

Chapter 56: Escape from the Sea

In a rather spacious living room, Anna and Joyce were seated on different sofas, separated by Anna's parents.

Joyce sighed with a satisfied expression and said, "Exalted Steam, I am so lucky to come back alive, to be able to see Anna again."

"My poor Joyce, what happened?" Anna couldn't help but ask with concern.

Joyce took a glance at his fiancée, and his expression turned grave.

"I still feel terrified to this day. I keep waking up from my dreams again and again. Five days after the Alfalfa left Caesar Pier, we came across pirates, scary pirates. The only fortunate thing was that their leader's name was Nast."

"The pirate that calls himself the King of the Five Seas?" Anna's father, Mr. Wayne, asked in shock.

Although Joyce had already been there for half an hour, he did not volunteer details about his ordeal. He appeared to be fearful, perturbed, and uneasy. It was only after Anna returned and hugged him that he finally appeared to put it behind him.

"Yes, due to his declaration of being a descendant of the Solomon Empire, the King of the Five Seas, Nast didn't believe in killing captives. Hence, we were only robbed and didn't lose our lives. His subordinates even left us sufficient food," Joyce said as he

recalled the ordeal.

His body started to quiver, but he continued to describe his deepest and scariest nightmare.

"I didn't lose much of my wealth. I believed that my misfortune was over, but as we continued towards our destination, a heated conflict erupted among the Alfalfa's passengers and crew. From disagreement, to fighting, to drawing revolvers, and raising swords to kill each other... I saw nothing but blood during that period. One after another, people beside me fell with eyes opened, never to be closed. Their limbs, hearts, and intestines were scattered across the floors."

"Those of us who were unwilling to turn into savage beasts, the rational group, had nowhere to hide and nowhere to escape. We were surrounded by deep blue waves and the boundless ocean... Some wailed, some begged for mercy, some sold their bodies, but their heads were hung from the mast either way.

"Anna, I reeled in despair back then. I thought I would never see you again. Fortunately, in such a nightmare, there was still a hero. The captain took us to hide in the sturdy keel of the ship, and we relied on the stored water and food there until the maniacs reached their limits. Mr. Tris encouraged us, courageously leading us in an assault against those murderers..."

"After an unforgettable bloody battle, we survived. But the Alfalfa strayed off course, and only a third of the original sailors remained."

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When he depicted the most horrible and darkest side of the human psyche, Joyce couldn't help but recall the "hero," the man

that called himself Tris. He had a round and amiable face. He was shy like a girl and enjoyed staying in a corner. Only people whom he was familiar with knew that he was a very good conversationalist.

But it was such an unremarkable boy who stood in front of everyone with determination in the worst of days.

“Oh, Exalted Steam, my poor Joyce, you went through such a heartbreaking ordeal. Thank God, praise be to God, He prevented us from eternal separation.” Tears welled up in Anna’s eyes as she constantly dotted three points to form a triangle, the Sacred Emblem for Steam and Machinery.

Joyce revealed a faint pale smile.

“This is the reward for our faith. The Alfalfa then went through storms, lost its course, and after surmounting one challenge after another, arrived at Enmat Harbor.”

“Due to the bloodbath that had taken place on the boat, those of us that survived were held captive by the police and questioned separately. We didn’t have a chance to send telegrams home to update our loved ones. When they released us this morning, I immediately borrowed some money from my friend and took the steam locomotive back. Thank God for letting me set foot on the land of Tingen again, allowing me to see all of you again.”

Then, he looked towards his fiancée in confusion.

“Anna, when you saw me, I could feel your happiness and surprise, but I couldn’t understand why you rushed towards the door so excitedly right after you got off the carriage. Heh, I had planned on giving you a huge surprise.”

Anna thought about what had happened earlier, and continued in disbelief, “There’s nothing to hide, Joyce. As I was worried about you, I went to the only divination club in Tingen City today for a divination. That fortune-teller—no, the seer told me, he said, ‘Your fiancé has returned; he’s in the house with a windmill.’”

“What?” the Wayne couple and Joyce exclaimed simultaneously.

Anna covered her face and shook her head.

“I can barely believe it either, but it happened. Exalted Steam, perhaps there really are miracles in this world.”

“Joyce, that seer asked me for your name, characteristics, address, and birth date. He told me he was going to do an astrolabe divination. Then, he asked me if the house with a toy windmill was yours or mine. When I confirmed it was mine, he said, ‘Congratulations Miss Anna, Mr. Joyce Meyer is currently a guest at your place. What he needs now are not questions, but consolation and a warm hug.’”

