting nearby in an ambush against the mastermind behind the investigations?”

Xio froze for a moment before answering in a fluster, “That’s highly likely!”

He was a Sequence 6 Wind-blessed, a powerful pirate with a mystical artifact, while they were just two Sequence 9’s!

This was an extremely simple and easy contrast!

...

In the house opposite Darkholme’s house, a man with a unique broad chin and dark green eyes in his thirties was standing by the window, coldly observing Xio’s and Fors’s opening of the door and slow entry.

He was none other than Rear Admiral Hurricane Qilangos!

The black glove on his left hand twitched as if it were alive. A layer of dull gold scales appeared on its surface.

Qilangos revealed a cruel and joyous expression as his dark green eyes turned pale gold and indifferent.

...

The moment Fors realized this, she dragged Xio to the other side and avoided the area just across the main door.

She then gritted her pearly-white teeth and took out a bracelet that was hidden by her sleeves.

This silver bracelet had three dark green, coarse stones which showed signs of burn marks and were rough and uneven.

Fors pulled out one of the stones and let out a low growl in ancient Hermes, "Door!"

She grabbed onto Xio Derecha tightly as the stone released a faint blue glow.

The figures of the two ladies turned indistinct, nearly invisible.

They saw many forms they found difficult to describe. There were even transparent objects that didn't seem to exist. They saw different colors, lustrous splendors which seemed to possess immense knowledge. They had entered the mysterious spirit world.

In this strange world that stood distinct from reality, Fors proceeded in a particular direction while pulling Xio along.

Seconds later, they exited their indistinct states and returned to reality—to Backlund.

But they were no longer at Darkholme's house, but instead arrived at an empty cemetery.

...

Qilangos, who was wearing his scaled glove, silently appeared at the door of Darkholme's house. He swept the interior with his cold gaze.

He froze for a moment, then creased his brows as he muttered to himself, "Traveler?"

...

In the cemetery.

"What are we going to do next?" Fors panted, sensing their predicament and feeling a lingering sense of fear.

The bracelet was a mystical item she had received along with the formula for Apprentice and its corresponding materials back during a fortuitous encounter of hers. Other than causing her to hear strange, faint murmurings during the full moon every month, it posed no threat.

There were originally five stones on the bracelet, each stone allowing her to traverse through the spirit world, technically allowing her to teleport. But now, there were only two stones left.

Xio calmed herself down and nodded solemnly.

"First notify Miss Audrey, then-then we call the police!"

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Chapter 178: The Subsequent Ideas

Translator: AtlasStudios **Editor:** AtlasStudios

“Call the police?” Fors Wall repeated in surprise.

To Beyonders, lodging a police report seemed to be something of another world.

Xio paced back and forth as she tugged her coarse blonde hair.

“The scene of Darkholme’s death is harrowing and creepy. As long as the police aren’t blind, they would definitely pass the case on to the Mandated Punishers, the Nighthawks, the Machinery Hivemind, or the special department of the military. When that happens, we can leak some more information and let them know that the murderer is Qilangos. At that point, the entire city will be chasing after him.

“Our goal is only to look for Qilangos, not to capture him. With the ‘help’ of so many Beyonders, things would become much simpler and safer. Once Qilangos panics and makes a mistake, it would be our chance to claim our bounty. Heh heh, I’m referring to the discovery of his whereabouts.”

Xio laughed dryly and looked at the appalled Fors.

“Do you think that the only way I know to deal with problems is by charging into them headfirst? The difference between us and Qilangos is as vast as the Desi Bay.”

Fors nodded slowly and said, “Your understanding of yourself is absolutely right. You’ve done too many things of a similar nature. Hence,

the losses that you've suffered is sufficient for you to advance to Sequence 8.

"Luckily, you're still rational enough regarding this matter."

Xio lowered her head to look at her bayonet. She thought for a moment and said, "... I have to be honest. I clearly sensed the approach of Death earlier. Qilangos was no doubt nearby. That was an aura evil enough to destroy us at any time. That triggered an instinctual response in me."

Fors wore her silver bracelet that had two stones left and thought seriously.

"I agree with your idea. Let's inform Miss Audrey first and lodge the police report after."

"Yes, regardless if it was Darkholme or his underlings who found Qilangos's traces, we could continue to investigate with that approach and find out Qilangos activity range and the location of his residence."

