

Chapter 28: Secret Order

Badump! Badump! Badump!

Klein's heart began beating rapidly. It shrank into a clump before expanding abruptly. It made his body tremble gently.

There was an instant when he nearly forgot what he had to do until the lurking figure suddenly paused. The figure pricked his ears slightly as though listening for any changes.

Blood flowed back from his brain as Klein regained his basic cognitive abilities. He reached beneath the pillow for the wooden grip of the revolver.

He felt the firm but smooth feeling as he rapidly calmed down. He silently and slowly pulled out the revolver and aimed it at the trespasser's head.

To be honest, he had no confidence in striking the intruder. Although he was already able to stably hit the target during practice, a moving person and a fixed target were completely different. He was not arrogant enough to confound the two together.

However, he vaguely remembered something from his previous life; the general idea was that a nuclear weapon wielded the greatest strength before its launch.

The principle held in his current situation. The best deterrence was before he shot!

By not pulling the trigger or shooting blindly, the intruder was unable to determine whether or not he was a complete rookie who had an extremely high chance of missing him. His worries and fears would make him deliberate more, resulting in him restraining himself!

In an instant, another thought arose in him. It immediately made Klein turn decisive. He was not the kind of person who turned calmer when faced with danger; instead, he had already imagined the situation when he faced the observer—using intimidation instead of attacking.

The Foodaholic Empire had an idiom: Where there is precaution there will be no danger!

When Klein pointed his gun at the intruder, the thin man froze suddenly, as though he had sensed something.

Following that, he heard a voice that hid a chuckle.

“Good evening, Sir.”

The scrawny man clasped both his hands together, and his body seemed to tense. Klein sat on the lower bunk, aimed the person’s head with the revolver, and tried to speak as leisurely and as naturally as he could.

“Please raise both of your hands and turn around. Try to do it slow. To be frank, I am very timid and I get nervous easily. If you move too quickly, I can be frightened, and I can’t guarantee that there won’t be a situation where I misfire. Yes, that’s right.”

The scrawny man raised both of his hands and held them up

near his head before turning his body bit by bit. The first thing that came into view was a black tight suit with neat buttons. Next, he caught a pair of brown eyebrows that were thick and sharp.

The intruder's deep blue eyes didn't reflect fear, but rather gazed upon Klein with the intensity of a ferocious beast. It seemed that if Klein were careless for a second, the other person would leap forward and tear him to pieces.

He clenched the handle tightly as he tried his best to appear calm and indifferent.

It was only when the thin man faced him completely did Klein jerk his chin towards the door. He softly and gently said, "Sir, let's take this outside. Do not disturb the beautiful dreams of others. Oh, do keep your motions slow. Lighten your footsteps a little too. It's basic courtesy for a gentleman."

The thin man's cold pupils rolled as he swept Klein a glance. He continued raising his hands as he walked slowly to the door.

Under the revolver's aim, he twisted the handle and slowly opened the door.

When the door was half-opened, he suddenly lowered himself and rolled forward. The door was pulled by a strong wind and it closed with a slam.

"Uh..." Benson, who was on the top bunk, was stirred. He almost woke up in a daze.

At that moment, a leisurely and serene melody entered from

outside. The heavy and comfortable voice started to sing.

“Oh, the threat of horror, the hope of crimson cries!

“One thing at least is certain—that this Life flies;

“One thing is certain, and the rest is Lies;

“The Flower that once has bloomed forever dies [1]...”

The poem seemed to possess the power to calm and relax others. Benson, who was on the top bunk, and Melissa, who was in another room, again fell asleep amid their grogginess.

Klein’s body and mind was also peaceful and quiet. He nearly yawned.

The way the thin man had darted off was so agile that he could not react in time.

Looking at the closed door, he smiled and muttered to himself. “You might not believe it, but pulling the trigger would not release a round.”

The empty chamber to prevent misfiring!

Following that, Klein listened to the midnight poem as he patiently awaited for the battle outside to end.

within a minute, the tranquil melody which resembled the reflection of moonlight on the surface of a lake stopped, and the dark night resumed its deep silence.

Klein silently spun the cylinder and moved the empty chamber away as he awaited for the outcome.

He uneasily waited for a full ten minutes. Just as he wondered if he should investigate, he heard Dunn Smith's staid and warm voice from the door.

"It's settled."

Phew. Klein exhaled. He held his revolver and took his key. Barefooted, he carefully approached the door before silently opening it to see the black trench coat and the halved top hat. Dunn Smith was standing there with his deep and calm gray eyes.

He closed the door behind him and followed Dunn to the end of the corridor and stood amid the weak crimson moonlight.

