

Chapter 75: Saving Himself

Oh no! I've been controlled by the puppet!

Captain and company are either unconscious... or have yet to recover. They can't even get up... They will not be able to... wake me up in time...

No... I have to... save myself!

Everything before Klein's eyes was happening in slow motion. All his joints and his brain seemed to have been coated with an ever-thickening layer of glue.

He had no interest in becoming a human-version puppet, so he seized the opportunity of not being fully controlled by trying his best to seek a way to save himself.

I definitely can't... hit myself... There must be an... external force...

External force... I'll give it a try... There's no time for hesitation... Without the luxury of time to think through things, Klein came to an idea in less than three seconds. He moved his "rusty" knee joint and took a counterclockwise step.

At the same time, he did not try to escape the invisible rope that "hung" around his throat. All he did was recite inwardly.

The... Immortal Lord of... Heaven and Earth... for Blessings...

He wanted to use the mysterious world above the gray fog to awaken him and escape Sealed Artifact 2-049's assimilation!

Creak! Creak! Creak! Klein's knees and ankles let out an involved ear-piercing sound. With a slow contorted step, he took another step counterclockwise.

From The Sky Lord... of Heaven and Earth... for Blessings...

Klein's thoughts turned increasingly sluggish as he felt as though he was a computer that had all sorts of bloatware and every antivirus software installed. He lifted his left foot in a jerky manner as he took another step in the required spot.

The... Exalted Thearch...

Klein's thought processes turned more and more rigid and sluggish. He took the final step purely out of instinct.

At that point, he knew he was almost fully under the puppet's control. Even if Aiur Harson could get up in time to save him, he would probably be unable to be awakened.

But his strong desire to live made him chant the final line of the incantation.

The... Celestial... Worthy...

Just as he finished his incantation, the extremely chaotic and hysterical shouts and murmurs sounded. They quickly took over every corner of Klein's sluggish thoughts, shattering them in the process and reducing them to thoughts he had no control over.

Klein's brain became a boiling pot of potpourri as his stiff body turned light while his spirituality lifted.

Endless grayish-white fog and the dark red stars of varying distances appeared once again before his eyes. It was vast, mysterious, vague, and blurry.

Klein's confused mind quickly settled down as he finally regained his ability to think, only to see the magnificent palace.

"Phew... Thankfully, it worked." he whispered with a lingering fear.

According to his previous observations, he knew that once someone fell under the control of Sealed Artifact 2-049, it was equivalent to death. Normally, there was no medicine that could save the victim.

Luckily, his luck enhancement ritual and the mysterious world above the gray fog was not considered normal at all!

After pacing a few times, Klein began considering the situation he was in.

I can't just stay here the entire time, right?

By the time Captain and company wakes up and gathers over, I won't be able to explain the situation...

As things are right now, I only have the shell of my body, nothing more zombielike than a zombie...

But if I were to take the risk and return, there's no way to guarantee my safety... What if I get controlled by 2-049 again?

...

While suffering from his dilemma, Klein suddenly smacked himself in the forehead and could not help but chuckle softly.

“It looks like I haven’t gotten used to my status as a Seer!”

Before he finished his sentence, he appeared at the seat of honor in front of the long bronze table, sitting on the high-back chair with the strange symbol.

Klein extended his hand as a fountain pen appeared out of thin air.

He scribbled a sentence on an illusory piece of paper.

“Returning to the real world is very safe.”

Immediately following that, Klein pulled out a projection of a spirit pendulum from his packet. After a few Gatherings, he discovered that the items he brought on him were projected above the gray fog, but they were relatively illusory.

Klein held the silver chain with his left hand as he allowed the topaz to nearly touch the paper.

He calmed his breathing and half closed his eyes. He calmly repeated the words on the piece of paper.

“Returning to the real world is very safe.”

...

“Returning to the real world is very safe.”

...

After repeating it seven times, Klein completed the divination with spirit dowsing.

He opened his eyes and saw the topaz slowly oscillating, guiding the silver chain in a clockwise spin.

Clockwise is an affirmation while counterclockwise is negative... Returning to the real world is very safe... Klein heaved a sigh of relief as he habitually stored the chain away. Then, he released his spirituality and wrapped his body as he simulated a plummeting state.

The hazy fog and deep red stars turned ethereal and charged upward. Klein soon saw himself still in a daze in his original position. He saw the brown puppet, halfway out of the chest. He also noticed that the Sealed Artifact had apparently stopped all motion.

His physical senses reached to his brain and just as he was about to try to move his arm to determine his condition, he suddenly heard a voice concealed within the wind.

“Do you wish to be awakened? You can be saved as long as you promise me one thing.

“This one thing is to help me take that Antigonus family notebook.

“Nod if you agree. I know you are still capable of completing that action.”

Who is it? Yes... 2-049 doesn't seem like it's attempting to control me... That's right. It will not repeatedly influence the same person. There will be a break... Klein was shocked, but he did not show it on his face.