Xio creased her slim blonde eyebrows and said, "But Qilangos would definitely not remain in the same place."

Even as one of the Seven Pirate Admirals, even if he had the assistance of a mystical artifact, Qilangos had to be extremely careful in Backlund.

Even Nast, the King of the Five Seas, had once encountered disaster here and was nearly caught.

"No, what I meant was, to surmise or confirm the purpose of Qilangos's visit to Backlund based on the clues. Once we know what he's trying to do, no matter how he disguises himself or what tricks he pulls, he'll be exposed to us in the end. Then, our mission would be accomplished,"

Fors explained in detail. “Two years of novel-writing experience tells me that things would become simple once we grasp the crux of the matter.”

Xio looked at her best friend in shock. She couldn't believe the woman had just made such a logical statement.

“I'm different from you. I'm merely too lazy to think, while you think with your muscles.” Fors pursed her lips, leaned her head sideways, and smiled.

“Teasing me doesn't make you smarter...” Xio tried to smooth out her few strands of blonde hair that was sticking out. “Alright, let's head over to Empress Borough and tell Miss Audrey about this.”

Fors nodded faintly and said, “So, what's our emergency contact method with Miss Audrey?”

Xio was momentarily put at a loss. She looked afar at the tombstone as she said, “She told me that pet dog of hers we saw earlier walks herself at least five times a day. Well, the next walk should be after lunch.”

“In other words, we have to loiter around suspiciously outside Count Hall's luxurious manor?” The corner of Fors's lips twitched.

Xio suddenly looked sideways and revealed an obsequious smile, “Fors, or would you prefer to just sneak in?”

“I don't think that would be difficult for you. It's what you're good at.”

“A hereditary count for centuries, one of the most influential parliament members in the House of Lords, the largest shareholder of Varvat Bank, the fourth largest shareholder of Backlund Bank, the special consultant of the Royal Bank of Loen, the third largest shareholder of Suchit Bank in

the Intis Republic, the second largest shareholder of Constant Coal and Steel Consortium, and so on. These are the titles of Miss Audrey's father. Xio, use your brain; how could a man like that not employ any Beyonders? Would he not have any prized collections? This is different from those destitute viscounts and barons!" Fors replied in exasperation. "I swear in the name of God, if I were to sneak in, I would be discovered and caught within five minutes."

Xio nodded continuously in agreement.

"Let's wait for the golden retriever then..."

With that said, she led the way. After she took a few steps forward, she spoke with her back facing Fors, "Uh, well, I will compensate you for your losses and the damages in the future. I'm referring to the stone, of course."

Listening to that, the corner of Fors's lips lifted and she said, "I was saving myself."

"And, Xio, you're going the wrong way!"

"God, if you were an Apprentice and ended up becoming a Traveler in the future, it would be a disaster!"

...

Outside Count Hall's luxurious manor.

Xio and Fors hid behind an Intis parasol tree and secretly observed their target building in silence, watching the people walking to and fro.

After God knows how long, they finally saw the golden retriever come out from a hidden hole under the wall. It pricked up its ears and looked to its left and right, appearing very cautious.

Just as Susie started taking its walk happily, a black male dog popped up from nowhere. It fawned on Susie and started running around in circles.

“This is the first time I’m seeing a dog show such a humanlike reaction. Just how much does it hate that black dog?” Xio sighed.

She could tell from Susie’s gaze and facial expression that there was obvious detest.

Fors smiled and said, “It’s just like encountering a rash, disgusting, and persistent lecher.”

Seeing Susie attempt to speed up to escape the black dog’s pursuit, Xio stood up do administer “Justice.”

“My ruling is for you to leave her alone!” Xio shouted with a mask of solemnity.

The black dog was taken aback and immediately scampered away with its tail between its legs.

Susie let out a breath of relief and slowed down. It barked politely and wagged its tail.

That was close, I nearly said “Thank you” to them... The golden retriever thought in joy.

That would’ve been a very awkward situation...

...

A melodic tune slowly came to a halt as Audrey picked up the latest intelligence Xio and Fors had delivered and read it with knitted brows.

She closed the piano cover and stood up elegantly. She paced back and forth in her piano room and considered her next course of action.

Qilangos is a very dangerous man... If Xio and Fors continued investigating, they might end up in danger... It might even expose me... Yes, I should just proceed according to their suggestion. Oh yeah, it's another two hours until the Tarot Club. I wonder what Mr. Fool would suggest? If he's still not interested, I'll discuss it with The Hanged Man carefully... Audrey gradually calmed herself down.

