

Chapter 64: Instigator

After instructing her golden retriever, Susie, Audrey paced around, seemingly worried. She too was uncertain if the ritualistic magic would result in anything odd.

“Let’s do this...” Her eyes turned calm as she used her state as a bystander to view the imagined process. Soon, she came to a new arrangement.

Audrey unlocked the door to her bedroom and said to Susie, “Susie, sit here. If Annie and the rest try to barge their way in, immediately go to the bathroom to inform me.”

In order to prevent any accidents, her personal maidservant had the key to unlock her door.

Susie looked at her enigmatically and wagged her tail thrice.

“Very good. I will let you choose anything you want for lunch today!” Audrey pumped her fist gently.

After exhorting Susie, she entered the bathroom. The square bathtub was three to four meters on each side. There was clear water rippling gently in it with steam emitting from it. It was quite a dreamy sight.

Audrey tidied up a rectangular table with many bottles placed on it. Then, she went back out and moved candles, sacrificial items, and a white robe over.

Immediately after that, she closed the bathroom door.

With everything done, Audrey heaved a sigh of relief and picked up a translucent light-blue bottle beside the four candles.

The cylindrical bottle shimmered dreamily under the light. In it was the essence oils she had distilled from a mixture yesterday. As an enthusiast of mysticism, she had no lack of research regarding such items. She had many different kinds of extracts, flower essence, perfume, essential oils, and incense that she brewed herself at home. As such, she had already finished the initial preparations according to The Fool's instructions.

"Moon flowers, gold mint, slumber flowers, fingered citron, and rock-rose... What an odd concoction..." Audrey mumbled softly. "Oh, one has to cleanse one's body and calm their mind before engaging in ritualistic magic. This is a form of reverence to the divine—uh, to the target."

As she went through the entire process in her head, she placed the ritual's essential oil beside her bathtub. She reached out and began disrobing what she wore at home.

Pieces of her silk clothing fell into the laundry basket one after another. Audrey coiled up her hair into a bun and tested the water's temperature with her hand. Then, she carefully stepped into the bathtub, allowing her body to slowly sink into the water's warm embrace.

"Phew..." She exhaled comfortably, finding herself warm all over. She felt abnormally relaxed.

I don't even want to move a single finger... Audrey forcefully pumped herself out as she grabbed the translucent light-blue bottle beside her and dripped a few drops into the water.

A waft of fragrance dispersed, filling the silence with a refreshing smell. Audrey breathed in a few times and nodded in satisfaction.

“Not bad. It smells really good.

“How relaxing. How comfortable...

“I don’t want to move at all. All I wish is to lie here in silence...

“Silence, in silence... si... lence...”

After losing her sense of time, Audrey suddenly heard barking.

She opened her eyes in shock, looking to her sides in a daze. She had no idea when Susie had opened the door and entered. She was squatting outside the bathtub, looking at her with an exasperated look.

As she rubbed the corners of her eyes, Audrey felt that the water had cooled down quite significantly.

I-I fell asleep? She subconsciously asked herself.

Susie looked at her without barking or wagging her tail.

“Haha, the effects of that bottle of ritual essential oil sure is great. Yeah, really great!” Audrey chuckled dryly as she explained with a cheerful tone.

She stood up, retrieved a towel, and as she wrapped and wiped her body, said to the golden retriever beside her, “Susie, continue keeping watch. Do not let Annie and the rest enter!”

Only when the golden retriever left did she secretly stick out her tongue. She threw her towel aside and wore a clean white robe.

After closing the door to the bathroom, Audrey recalled the ritual she had memorized.

She picked up four candles and placed them on the four corners of the table.

A loaf of white bread at the top left corner, a bowl of Feynapotter noodles at the top right corner. Smells great, but it's a little cold... No! It's not time to think of this! Paella at the bottom left corner and Desi pie at the bottom right... Audrey set up the altar according to The Fool's descriptions seriously, shaking her head twice during the process.

After she was done with the preparation, she left her four candles lit. She picked up a silver knife and stabbed it into a pile of coarse salt.

After narrating the sacred incantation in Hermes, Audrey raised the knife with beautiful patterns and placed it into a cup filled with clear water.

After focusing her mind, she pulled out the silver ‘sacred blade,’ cogitating her spirituality to spew out and spread from her blade.

Invisible energy spewed out as Audrey held the knife and circled

the altar once. When she felt that a spirituality wall was fully erected around her, she expelled all the uncleanliness and distractions outside.

Maintaining her Spectator state, she prevented her excitement and joy from affecting the ritual.

She put down the silver knife and picked up the tiny light-blue crystalline bottle and dripped a drop on each candle.

Sizzle!

A faint fragrance emanated as Audrey's body, heart, and soul seemed to attain tranquility.

She drew a breath as she lowered her head in reverence and began chanting the incantation in Hermes.

“The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era,

“You are the mysterious ruler above the gray fog,

“You are the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck,

“I pray for your help.

“I pray for your loving grace.

“I pray for you to give me a good dream.

“Moon flower, a herb that belongs to the red moon, please bestow your powers to my incantation!

“Fingered citron, a herb that belongs to the sun, please bestow your powers to my incantation!”

...