At that moment, the voice added quickly, “You can obtain additional rewards if you complete this matter. I know you are a Seer. I also know that the Church of Evernight does not have Sequence 8 that succeeds Sequence 9. But our Secret Order can give it to you.

“Heh, to be honest, I was a Seer before. If not, I wouldn't have dared return. To show you my sincerity, I can now tell you that the corresponding Sequence 8 of Seer is Clown.”

Clown? Secret Order... Klein nearly did not maintain his “puppet” state.

He never made the connection between Seer and Clown.

Were they about to become the head honchos of a circus?

“Alright, make your choice. Believe me, you no longer have much time left to waste.” The voice sounded with the wind again. The distant Dunn and Lorotta were still unconscious. Borgia seemed heavily injured as he moaned without moving. Aiur Harson and Leonard Mitchell were in relatively good shape as they attempted

to sit up.

Why me? The Secret Order... Is it that suited clown from before? After he escaped, he secretly returned in a bid to fish in troubled waters... Upon hearing the voice, all sorts of doubts instantly flashed through Klein's mind.

Since the person said that he was a Seer, Klein attempted using the thought processes of a Seer to analyze the situation.

He dared return because he divined 'hope.' He believed that Monster Bieber would be destroyed and that we would suffer a heavy setback.

He did not take the notebook by himself or deal with us directly because he likely divined that it would contain immense risk. Therefore, he is suspecting Captain and Madam Lorotta are feigning their unconsciousness, or that this is a trap laid out for him.

He did not make further divinations to determine my present state partially because firstly, he might not have the time. If he waited any longer, Mr. Aiur Harson and company would have regained some of their combat strength. Secondly, he belittles me and thinks it unnecessary.

He understands a Seer very well and is confident that I'm unable to escape the puppet's control... He is using me as cannon fodder to probe for any traps...

From another angle, this also means that the luck enhancement ritual does not cause any abnormal appearances...

With his brain no longer sluggish, Klein felt that his line of reasoning was clear. He was quite confident of the thoughts and goals of the suited clown.

As for the clown's promise, he believed not one bit of it. Cannon fodder did not have any human rights!

As the thoughts flashed through his head, Klein controlled his neck and difficulty nodded.

As he did this action, he confirmed that he had escaped the control of Sealed Artifact 2-049.

Just after he nodded, a transparent "curtain" stirred two to three meters to his side. It revealed the suited clown who had his face painted with a clown's pastel colors. It was none other than the Secret Order member who had fled previously.

At that moment, as Klein had previously turned around in an attempt to leap out of 2-049's effective range, his back was facing the black chest and the puppet. The suited clown was in front of him to his side. First, it was to stay away from the Sealed Artifact and second, to avoid his revolver's barrel. It was clear that he was very careful.

The suited clown pulled out a long paper slip from his pocket and shook it vigorously until it turned straight like a wooden pole.

He held the wooden pole and at a distance of two to three meters, he gave Klein's shoulder a prod in an attempt to wake him.

This fellow knows 2-049 very well. He knows that if the scent of an Antigonus family descendant is present, the puppet would go ballistic and control two at a time... He also knows that throwing a rock doesn't seem effective. At the very least, I've seen Captain and company attempt similar means... Although Klein did not know why 2-049 had stopped assimilating him again, he did not dare stay within five meters of it any longer. Therefore, he waited as he held his breath.

Just as the wooden pole was about to touch his shoulder, Klein suddenly raised his left hand and grabbed the edge of the pole and yanked it backwards.

The suited clown was caught by surprise as his body was pulled forward. He staggered a few steps forward as the gap between him and Klein contracted once again. He was now less than two meters away.

At the same time, the prepared Klein squeezed his right finger on the revolver's trigger.

Bang! Bang!

He shot twice but did not aim at the suited clown. Instead, he had aimed behind him, shooting to the side of Sealed Artifact 2-049!

Before the gunshot rang, the suited clown had taken the initiative to roll from his staggering state. He had instinctively backed off.

Klein released his hand which had grabbed the wooden pole as he took several steps away rapidly and rushed out the danger zone.

Just as the suited clown rolled twice and was about to jump backwards, his head went abuzz as his thoughts rapidly turned sluggish.

No good!

He forced me to... dodge in the direction of the Antigonus puppet!

I'm within... five meters...

How could he... not be... controlled by... the Antigonus... puppet...

...

The suited clown stopped from his rolling as he attempted to crawl out with his seemingly rusty joints.

At that moment, Klein had already turned around. He held his revolver with both hands as he aimed at the slowly-moving target.

To him, that was equivalent to shooting a fixed target.

Having seen the suited clown's battle with Dunn, Aiur, and Lorotta, Klein knew that he was agile and good at rolling. Therefore, even when they were just a meter or two apart, he had carefully given up on shooting directly. Instead, he forced the clown to dodge to the "kill zone" he imagined—where Sealed Artifact 2-049 was!

If the puppet had been ineffective, the suited clown would have

determined that he had fallen into a trap. He would then escape by leaping backwards and not pose any significant threat.

Bang!

Reflected into the indescribable eyes of the suited clown, the black-suited Klein pulled the trigger calmly.