This was the first time she had encountered, or perhaps was described as being placed in such a perilous situation. There was already one death!

Three in the afternoon.

Audrey's vision recovered from a crimson and blurry state before seeing the boundless gray fog that didn't belong to reality, the lofty palace that looked like the home of a giant, the long ancient mottled bronze table, and The Fool who was always engulfed by a thick layer of fog. Lastly, she saw The Hanged Man and The Sun.

At that moment, Audrey's tense and anxious emotions seemed to relax—she felt so safe, so calm.

I'm participating in the Tarot Club that doesn't belong in the material world, and I'm dealing with Mr. Fool who's nearly a god. Qilangos and I are on different levels... Audrey sat in an upright position proudly. She lifted her chin slightly and greeted cheerfully, "Good afternoon, Mr. Fool! Good afternoon, Mr. Hanged Man! Good afternoon, Mr. Sun!"

After they greeted one another, Klein saw that Miss Justice was indicating her desire to speak; therefore, he nodded faintly to express his permission.

“Honorable Mr. Fool, I wonder if your adorer has received the compensation of 300 pounds?” Audrey asked, holding back her urge to talk about Qilangos while she showed concern over her leader’s adorer.

Klein smiled and said, “I didn’t pay close attention to this matter. But as my adorer didn’t request for additional help, I suppose he has already received it.”

Yes, I’ve checked multiple times. There are 300 pounds lying in my anonymous bank account... Klein added in his head happily.

“That’s great!” Audrey relaxed and looked across her. “Mr. Hanged Man, there’s been progress regarding Qilangos.”

Alger suddenly sat up straight. He couldn’t hide his excitement as he asked, “Where is he?”

“Unfortunately, he noticed our investigations just after we discovered his tracks. He killed one of the personnel involved.” Audrey repeated the highlights of Xio’s and Fors’s story and explained their follow-up plan in detail.

Alger nodded faintly and said, “I’ll pay close attention.”

Then, he turned to the side and looked towards the seat of honor at the long bronze table. Under the vacant gaze of The Sun, Derrick, who listened but didn’t understand anything, he said, “Honorable Mr. Fool, if I were to find out Qilangos’ true intention and the very important and

magical item that he intends to obtain, please allow me to recite your name and inform you through the ritual.”

He didn't repeat his request for The Fool's adorer to provide him assistance. As he brought it up before and The Fool had given his answer, there was no need to harp on the topic. Otherwise, it might provoke the god.

Hence, Alger made it clear that his intention was only to report his findings.

If the final temptation was sufficient, he believed that Mr. Fool's adorer would definitely appear.

That works ? Audrey widened her eyes.

I should've asked for the right to report as well. I might be able to gain Mr. Fool's guidance occasionally... She thought with regret.

Under everyone's gaze, Klein leaned back into his chair and nodded faintly. He replied slowly, “You may.”

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Chapter 179: Praising Mr. Fool

Translator: AtlasStudios **Editor:** AtlasStudios

Alger heaved a sigh of relief when he heard The Fool's answer. He lowered his head and humbly said, “Please allow me to thank you in advance.”

That's because I'm also curious... curious about the item Qilangos is searching for. I want to know about the item that can allow a Sequence 6 Wind-blessed to have the strength of a Sequence 4... I'm also curious about what a pirate admiral is going to do in Backlund... Klein smiled, maintaining his profound posture.

It's not like I've promised to provide assistance after I hear your prayers! He emphasized in his heart.

But now, he was a lot more confident than before. Now, he had actual allies and the mysterious Mr. Azik who was currently in Backlund.

If it was absolutely necessary, Klein was willing to use the bronze whistle to enlist the help of Azik. Of course, he definitely wouldn't mention the Tarot Club. He would probably say he got information from some random source.

There were still two problems that existed in this matter. First, Klein was only limited to a cooperative relationship with Azik. It wasn't necessarily the case that Azik would provide assistance unless he was interested in what Qilangos was doing or the mystical item that he was after.

Second, Klein was unsure of just how powerful Azik was. Even if he had made the assumption that Azik was a High-Sequence Beyonder, he had to consider the fact that his memory loss might have weakened his abilities. After all, knowledge was usually equated with power, and the lack of knowledge would definitely diminish Azik's power.