"It took me some time to enter his dream," said Dunn calmly as he looked at the red moon outside the window.

"Do you know his background?" Klein felt a lot more relieved.

Dunn nodded and said, "An ancient organization known as the Secret Order. They were established in the Fourth Epoch and are related to the Solomon Empire and a number of fallen aristocrats of that period. Heh, the Antigonus family's diary came from them. Due to a member's negligence, it entered the antique market and was obtained by Welch. They had no choice

but to send people in search of it.”

Without waiting for Klein’s question, he paused before continuing.

“We will capture the remaining members they have according to the clues. Well, it might not end too well. These fellows are as good at hiding as the rats in the sewers. But at the very least, they would believe that we have likely obtained the Antigonus family’s notebook or that we have obtained a critical clue. In that case, as long as it’s not something extremely crucial or important, they would abandon the operation. That is their philosophy on surviving.”

“...What if the notebook is extremely crucial and important?” asked Klein worriedly.

Dunn smiled without an answer. Instead, he said, “We know very little of the Secret Order. Our success this time is all thanks to your sharp wits. This contribution is all yours. In light of the possibility of hidden dangers and how heightened perception would aid in finding the notebook, you have a chance at choosing.”

“A chance at choosing?” Klein vaguely guessed something as his breathing subconsciously turned heavy.

Dunn wiped the smile from his face as he said in all seriousness, “Do you wish to become a Beyonder? You can only choose the starting Sequence of an incomplete Sequence.

“Of course, you can give up this chance and choose to accumulate the merit you have garnered. Then, all you have to do is wait till there’s sufficient room for you to become a Sleepless, which is also the first, complete Sequence the Goddess

has bestowed on the Nighthawks.”

Indeed... Klein felt delighted and did not have any hesitant emotions. He took the initiative to ask, “Then from which of the Sequence 9s can I choose from?”

I have to have detailed information to decide whether to give up or accept, as well as choose which one!

Dunn turned around and seemed to be cloaked in the crimson veil that shone down on him. He looked into Klein’s eyes and said slowly, “Apart from the Sleepless, the Church has three Sequence 9 potion formulas. One of them is Mystery Pryer, which is also the power Old Neil controls. Heh, Rozanne has likely mentioned this to you. She can never hold her tongue.”

Klein smiled awkwardly, at a loss for an answer. Thankfully, Dunn did not mind it as he continued. “Our Mystery Pryer potion formula and the later Sequences that aren’t directly chained were obtained from the Moses Ascetic Order. Back then, it was said that they had yet to fall to corruption. They persisted in their morals and precepts, determined in their pursuit of knowledge. They kept their secrets strictly confidential. Anyone that entered the order would be barred from speaking for five years after becoming a Mystery Pryer. They would learn to keep silent, so as to cultivate and enhance their focus. The maxim of the Moses Ascetic Order—do as you wish, but do no harm—began from them.

“Mystery Pryers have a comprehensive but rudimentary understanding and grasp of magic, witchcraft, astrology, and other mystical knowledge. They also know a fair number of magical rituals, but they can easily sense certain existences that hide among matter. Therefore, they have to be careful and show respect to their powers as a Beyonder.

“We lack a large portion of this Sequence, causing it to be an incomplete chain. For example, its Sequence 8. Of course, perhaps the Holy Cathedral has it.”

This pretty much meets all my requirements... Klein nodded slightly, to the point of having the urge to choose.

Thankfully, he still remembered certain things.

“What about the other two?”

“The second type is named Corpse Collector. Quite a number of cultists who worship Death in the Southern Continent choose it. After consuming the potion, unintelligent dead spirits would mistake them as one of their kind and not attack them. They would gain resistance to the cold, decay, and corrosiveness of cadaveric auras. They will be able to directly see a portion of evil spirits and see the characteristics and weaknesses of undead creatures, as well as gain certain attribute enhancements. We have the Sequence 8 and Sequence 7 that follows it. Heh heh, you probably can guess Sequence 7—Spirit Medium! This was chosen by Daly back then,” described Dun in detail.

Spirit Medium does appear mysterious and cool, but what I want most is to grasp knowledge of mysticism... Klein did not interject; all he did was listen quietly.

Dunn Smith looked sideways at the crimson moon and said, “We only have Sequence 9 of the third type. Whether the Holy Cathedral has it, I’m not sure. It’s called Seer.”

Seer? Klein’s pupils constricted as he recalled the regret Emperor Roselle had left in his diary: He regretted not choosing Apprentice, Marauder, or Seer!

1. Adapted from the English translation of Rubáiyát.