“God...” Joyce found it unbelievable and incomprehensible. “Does he know me? Did someone send him a telegram? Could it be that he is familiar with the police in Enmat Harbor? No, that doesn’t explain it. How did he know that I came to your place? How could he possibly know that you would seek a divination? Did you make an appointment?”

“No, I made a selection at the last minute,” Anna replied with a vacant-looking expression.

“Perhaps a good seer needs to be in control of vast amounts of information, even if it cannot be used any time soon. Perhaps, that is the fascinating aspect of divination.” Anna’s father, Mr.

Wayne sighed and concluded. “In the known history of more than a thousand years and in the uncertain Fourth Epoch, divination has existed and has yet to disappear. I think there must be a reason for that.”

Joyce shook his head lightly and asked, “What’s that seer’s name?”

Anna thought and said, “Klein Moretti.”

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In the reception lobby of the Divination Club.

As Klein had spoken softly, Angelica knew not to go close. Therefore, she only saw Anna leave as though she had lost her soul, wearing shock and confusion on her face.

Angelica briskly walked to the sofa and asked out of curiosity, “Was the result good?”

She did not dare ask the actual result, afraid of violating the unspoken rule of fortune-tellers.

“Yeah.” Klein nodded and took out three copper coins from his pocket. “One-eighth of one soli is one and a half pennies, right?”

“Yes.” Angelica looked at the copper coins and realized that one of them was a penny and two of them were halfpence. She quickly held it out and said, “There’s an additional halfpence.”

Klein smiled faintly and said, “Thank you for taking care of my customer. She gave me a tip, so it’s only right I give you one.”

It's also to thank you for recommending me... he added in his heart.

“Alright.” Angelica felt an unknown fear of Klein, but since the reason was appropriate, she didn’t refuse the offer.

Klein returned to the meeting room, believing that there would be more people requesting his divinations.

However, he did not receive a second customer by forty minutes past five.

It wasn’t because the Divination Club’s business was poor, but because most people had already chosen a fortune-teller.

They likely were recommended by others and had long determined whose services to hire... In short, I'm still lacking in reputation... Klein laughed at himself for using game terminology.

He finished his third cup of Sibe black tea, grabbed his top hat and silver-edged cane, and walked leisurely out of the meeting room.

Angelica suddenly recalled Glacis’s instructions, and she quickly moved to intercept him.

“Mr. Moretti, when will you next visit the club? Mr. Glacis would like to thank you in person.”

"I will come over whenever I'm free. If fate permits us, he will definitely meet me," Klein replied, using the tone of a psychic charlatan, as though he was in character.

Then, he left the club before Angelica could respond and took the public carriage home.

When he stepped through the door, Klein found Benson reading the newspaper and Melissa putting together bits and pieces of gears, bearings, and springs in the evening sunlight.

"Good afternoon. Did Mrs. Shaud visit?" Klein asked casually.

Benson didn't put down his newspaper; instead, he lifted his head.

"Mrs. Shaud's visit lasted fifteen minutes. She brought some gifts, and she was very happy with the muffins and lemon cake that we prepared. She also invited us over whenever we have the chance to. She is a friendly, well-mannered lady. She knows how to carry a conversation very well too."

"The only problem is their belief in the Lord of Storms. They believe that girls shouldn't go to school, but should be homeschooled instead," Melissa complained.

It was obvious that she was very upset about it.

"Don't mind that. As long as she doesn't disturb us, she will still be a good neighbor," Klein comforted his sister, smiling.

The Loen Kingdom was a multi-religious nation, unlike the

Frosac Empire in the north which only believed in the God of Combat or the Feynapotter Kingdom in the south which only worshiped Earth Mother. It was inevitable that the congregations from the three major churches of the Lord of Storms, the Evernight Goddess, and the God of Steam and Machinery had conflicts in beliefs and customs. After a thousand years of this, they restrained each other, making coexistence possible.

“Okay.” Melissa pursed her lips and redirected her focus onto the pile of parts again.

After dinner, Klein continued revising history. Only when Melissa and Benson showered and returned to their rooms did he wash up, enter his bedroom, and lock his door.

He needed to organize and summarize what he had learned and the problems that he encountered to prevent himself from forgetting or missing out any critical points. Only by doing so would he be able to respond to subsequent developments in the future with a clear train of thought.

Klein flipped open his notebook, took out his pen, and started writing in Mandarin.

“Why is the key to digesting potions acting?”