If that was the case, Klein couldn't guarantee that Azik could deal with Qilangos, especially with the latter wielding the Creeping Hunger. Klein was afraid that he would be placing Azik in danger so he was unwilling to trouble Azik unless he absolutely had to.

Now that I think about it, Mr. Azik's terrifying messenger can be summoned with the bronze whistle... No, that thing doesn't look like a messenger at all; it could take the role of an evil boss! So, even if Mr. Azik cannot beat the Creeping Hunger augmented Qilangos, he should be able to defend himself easily and have enough power left to save The Hanged Man, Miss Justice, and her partners... Klein shifted his posture as he thought, still leaning against the back of his chair. He propped his right leg over his left.

The Hanged Man Alger looked at The Fool and spoke once again, "I'm about to receive a batch of pages from Emperor Roselle's diary. I believe that I can present them to you in the next gathering, or the gathering after that."

According to the arrangement of the Church of the Lord of Storms, Pritz Harbor was under the jurisdiction of the Backlund diocese. Thus, Alger could enter the capital and wait for Rear Admiral Hurricane Qilangos to show himself under the guise of reporting about his previous voyage.

Backlund had been the headquarters of the Church of the Lord of Storms until the end of the last epoch, having shifted their holy altar to Pasu Island only after the establishment of the Loen Kingdom. Regardless, the status of the Church of the Lord of Storms in Backlund was second only to the headquarters of the Seven Great Churches. One could imagine the information the Church of the Lord of Storms held.

Under these circumstances, Alger was confident that he would be able to collect pages of Emperor Roselle's diary in the name of research. After all, they were indecipherable at present.

Klein allowed joy to color his tone, as he said with a gentle nod, "Very good."

What he was really feeling right now was a mix of joy and worry. He was happy that he could see several pages of Emperor Roselle's diary soon. They might contain a lot of useful information, but he was also worried about what he had to give The Hanged Man in return. After all, no one knew if The Hanged Man would be interested in the contents of the diary, or if the content was valuable enough.

Even a Seer is unable to determine that in advance... Must I really let my "adorer" help him? Klein gave a silent sigh.

Audrey Hall hurriedly spoke up when she saw the conversation between The Hanged Man and The Fool end.

"Honorable Mr. Fool, may I recite your name and inform you using a ritual should I receive any timely and useful information?"

Timely... Look, Miss Justice's choice of words is so refined. Compared to her, you are too vulgar, The Hanged Man! Klein nodded slightly, saying past the fog, "You may."

Great! Audrey secretly clenched her fists.

At the same time, Klein turned to look at The Sun, Derrick Berg, who had been silently listening to their conversations. He spoke, his tone was peaceful, "The same goes for you as well."

"Yes, Mr. Fool." Derrick lowered his head.

The majestic palace was silent for a few seconds before Audrey spoke, "I need the complete pituitary gland of a Rainbow Salamander."

One of the main ingredients of the Telepathist potion? Hanged Man Alger nodded slightly as if he was contemplating.

“I don’t have it. To be honest, I’ve only seen this creature in textbooks.” The Sun, Derrick, heard the term automatically translated to him as Phantom Netherdrake.

What kind of textbook would discuss a supernatural creature? How envious... I can only get information like that at a Beyonder gathering, through word of mouth, or through a crumpled piece of paper. There’s no system in place, and my search for knowledge lacks organization... I’ll find a way to trade for the Sun’s textbook in the future! Oh, he was interested in the formula for the Bard potion... Audrey thought, a little envious.

At that moment, Alger looked at The Fool, then retracted his gaze. He then looked opposite him and said in thought, “I might have a way of obtaining the complete pituitary gland of the Rainbow Salamander.”

Without waiting for Audrey to speak, he added on, “But it’s under the premise that Qilangos is found. When the time comes, the complete pituitary gland of the Rainbow Salamander would be equivalent to the extra compensation that I owe you. Miss Justice, you might not know, but these creatures are nearly extinct, and we can only find traces of them in primitive islands in the Sea of Fog, the Berserk Sea, or the Sonia Sea. Not many people have the coordinates to these Islands. Heh, if you’re interested, we can make a deal, for I am one of the few who knows how to get there.”

I’m also interested in those primitive islands... Klein silently listened to their conversation.

