

Chapter 167: Holy Artifact

“Alright.” Crestet Cesimir nodded. He leaned forward. “Then swear upon the Holy Artifact.”

As he was saying this, he bent down to lift the silver suitcase by his foot.

Holy Artifact? The Holy Artifact that earned you the title of the Goddess's Sword? Klein looked at the actions of the deacon curiously.

Crestet placed the suitcase on his knees, his dark green eyes instantly turning black.

He lifted his hand then pressed down. The cover of the silver suitcase which resembled a violin case suddenly dissolved and receded like the tide.

At the same time, Klein felt that the light around him was being drawn forward as if it was being absorbed by the suitcase.

Apart from the lights from the classic lamps that lined the walls, as well as the silver splendor that spiraled within the suitcase, the alchemy room turned pitch dark. The scene looked extremely strange.

Pa!

With a crisp snapping sound, Crestet Cesimir opened the suitcase, revealing the pure white bone sword that lay within.

Yes, a bone sword. The moment Klein saw the sword, he knew instinctively that it was mainly made out of bone!

The short sword silently released a pure white glow in the pitch dark alchemy room, as if it were a moon hanging high in the night sky, or a lighthouse in the middle of a storm.

It looked as though the sword had no defects on its surface, but a closer examination would reveal that the surface of the sword was laced with layers of symbols and icons. These mysterious patterns intertwined to form the body of the sword.

Klein observed the holy sword, suddenly realizing that he couldn't look away!

His vision was being drawn towards the sword as his brown eyes slowly lost their luster.

Crestet lifted the suitcase, moving the sword away from its original position.

Klein instantly snapped out of his trance and finally freed himself from the nightmare he couldn't escape before.

He cast his gaze to the side and asked gravely, "Reverend, do you need me to put my hand on the holy sword?"

"Yes, come over." Crestet's voice was melodious as if he was singing a lullaby.

Klein stood up, still looking to the side as he took small steps forward. As it was dark, he couldn't see where the legs of the

deacon were, nor his old leather boots.

“Stop,” Crestet spoke calmly.

Klein immediately halted and stood on the spot. He took a quick glance at the pure white bone sword through the corner of his eyes before retracting his gaze again, in fear.

With that mere glance, he bent down and extended his right hand, accurately placing it atop the holy sword.

A cold feeling swept through his skin and into his mind. The distracting thoughts and feelings of worry instantly eased, as if he was sitting on a roof in a noisy village, smelling the scent of the harvest and admiring the cosmos.

“Recite after me,” Crestet said solemnly.

“Alright.” Klein nodded.

He then heard the deacon speak in Hermes.

“Standing higher than the cosmos and more eternal than eternity, the Evernight Goddess.

“I swear to you in my real name and my spirituality.

“I, Klein, will never reveal the details of the ‘acting method’ to those who do not know of it from this moment forth.

“If I go against this, I shall accept any punishment you deem fit.

“Please witness my oath.”

Klein collected himself and made the oath in Hermes, following Deacon Cesimir’s lead.

He had the faint feeling that a connection has been established between him and a faraway being through the pure white bone sword.

After retracting his right hand, he drew a crimson moon on his chest.

“Praise the Lady!”

“Praise the Lady!” Crestet smiled and bowed in response.

Immediately, he closed the cover of the suitcase and pressed down heavily with his right hand.

The darkness was instantly lit up as the light from the lamp once again filled the entire room.

Klein noticed that the black eyes of Deacon Cesimir had regained their usual blackish-green.

He made his way back to his chair and frowned. He asked in puzzlement, “Acting method?”

Crestet cleared his throat. Without answering the question directly, he instead smiled and said, "You might feel a little confused and not understand what I'm about to tell you, but I cannot explain why that is so, for that involves the secrets of the Church."

You will only have the right to know after you become an archbishop or a high-ranking deacon... Klein looked at Cesimir and added inwardly before Cesimir could say it.

"You will only be permitted to know after you become a core member of the Church, such as an archbishop or a high-ranking deacon," Crestet emphasized.

Klein nodded sternly.

Crestet placed the silver suitcase back beside his foot and crossed his legs.

"In the long history of time, the Church has had generations upon generations of genius Beyonders slowly figuring out a way to avoid losing control.

