

Chapter 41: Audrey and Her Susie

After pouring away the coffee and returning to the armory to take the thick stack of historical materials and explanatory transcripts from Old Neil, Klein followed the wall of lights up the staircase to the Blackthorn Security Company.

Tap. Tap. Tap. His footsteps echoed in the sealed and quiet basement.

After Klein left the spiral staircase, he pushed open the door and identified his bearings before heading for the second office opposite of him.

After familiarizing himself for two days, he had a general understanding of the layout of the Blackthorn Security Company.

The entrance brought visitors to a huge reception hall with sofas and tables. Through the partition, there was an inner region. To the left of the corridor were three rooms. From the nearest to the furthest, they were Mrs. Orianna's account room, a rest room with a few sofa beds, and the staircase that led underground.

On the right were three rooms. From the nearest to the furthest was Captain Dunn Smith's office, a civilian staff office with a typewriter, and the recreation room for formal members of the Nighthawks team.

Klein had previously seen Leonard Mitchell playing cards with two other teammates in the recreation room. He guessed that they were playing Fighting the Landlord. Of course, Emperor Rochelle had already given it a new name—Fighting Evil. However, the way it was played was identical to what Klein

knew.

Bredt was entitled to a day of sleep after a night shift. Rozanne was at the reception desk. The carriage driver who was in charge of procuring necessities and collecting supplies, Cesare Francis, was out as usual. When Klein opened the door to the civilian staff office, the three desks inside were empty. Only the typewriter sat there silently.

“Akerson Company’s Model 1346 typewriter...” Klein, who had seen similar objects in his mentor’s office and Welch’s place, muttered. He felt that the complicated mechanisms inside were filled with the beauty of machinery.

He walked to the desk with the typewriter. After preparing himself, he attempted to type something on air.

In the beginning, he often converted the local language to Chinese ‘pinyin’ instinctively. Only after he was familiar with it did he ‘digest’ the original Klein’s corresponding memory fragment and no longer made mistakes.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

The rhythmic tapping on the typewriter sounded like a melody composed from the heavy marriage of metal and industry. Under this melody, Klein quickly typed the expenditure application.

However, he was in no hurry to meet Dunn Smith. Instead, he focused his mind and read the materials provided by Old Neil seriously. It was both revision and new material.

When it was almost noon, he stretched his neck and put away the documents. He then read and consolidated what he had learned on mysticism in the morning.

Only after all that did he take his application to the office next door and knocked on the door gently.

Dunn was waiting for lunch to be delivered. When he saw Klein hand him the document, the corners of his mouth curved up.

“Did Old Neil teach you this?”

“Yes.” Klein did not hesitate to betray Old Neil.

Dunn picked up his dark red fountain pen and signed it.

“I happen to be applying for funding for the months of July, August, and September from the Church and the police department. I’ll add yours in. When it’s approved, get the money from Mrs. Orianna. You can draw the spirit pendulum in the afternoon.”

“Alright,” Klein answered simply and vigorously.

His tone and eyes were obviously filled with joy.

Before bidding Dunn farewell, he asked casually, “Shouldn’t the budget for July, August, and September be applied for by June?”

Why are you applying for July’s budget only in July?

Dunn fell silent for a few seconds before sipping his coffee.

"We encountered three cases in June. I was so busy that I forgot about it."

As expected of Captain and his poor memory... Klein knew he had asked a question he should not have asked. He gave a chuckle before leaving immediately.

With that, he began a simple but regular lifestyle. He would spend half an hour in the early morning Cogitating. He would have two hours of mysticism lessons in the morning and an hour and a half of studying the historical documents. After lunch, he would take a short nap in the break room to regain his energy.

Following that, he would draw bullets and head to the Shooting Club. After finishing his practice, he would stroll over to Welch's place, which was not too far. He would then change routes and return to Iron Cross Street. That way, he could save on the carriage fees. If he had time, he would practice his Spirit Vision and Spirit Dowsing. On the way, he would buy groceries.

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In a private chemistry laboratory equipped with apparatus and items.

A tall, blond Audrey was looking at the cup in her hand. There were countless bubbles and it made the atmosphere serene.

Finally, the liquid in the cup precipitated into a sticky silver substance.

"Haha, I'm indeed talented in mysticism. I succeeded in one try! I was worried of failure and prepared two sets of materials!" the girl muttered to herself in delight.

She put away the items she took from her family's vault or exchanged them with others. She took a deep breath and prepared to close her eyes to drink down the Spectator potion.

At that moment, barking sounded from outside the laboratory. Audrey frowned instantly.

She hid the cup of silver liquid in a dark corner, turned around and headed to the door.

"Susie, who's here?" Audrey turned the doorknob and asked the golden retriever sitting in front of the door.

Susie wagged her tail in an obsequious manner. Her personal maidservant, Annie, had appeared in the corridor nearby.

Audrey walked out of the laboratory and closed the door. She looked at Annie and said, "Didn't I tell you? Do not disturb me when I'm running chemistry experiments."