Thinking about the extinction of the Rainbow Salamander, he suddenly recalled the joke he cracked with Old Neil—the Dragons and Giants Protection Association. He let out a sigh in his heart.

Audrey became thrilled after hearing that. She fought back her emotions as she said, "I once dreamed of going on a voyage in search of these primitive islands to take in the history."

My Goddess, the Tarot Club is too powerful, too wonderful! To be able to recruit a member who has the coordinates of the primitive islands! Praise Mr. Fool! Audrey couldn't maintain her Spectator state as a smile crept across her face.

Primitive islands? Klein froze for a moment, then thought about a page of Emperor Roselle's diary that he had seen, the one where the Emperor described himself as a pirate king!

He said that he discovered an unnamed island with many supernatural creatures when he and his Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse were traversing the Sea of Fog on an unsafe sea route.

Could that be the so-called primitive island? How unfortunate, the Great Emperor didn't include any coordinates in his diary. Perhaps the information will be in some future pages, but as of now, I haven't received any pages of his diary in chronological order... Klein was filled with regret and anticipation.

The Sun Derrick was already confused by the terms "Sea of Fog," "Berserk Sea," "Sonia Sea," "primitive island," etc.

He felt more and more certain that Miss Justice and Mr. Hanged Man belonged to a different world than he did.

After collecting herself for a few seconds, Audrey asked curiously, "Does the near-extinction of the Rainbow Salamander mean that the Spectator pathway will be severed soon?"

“No, there will definitely be substitute materials.” Alger gave a definite answer.

“What substitute materials are there?” Audrey’s eyes brightened as she asked.

Alger shook his head, replying without revealing certain profound truths, “I don’t know. Perhaps the members of the Psychology Alchemists might know.”

“Then how can you be so sure that there will be substitute ingredients?” Audrey didn’t understand.

Alger laughed and said, “You will understand in time. Or do you have something to trade for the information right now?”

“I guess I’ll wait.” Audrey pouted and sighed. She also dismissed the idea of asking Mr. Fool.

There’s no use in me knowing for the time being... The Hanged Man will definitely ask about something regarding Rear Admiral Hurricane, and I cannot be dragged too deep into that matter... She suddenly felt like praising her intellect.

But what she never expected was that Mr. Fool was feeling very disappointed at that moment.

Klein was rather curious about the secrets which Alger’s words held. Unfortunately, Miss Justice, who was the best assist all this while, didn’t choose to go through with the transaction.

No matter what method they chose to perform a transaction, the contents of the deal couldn’t be hidden from the owner of the fog!

Well, even if the Rainbow Salamander is nearing extinction, the Psychology Alchemists are still giving out formulas listing it as an ingredient instead of providing a substitute. Does this mean that the Psychology Alchemists are in possession of the coordinates of certain primitive islands? Or could they be working together with an organization that has the coordinates? Klein wondered.

After the end of the transaction discussions, Klein looked around, then turned to The Sun. He asked in a gentle tone, “Does the City of Silver still believe in gods?”

Klein was merely an official member of the Nighthawks and had no access to deeper mysticism knowledge. An example would be sacrificial rituals. Thus, in order to refine his understanding of performing sacrificing dedicated to himself, to move materials in the mysterious space above the gray fog, as a Sequence 8, Klein needed to learn it as soon as possible from other sources.

He came up with three methods after continuous consideration: First, he was going to ask Spirit Guide Daly, who was adept at ritualistic magic whilst also being a deacon. But this might invite suspicion from her; thus, Klein could only patiently wait for an opportunity. Second, he could ask Mr. Azik, but Klein couldn't guarantee that he would be able to recall the knowledge in this area. Third, he was going to use a roundabout way to ask Sun, who lived in the City of Silver.

Klein already had an idea of how he was going to do it while effectively maintaining his image.

Whatever he asked would be tied to the gods!

Derrick replied in a respectful tone, “We still believe in the Lord that created everything, the omnipotent and omniscient God.”

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Chapter 180: A Smart Person Always Overthinks

Translator: AtlasStudios **Editor:** AtlasStudios

Upon hearing The Fool's question, Audrey perked up her ears and entered her Spectator state. She waited for The Sun to answer.

She had always been curious about where the City of Silver was and what was so special about that place, but she couldn't bring herself to ask. It touched upon his privacy after all.

At that moment, Mr. Fool was asking personally. It was like finishing the first volume of an outstanding detective novel she had been reading for a long time, and she finally had the chance to buy the next volume!