"And the core to this method is the name of the potion. It's not only critical; it's also the key."

After looking at Klein's thoughtful expression, Crestet continued, "We have realized that the names of the potions all point to a certain group, and this group has their own approach and operates in unique ways. In simpler terms, there are a set of rules that come with the name of the potion, different rules for different potions. When we follow these rules strictly, the risk of losing control is reduced to a minimum."

“Similar to my set of Seer principles?” Klein took the opportunity to ask.

This explanation isn't as simple or understandable as the one I gave to Justice and Hanged Man... Klein silently criticized.

“Yes.” Crestet gave an affirmative answer. “When we follow the rules of the potion, we become more and more like the group described by the name of the potion. In other words, we are acting as the job that the name of the potion points us toward. That is the ‘acting method.’ You must remember, the spirituality of every individual is special, unique. Even though the core rules must be followed by the people who consume the same potion, there are always certain variations to the rules that are unique to the individual. Thus, the experiences of others can only serve as a guide.”

That is a point that I didn't realize... Klein said sincerely, “Thank you for informing me. I will remember that.”

Crestet laughed.

“These are the experiences accumulated over the generations.

“After using the ‘acting method,’ we not only gain mastery over the potion, we're also digesting it, just as we would our food. When you truly digest the potion, you will feel a unique, mysterious sensation, understood?”

“I understand. ‘Digestion,’ this term is very appropriate...” Klein pretended to be deep in thought.

After Crestet explained the method in more detail, Klein weighed

his words as he asked, “Reverend Cesimir, since the name of the potion is not only the core, but also the key, then how did the first Beyonders obtain them? I heard that it was recorded on the Blasphemy Slate?”

“Yes, that is correct,” Crestet replied frankly. “But the Blasphemy Slate was inscribed with the ancient names. The names of the potions which we use today were derived in part from divine revelations. Some were also consolidated by the experiences of the Beyonders themselves.”

Klein nodded slowly. He pursed his lips and asked, “Reverend Cesimir, since the ‘acting method’ is so effective, why wouldn’t the Church tell every Nighthawk about it?”

“I have said that it is a secret of the Church. You will understand the reason behind it once you become an archbishop or a high-ranking deacon,” Crestet answered, unfazed. “Alright, return upstairs and tell the rest of the Nighthawks to come down one at a time. I have to carry out the final step of the examination.”

That’s to keep Frye and the others from divulging the ‘acting method’? Klein thought as he stood up, he then bade farewell, following the Nighthawks’ etiquette.

He made his way past the corridor and up the stairs, returning to the Blackthorn Security Company. He saw Dunn smoking his pipe near the entrance of the basement.

With a smile, Klein took the initiative to say, “There shouldn’t be any more problems; His Grace wants me to inform Frye and the others to head down for a conversation with him.”

“Yes, that is the last step. That means that there were no problems.” Dunn put away his pipe and headed to the recreation

room to tell the rest.

As he watched Frye and Seeka enter the basement, Klein suddenly recalled something. He said in a hurry, "Captain, are we going to have to get Royale who's guarding over Chanis Gate, and Leonard who's watching over the asylum? Oh, and Kenley, who's on break."

Dunn froze and pinched his forehead.

"I forgot..."

He paused for a moment, then chortled. "But the matter shouldn't be too complicated. One of the advantages of having a high-ranking deacon examine you is that there's no need to send a telegraph to the Holy Cathedral, or engage in a cumbersome exchange of letters. He can make the decision on the spot and hand the formula to the Clown potion as well as the main ingredients to you."

"That's not too bad." Klein couldn't contain his excitement.

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An hour and a half passed. As Kenley walked out of the alchemy room, his expression full of puzzlement, Klein was once again called downstairs. He met the high-ranking deacon once again, the Goddess's Sword, Crestet Cesimir, a second time.

This time, the golden-brown-haired and blackish-green-eyed deacon wasn't seated. He stood there, allowing the breeze in the basement to blow at his black trench coat.

Crestet's collars stood tall, hiding his chin in the shadows.

He looked at Klein and smiled.

“Nighthawk Klein Moretti, I announce in the name of the Goddess that you have passed the examination of the Holy Cathedral.

“Congratulations. With your contributions, you can immediately advance to become a Sequence 8 Beyonder!”