A vexed Annie answered, "But there's an invitation from the Duchess, Duchess Della."

"Duke Negan's wife?" Audrey took a few steps forward and asked Annie.

"Yes. She has managed to hire the services of the palace's baker, Madam Vivi, and plans to invite you and Madam to afternoon

tea,” Annie recounted the invitation.

Audrey tapped her cheeks discreetly and said, “Tell my mother that I have a headache. Perhaps I’m a little dehydrated because of the scorching sun. Please get her to convey my apologies to Madam Della.”

As she spoke, she acted frail.

“Miss, it’s not only afternoon tea, but a literature salon,” added Annie.

“But that won’t treat my dizziness. I need rest,” rejected Audrey firmly.

Simultaneously, she muttered deep down. *If they insist, I'll faint for all of you to see. The etiquette teacher said that I can do it most perfectly... I think I heard something?*

“Alright,” Annie exhaled and said. “Do you need me to help you back to your room?”

“There’s no need. I’ll clean up the laboratory first.” Audrey was yearning to return immediately to consume the potion.

However, she suppressed her impatience. She only returned to the laboratory’s entrance when she saw Annie leave.

Suddenly, she discovered that the golden retriever, Susie, who was waiting outside, was gone. Furthermore, the door to the laboratory was half opened.

"I forgot that Susie can open doors with handles... What was that sound? Not good!" Audrey heard crisp sounds coming from within. Suddenly, she came to a realization as she charged into the laboratory.

All she could see was the cups shattered on the floor. Susie was licking the final drop of silver liquid.

Audrey stood rooted at the entrance like a statue.

Susie immediately sat down and looked at her owner innocently as she wagged her tail.

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In the seas beyond the Pritz Harbor, there was an island perennially enveloped in storms. An ancient sailboat was docked at its harbor.

A blond man dressed in a robe with lightning patterns was looking at Alger Wilson opposite to him. He asked, perplexed, "Alger, you could have returned to the kingdom and become a captain of a Mandated Punisher team or a reputable bishop. Why did you choose to voyage out into sea and become the captain of the Blue Avenger?"

Alger wore a stoic expression on his rough face. He replied solemnly, "The sea belongs to the Storm. This is the Lord's kingdom. I'm willing to abide by the Lord's will and monitor this area of His kingdom."

"Alright." The blond haired man clenched his fist and struck his chest. "May the Storm be with you."

"May the Storm be with you." Alger replied with the same standard salute.

He stood on the deck with a few sailors and watched his companions leave the boat, walking into the distance.

"Sainz, you do not understand because you do not know enough..." Alger muttered silently.

Meanwhile, Audrey finished her second concoction in a panic-stricken state.

Seeing that the silver potion looked nothing different from before, she was nearly moved to tears.

Gulp. She quickly drank down the Spectator potion.

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Friday. A storm befell Tingen. The heavy rain pounded on the windows of every household.

Inside the Blackthorn Security Company, Klein, Rozanne, and Bredt sat on the sofa in the reception hall and enjoyed lunch.

As there was only a kettle for boiling water, there was no way to heat up leftovers. Klein could not eat rye bread every day or take the carriage home every day. If he did that, he would have to walk from Iron Cross Street to Welch's place in the afternoon and consider taking a carriage back. It was a waste of money; therefore, he began joining Rozanne and his colleagues in eating the so-called 'office rations.'

The nearby Old Will's Restaurant would punctually send a waiter at half past ten every day. He would ask for their orders and after determining the quantity, he would send it over at half past twelve. The food was contained in what resembled meal boxes. At three, he would return to take their orders for dinner and take back the utensils.

The 'rations' included meat, vegetables, and bread. Although the quantity was lacking, it was barely sufficient to fill a person. A cost of a meal ranged from seven to ten pence depending on the different premium levels.

Klein would always thicken his skin and order the meal costing seven pence. Typically, there was half a pound of wheat bread, a tiny piece of meat cooked in different ways, a ladle of thick soup with vegetables, and tiny bits of butter or margarine.

"We actually only have one Nighthawk here today..." Rozanne said as she delivered a spoonful of thick soup into her mouth.

"I heard that a case with cultist elements is going on in Golden Indus. Therefore, the police department has requested for two Nighthawks..." Bredt said as he put down his bread.

Klein used the remaining wheat bread and dabbed it into the last bits of meat juice before stuffing it into his mouth. He did not say a word.

Under his left sleeve, there was a silver chain with a topaz hanging.

At that moment, knocks sounded outside the half-closed main door.

“...Please come in.” Rozanne was taken aback as she put down her spoon. She quickly used a handkerchief to wipe her mouth and stood up.

The door was pushed open as a man in a halved top hat came in. The left shoulder of his black formal suit was drenched.

The sides of his hair had grayed. He put away his umbrella and said to Klein and company, “Is this the former small mercenary squad?”

“You can say that,” answered Rozanne like clockwork.

The lanky man coughed and said, “I have a mission request.”