

Chapter 211: Funeral

In the basement of Saint Selena Cathedral, in the guardroom outside Chanis Gate.

Leonard Mitchell was leaning on the back of his chair, his legs were propped up on the table. His eyes were vacant without any focus.

Even though he had been healed using ritualistic magic, he still looked terrible, as if he had obtained reprieve from a severe illness without fully recovering.

At the moment, the powerful Beyonders sent by the Holy Cathedral were creating another seal behind the Chanis Gate since the ashes of Saint Selena was lost. They had conflicting opinions; some wanting to fill in the gap of power using a new holy item, while the others believed that there was no need to go through all the trouble. After all, to the Church of Evernight, holy items were rare and incredibly precious. What they suggested was lowering the presence of the Nighthawks in Tingen and transferring the artifacts with living characteristics or difficult-to-seal artifacts to the headquarters at the Cathedral of Serenity in Backlund's diocese, only leaving behind those that could be controlled more easily.

They intended to send a telegram to propose a meeting of the higher-ups, to get a vote from the archbishops and high-ranking deacons.

Leonard was uninterested in this debate. He felt as if he had become a living corpse, with no sorrow, grief, agitation, or excitement. He was abnormally numb. He didn't want to face anyone. All he wanted was to stay alone in the corner.

Occasionally, he would feel puzzled about why the “murderer” would only take away Klein’s Beyonder characteristic and leave Captain Dunn Smith’s one intact.

Thud. Thud. Thud. Footsteps reverberated in the corridor. Seeka Tron, whose right arm had been bandaged, appeared at the door of the guardroom.

While Klein and the others were attacking Megose and attempting to save Tingen City, she and the Keepers within Chanis Gate were doing battle against a portion of the Sealed Artifacts. If it wasn’t for the timely arrival of the members of the Mandated Punishers and the Machinery Hivemind, or the eventual arrival of the reinforcements from the Holy Cathedral, she also might’ve lost her life.

But even so, the elderly Keeper failed to last until the end. He fought to his death, under the call of duty.

“Leonard, I found an unencrypted telegram in the Captain’s office. It was sent over by the Holy Cathedral,” Seeka Tron said.

Leonard’s green eyes moved slightly, finally coming to life. He faintly recalled the sound of a new telegram coming in, but the battle was about to begin. He and Klein didn’t have the time to pay attention to it.

“What does it say?” Leonard noticed that his tone was unusually raspy.

The white-haired and black-eyed Seeka Tron replied without hesitation, “Beware of Ince Zangwill. Beware of Sealed Artifact 0-08.”

“Ince Zangwill, the archbishop that betrayed the Church, the Gatekeeper who failed his advancement... Sealed Artifact 0-08, an ordinary looking quill...” Leonard muttered at first as he searched his memories, then he tilted his head to the side.

He suddenly narrowed his eyes, the dispirited feelings and sadness disappeared from his body.

“So that’s how it was...” Leonard pulled his feet back and stood up, his green eyes burning with a passion.

He looked at Seeka Tron and said, “I intend to apply to join the Red Gloves.”

The Red Gloves was a code name for the elite team of Nighthawks. Under normal circumstances, Nighthawks teams were situated locally and had regions under their jurisdiction. They were not permitted to capture criminals outside of their area of jurisdiction without permission. As such, some evildoers would change their location after every crime, making it terribly inconvenient for the Nighthawks.

To deal with this, the Church of Evernight set up the Red Gloves. They were carefully selected elites, some even possessing incomplete holy items. Their mission was to reinforce Nighthawks teams that had called for help, as well as track down and arrest evildoers without any restrictions.

In some circles, they were also called “Pursuers” or “Hunting Dogs.”

“Red Gloves? But their lowest requirement is Sequence 7... Besides, the dangers the Red Gloves face are many times higher than an ordinary Nighthawk Squad,” Seeka Tron said in concern and doubt.

Leonard smiled coldly.

“I’m close to advancing soon.”

His eyes became cold. He clenched his teeth and said to himself.

I want revenge!

Ince Zangwill, you must live until the day I become powerful enough!

“Alright...” Seeka seemed to have guessed Leonard’s thoughts. She sighed. “Almost half of our team will be new faces. It’s rare to see a Nighthawks team become so ravaged...”

Leonard’s expression darkened. He clenched his teeth and asked, “Are the bodies ready?”

“Yes.” Seeka nodded indiscernibly.

Leonard suddenly stepped towards the door.

“I’ll notify their families.”

I’ll deal with the scene I don’t want to deal with the most.

I’ll do it...

...

At 2 Daffodil Street, Melissa sat on the sofa, inspecting the three tickets in her hands. She was looking at the words, the printed date, and the seat numbers.

Benson was sitting beside her, observing his sister with a smile. He had a relaxed posture.

Suddenly, they heard the doorbell. *Ding dong, ding dong.*

Melissa glanced at their busy maid Bella, then she took the three tickets with her and stood up, looking a little confused. She briskly ran to the door.

Her black hair was shinier than it was before, her face no longer skinny. The color of her skin had a ruddy color, and her brown eyes looked brighter and energetic.