Right after Audrey chanted the incantation and hoped to cogitate the contents of her plea, she felt there was a stir within the spirituality wall. She saw a dark red star swirling on the back of her hand.

Her heart leaped as she hurriedly closed her eyes and calmed her heart to plead sincerely.

When everything was over, she surveyed her surroundings wondrously, but did not find anything odd.

“Is that all?” Audrey knitted her eyebrows slightly as she whispered.

...

The King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck... The Fool that doesn't belong to this era... In the Blue Avenger's captain cabin, Alger Wilson in his windstorm robe was silently reciting the three lines of description he had heard in the afternoon. He seemed to be attempting to find clues of the person's identity through it.

He shook his head and stood up in a clearly vexed manner, but

ultimately did not do anything.

Alger was not at ease inside the Blue Avenger, an ancient ship that was a relic from the Tudor Dynasty. Although he was already in control of the ship, he had a gut feeling that there were still many hidden secrets, just like the Blood Emperor.

Therefore, he planned on using the ship to test The Fool's powers but did not wish to attempt the unknown ritualistic magic on the ship.

Alger ruminated for a few minutes before leaving the captain's cabin and went on deck. He said to the few sailors, "We will be reaching the Rorsted Archipelago soon. We will be anchoring there for a day."

The sailors immediately cheered as they shouted in unison, "Thank you, My Lord!"

As the ghost ship did not need sailors, there were very few sailors on board. There was no need to worry about their supplies, being able to enjoy fresh food and clean water. However, day after day of voyaging at sea and the nearly unending vistas exhausted them both physically and mentally. It felt like they were always repressed and tolerating something until they lost control.

As for the Rorsted Archipelago, it was a famous colony on the Sonia Sea. Their business was booming, and they had all kinds of industries.

"I simply can't wait!" A crew member gyrated his hips and sniggered a meaningful laugh that all men would understand.

...

On the public carriage toward Zouteland Street, Klein, who was reading the newspapers leisurely, suddenly jolted. He seemed to hear an ethereal voice calling out to him.

Shapeless murmurs resounded in his mind as his forehead throbbed uncontrollably.

The contents of the calling that could not be heard left as fast as it came. In just ten seconds, it was gone. Klein pinched his forehead and resisted the throbbing pain deep in his brain.

Is this the murmurings of unknown existences that Old Neil mentioned? A result of having enhanced spiritual perception? Thoughts flashed through Klein's mind as he suddenly saw four black dots appear on the back of his right hand. They were like tiny inconspicuous moles.

The four black dots that stemmed from the luck enhancement ritual quickly sank, dimmed, and vanished.

Klein looked at it in surprise and had an additional guess about what had just happened.

Justice or The Hanged Man has attempted the ritualistic magic I gave them?

Was my train of thought right?

Those three descriptions have precisely pointed towards me through the mysterious space above the gray fog?

But I'm far from powerful enough. I can't hear the contents of their requests... I wonder if the information is 'stored' above the gray fog...

Yes, I should confirm it by entering tonight.

Klein felt a little perturbed and agitated. He quickly raised his newspaper and hid his face, preventing anyone from seeing the changes to his expression.

Soon, he arrived at Zouteland Street and entered the Blackthorn Security Company.

Before he could greet Rozanne, Klein saw Captain Dunn Smith walk out. He held a piece of paper with a portrait on it.

"Take a look at this internal warrant of arrest. A very cruel and vicious Beyonder has entered Tingen." Dressed in his black trench coat, the hatless Dunn swept his gaze over and handed the piece of paper in passing.

Klein received it and the first thing that entered his vision was a portrait sketch.

The sketch was of boy with a round face. He looked amiable with a tiny hint of bashfulness and was fairly young, probably about eighteen or nineteen years old.

"Tris, a suspected Beyonder. The initial estimate is that he's a Sequence 8 Instigator and we are not eliminating the possibility that the Theosophy Order is behind it. The culprit behind the massacre of the Alfalfa... According to a witness testimony, he came to Tingen after leaving Enmat Harbor. His current

whereabouts are unknown..."

Tris... Alfalfa... It's actually a crime committed by a Beyonder? Klein suddenly recalled the dream interpretation from yesterday afternoon and Joyce Meyer's description. He immediately said, "Captain, I know one of the witnesses. He might very well be an important witness."

"I know. Joyce Meyer. My help was requested by the Machinery Hivemind last night. I saw you in Joyce's dream. Many details have led to the confirmation that the Alfalfa tragedy was a result of Tris." Dunn's gray eyes looked unperturbed as he chuckled.

How uninteresting. Captain... thankfully it was my rest day yesterday and not me acting as Seer during working hours... Klein lampooned. He barely missed the horror of being caught skiving by his direct superior.

He asked instead, "Which Sequence pathway is Instigator? What kind of organization is the Theosophy Order?"

Was instigating others to kill each other the method Tris used to eliminate the side effects of the potion or was it a requirement needed to advance?

Dunn thought for a few seconds and said, "Coincidentally, it's about time for you to learn the relevant information regarding Beyonders and the mysterious organizations. You shouldn't be ordered by Old Neil to keep reading the historical documents all the time."

Captain, wasn't the reason for recruiting me to be your 'history expert?' Klein did not dare point out the problem as he nodded seriously.

“Alright.”