The Sun's answer didn't disappoint her. They didn't believe in the mainstream seven orthodox deities, nor did they believe in Death as the Southern Continent did. They also didn't believe in the hidden existences, evil gods or devils—Primordial Demoness, Hidden Sage, Dark Side of the Universe, Chained God, or the True Creator—which The Hanged Man had told her before.

The City of Silver is really special! They actually worship the Creator Himself! This is the primordial worship that Mr. Hanged Man described, right? Hmm, the description of omnipotence is a little strange... Audrey stole a glance at The Hanged Man subconsciously and realized that he was nodding slightly.

Klein wasn't surprised at all. He purposely chuckled and asked in reply, "Even though He abandoned you?"

Abandoned? The Creator abandoned the City of Silver? Alger was shocked. Suddenly when he suddenly made the connection regarding a particular term.

The Forsaken Land of the Gods!

In the confidential information of the Church of the Lord of Storms, at the security clearance level that Alger, who was Captain—equivalent to the Bishop level—could access, the Forsaken Land of the Gods had always only been a name with no actual description. However, it clearly pointed towards the end of the Sonia Sea. From what he knew, even the Cardinals at the core of the church had no idea what the Forsaken Land of the Gods represented. But only the leader of the church, the Proxy of the Lord of Storms, knew something about the situation and seemed to be taking charge of the hidden mission to look for the Forsaken Land of the Gods.

Alger had once made a bold guess when he equated the True Creator's holy residence which was promoted by the Aurora Order with the Forsaken Land of the Gods. But, unfortunately, The Fool hadn't confirmed his guess, so he couldn't be sure.

Now, he was shocked and surprised to find that the Tarot Club member using The Sun as his code name was very likely from the Forsaken Land of the Gods!

Mr. Fool knew where the Forsaken Land of the Gods was all this time, and he could pull someone from there to be a member of the Gathering! This is a hidden place that the Church of the Lord of Storms has been trying to find to no avail!

Alger looked at The Fool who was seated in the seat of honor at the end of the ancient long bronze table in horror. He could only see that he was leaning back in his chair in silence, engulfed by the thick fog.

Audrey wasn't particularly moved about it. The only time that she had heard about the Forsaken Land of the Gods was from The Hanged Man's question. She wasn't particularly interested, so she failed to associate it to anything from what Mr. Fool said earlier.

The City of Silver has the legend about being abandoned by the Creator... Huh, Mr. Hanged Man seems to be deeply affected... What is he amazed and afraid of? Audrey nodded in puzzlement as she remembered the details of the moment.

"Yes, we believe that we will regain the Lord's favor in the end. Perhaps, it will be on the day the sun rises again," Derrick Berg answered in an uncertain tone. "We were once ruled by the giants' royal family, and we worshiped the Giant King Aurmír. Later, we were saved by the Lord and we will never betray the Lord again."

Ruled by the giants' royal family... It really is ancient. But it doesn't seem to match...Alger, who had guessed at something, suddenly recalled the description about the Second Epoch in the hidden chapter of The Book of Storms.

The Second Epoch was also known as humanity's Dark Epoch. At the time, the sky, ocean, and land were ruled over by dragons, giants, elves, mutants, devils, phoenixes, demonic wolves, and dead spirits. But in the end, the Lord of Storms, Eternal Blazing Sun, and the God of Knowledge and Wisdom led humanity into defeating the supernatural creatures and ushered in the beginning of the Third Epoch, the Glorious Era, which was later known as Cataclysm.

Giant King Aurmír... Klein repeated the name in silence.

In various legends and myths, it was a great existence on par with the deities. Even now, there were still some places that worshiped him. Even

the most famous and most expensive grape wine in the Intis Republic was named after Aurmir. It was said that the Giant King particularly fancied grape wine which was like blood.

Considering the fact that the Church of the God of Combat is in control of the complete pathway of the Warrior, which once belonged to the giants, can I assume that Aurmir was the ancient God of Combat? Klein guessed.

He nodded deliberately but didn't think any further about it. He then asked calmly, "Do you still offer sacrifices to this omnipotent God?"

"Yes, we still do. But since the day we were abandoned, we have never gotten any response." Derrick's voice had a hint of unconcealed pain.

Klein leaned against the back of his chair leisurely. He half-closed his eyes and said, "Describe the process of your offering ritual in detail."