Twisting the handle and opening the door, Melissa froze for a moment. She didn't recognize their visitor.

It was a young man with black hair and green eyes. He looked handsome, but his face was unusually pale. Hidden in his eyes was deep sorrow.

"May I know who you are?" Melissa asked, feeling somewhat lost.

Leonard had specially draped a black formal coat over his white shirt. He said in a raspy voice, "I'm a colleague of your brother Klein."

Melissa's heart suddenly skipped a beat. She instinctively tiptoed to look behind Leonard but didn't notice anything.

She said with a strange quiver in her voice, "Where's Klein?"

Leonard closed his eyes, inhaling as he said, "I'm very sorry, your brother Klein died at the hands of an evil criminal while he was trying to save others. He's a hero, a true hero."

Melissa widened her eyes slowly, her body shaking indiscernibly. The three tickets in her hands dropped helplessly onto the floor.

The tickets faced upward, revealing the name of the play—"The Return of the Count."

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Sitting in the Moretti family's living room, Leonard didn't dare to look directly at Melissa and Benson.

But he couldn't stop scenes of what they looked like from flashing through his mind.

That girl filled with youthfulness and vibrancy had her eyes wide open. She didn't speak, and her eyes were unfocused. Her silence made her appear like a puppet.

The man who looked a little like Klein maintained a normal posture, but he would slip into a daze from time to time. His words came out slowly.

“That’s the gist of the matter. I’m very sorry that I was unable to prevent it in a timely manner. The Blackthorn Security Company, the police department, and those that he helped have promised a bereavement compensation of about 6000 pounds...” Leonard said, as his eyes darted around.

Suddenly, Benson interrupted him. His voice was hoarse as he asked, “Where’s his body? I’m asking where’s Klein’s body?”

He puckered his lips and paused.

“When can we see him?”

“In the company. You can see him now,” Leonard answered, unable to mask his grief.

“Alright.” Benson moved his rigid lips with great difficulty. “Let me use the bathroom first.”

Without waiting for Leonard’s reply, he quickly entered the bathroom and slammed the door closed.

He stood in front of the sink and turned on the tap, allowing the water to flow.

He bent down and repeatedly splashed water onto his face.

As he did that, his actions came to a sudden stop. Nothing changed for a long time, leaving only the sound of running water reverberating in the bathroom.

A few minutes later, Benson lifted his head and looked into the mirror. He saw that his face was covered in water droplets, the redness in his eyes was impossible to hide now.

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A few days later, in a corner of the Raphael Cemetery.

After finishing Dunn's funeral, the crowd gathered before a new tombstone. On it was Klein's black-and-white photograph, a very scholarly photograph.

Melissa stood before the grave, her eyes without focus. Beside her, Elizabeth kept wiping away her tears.

Leonard, Benson, Frye, and Bredt carried the coffin and walked over, lowering the coffin into the grave.

After the priest gave the eulogy and individual prayers, the grave was filled with soil, covering the black coffin bit by bit.

At this moment, Melissa knelt down and tossed in the copper whistle she found on her brother's body.

Leonard turned and looked at the scene, his heart wincing. However, he admired how strong this girl was. He knew that this girl didn't cry after receiving the bad news. Instead, she stayed pitifully quiet.

The grave was leveled and a stone slab was laid over it. Leonard took a final look at Klein's tombstone. There were three lines to his epitaph:

The best elder brother,

The best younger brother,

The best colleague.

Under the mournful atmosphere, the members of the Blackthorn Security Company gradually left. Selena and Elizabeth also bade farewell under the urging of their families. The only people left behind were Benson and Melissa.

“I’ll get a rental carriage...” Benson was in a terrible condition, it was as if he hadn’t slept for a long time.

“Alright.” Melissa nodded.

After seeing her brother leave, she turned to look at the tombstone.

She squatted down and buried her face in her arms.

After some silence, Melissa suddenly scolded, “Stupid!”

She cried as she wept silently. Her tears just wouldn’t stop.

...

Night time, at the Raphael Cemetery.

The copper-skinned Azik stood in front of Klein's grave holding a bouquet of white flowers. He didn't speak for the longest time until he finally sighed and muttered to himself, "I'm sorry, I was ten minutes late. But I think I know who it was..."

He bent over and set the bouquet of flowers down before turning to leave the cemetery. He also left Tingén, but he didn't retrieve the copper whistle.

The place was quiet and serene under the illumination of the crimson moonlight.

Suddenly, the stone slab sealing the grave was flipped open. A pale hand extended out from the soil.

A hand came out!

Whoosh!

The gravestone was shoved aside. The lid of the coffin was pushed open. Klein sat upright and looked around, lost.

His memory was still frozen at the scene with the brand new leather boots, and the palm that grabbed onto the urn of Saint Selena's ashes. Everything after that felt like a dreamless sleep.

Klein instinctively lowered his head and unbuttoned his shirt. He looked at the left side of his chest, only to see that his ravaged injury and missing heart were squirming as they healed, similar to how he recovered from the bullet wound through his temple back when he looked into the mirror. The only difference was that this time, the recovery was much slower and much more difficult.