Does Mr. Fool want to figure out the truth behind the City of Silver's abandonment? Or does He want to determine if the Creator still exists? Alger suddenly felt a shock through his body and he quivered.

Not only was he afraid, but he was also excited too. This was because he felt he was being made privy to the secrets between deities!

That made him feel like he had been elevated to a whole new level!

I've been chasing after power, after strength. Didn't I do it to achieve this kind of feeling? Alger leaned back, lifted his chin, and got carried away with his thoughts.

Mr. Hanged Man's mental state doesn't seem to be normal... Audrey looked at him with pity.

She finally understood that there might be some sort of shocking secret behind the communication between Mr. Fool and The Sun, which led to The Hanged Man's loss of composure.

After the Qilangos commission is over, I'll pay the price to get information about what Mr. Hanged Man learned today... I wonder if he would be willing to... Audrey thought in anticipation, yet was still a little worried.

Derrick didn't notice the weight that was hanging on his answer as he replied frankly, "We build opulent altars covered in the Lord's symbol. Every time we receive a bumper Black-Faced Grass harvest, we hold a sacrificial ritual.

"We use the monsters we capture in the depths of the darkness to use as sacrificial offerings. After we recite God's honorable title and the necessary prayers, we dance for Him and then kill the monsters, to let their spirituality and tainted blood dye the entire altar. If we haven't caught any monsters, then we use a sinner on the lowest floor in the City of Silver prison instead.

"Then, we turn the very first batch of Black-Faced Grass into food and serve it before the Lord.

"In the end, we sing praises in unison and end the ritual."

Since I was planning to offer a sacrifice to myself, I'm not picky about time, and the altar can be as simple as possible. The most important part would be to open a channel with the aid of the monsters' spirituality or the blood containing Beyonder powers to complete the sacrifice offering. Of course, this is under the premise that one will receive a response? How extravagant... Klein used his mysticism knowledge to analyze every step of the sacrificial ritual in the City of Silver before finally

saying, “What are the corresponding prayers? What language do you recite them in?”

Derrick was also looking forward to this, so as to gain hints from Mr. Fool on how to shake off the curse, so he recalled it carefully and answered, “We use Jotun, which is also our common language.

“The corresponding prayers are,

“Your devoted believers pray for your attention.

“We pray for you to take their offerings.

“We pray for you to open the gates to your Kingdom.”

...

Klein listened in silence and intentionally let the engulfing fog slowly swirl around him. He nodded as though deep in thought and remained silent.

As for what he learned from it, he obviously wouldn't share it...

Alger found it very normal. How could the secrets of a deity be revealed directly to a mortal? Derrick also steeled his resolve to quickly grow in power, so that he could obtain something that could garner Mr. Fool's interest in exchange for his guidance.

After some more communication, Klein ended the gathering. He watched Justice's, The Hanged Man's, and The Sun's figures vanish before him.

He looked down and saw the boundless gray fog and crimson stars that seemed eternally immutable.

However, after he advanced to Sequence 8, he realized that he could connect even more stars. In other words, he could pull in more members.

At least two... Klein nodded indiscernibly.

He wasn't in a hurry to add new members. He planned to act as he had before. He would first wait and observe. If Justice and The Hanged Man had any recommendations, he could assess them first.

What I saw the last few times was when The Sun was praying. There was a clear crystal ball before him, but ever since I pulled him into the world above the gray fog, that crystal ball has never appeared again... Does the prerequisite needed to pull people in through the connection of the crimson star have something to do with having a special item around them? Or does every crimson star correspond to an item in reality, which, when it's connected successfully, it would return to the world above the gray fog?

I wonder if Miss Justice and Mr. Hanged Man were the same... Let's just assume that's the case. In that case, if people without this special item were to recite: "The Fool that doesn't belong to this era, the mysterious ruler above the gray fog; the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck." and allow me to hear their prayers, would I be able to pull them in?

I can give it a try in the future.

Klein didn't stay any longer. He wrapped himself with spirituality and stimulated a descent, leaving behind the lofty palace, the ancient table, and the twenty-two high-back chairs which sat immutably above the gray fog.

He had mastered the overflowing power of the Clown potion and eliminated the corresponding negative effects. Therefore, he wanted to try the ritual to summon himself!

I wonder what I'll conjure this time... Klein thought in anticipation and fear as he fell through the mad ravings.

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