

Chapter 118: August

Time flew by and Tingen bade farewell to the end of summer. The temperature hovered between twenty-six and twenty-seven degrees Celsius.

Whoosh!

Klein stood up from the bathtub and took a stride forward, sending water droplets to the floor.

He stood there naked, looking down at his abs. He flexed and saw prominent muscle lines appear.

That was the result of his daily training. Besides, he appeared a lot more energetic.

And just today, his combat teacher, Gawain had started teaching him the basic footwork for punching and the techniques for delivering force.

Tap. Tap. Tap. Klein stepped on the floor barefooted in the bathroom, either sliding forward or retreating before dodging to the right and swinging his fist while he made a defensive gesture.

Phew. He stopped and let out a breath happily. He took the towel next to him and wiped himself down.

After getting in touch with Daxter Guderian, the doctor in the mental asylum, Klein seemed to escape from coincidences for

two whole weeks. Without the constant barrage of supernatural incidents, his life became stable. He received his paycheck on time, researched mysticism in-depth, trained his marksmanship and fighting skills, developed new cooking recipes, slowly gathered decent utensils and decorations with Benson and Melissa, asked his teammates about supernatural cases in the past, divined for people who came to the club, and strictly followed the principles he figured out.

That made him more stable. If it wasn't for the late nights in which he still missed Earth, the red chimney that had yet to be uncovered, or the Misfortune Cloth Puppet's picture that still appeared in his dreams occasionally, he would've started getting used to his current life and think of it affectionately.

During that time, three Tarot Club Gatherings were convened, but Klein didn't receive any new pages of Roselle's diary. However, according to Justice's explanation, she had gotten to know two Beyonders and she was getting in touch with them consistently. When she got into their circle of acquaintances, it was likely that she could trade for more pages of Roselle's diary.

The Hanged Man also expressed that he had returned to land and was dealing with some matters. He would begin looking for more as soon as he had more free time.

Besides, Justice felt that the two Beyonders whom she knew were potential targets to join the Gathering. They both had decent identities as cover, with certain but different channels of information, as well as principles and unique characteristics. They were not the kind of people that would sell out a secret. The only problem was that they were only Sequence 9 Beyonders, which wasn't too suitable for a high-end secret organization like the Tarot Club.

High-end secret organization? Sounds more like a pyramid scheme... Klein only let out a heavy sigh to cover up the fact that

he was at a loss for words to reply to Miss Justice's complacency. He could only agree to observe the two Beyonders further.

Of course, Justice wasn't the innocent and romantic maiden from before. She kept her guard up and never mentioned the names and traits of the two Beyonders. She was afraid that The Hanged Man would be able to identify her through that.

Miss Justice said that she clearly feels the signs of the potion digesting. She might need another three to four weeks until she completes her acting as a Spectator. My scheduled acquisition of the Telepathist formula has to be brought forward... Klein threw aside the towel that he used to dry himself and put on his clothes as he thought about the Tarot Club from the day before.

In the last twenty days, he had only met Daxter Guderian once. He had the idea of haste makes waste, so he merely chatted about the doctor's state and asked unimportant matters about the Psychology Alchemists.

Given the speed with which Justice was digesting the potion, he had no choice but to begin thinking about how to get the formula of Sequence 8 Telepathist from Daxter earlier.

Klein buttoned his shirt and took another dry towel to wrap around his head to absorb the water in his hair.

Compared to Justice, he was digesting the Seer potion even faster than expected. By this week, the sounds that he shouldn't hear and things that he shouldn't see had already vanished while engaging in Cogitation or Spirit Vision.

Flipping over the towel, Klein dried his hair again. He lifted his head to look at the door and muttered to himself, "The Seer principles that I've figured out are really efficient. Next week... I

should be able to digest the potion entirely by next week. I have no idea where to get the single horn of a matured Hornacis gray mountain goat and a complete stalk of a human-faced rose required by the Clown formula... Maybe I could do as Lady Daly did and send in a special application? But that would definitely attract the attention of the higher-ups, and I want to develop at my own pace. The believer from the Aurora Order in the police department was found too, but I have yet to find out who this Mr. Z is...

"Henry said that he would complete the red chimney task before the end of this week. My private stash of money has returned to slightly more than seven pounds, so at least I don't have to worry about making the final payment..."

"Some of the information on houses and tenants that he provided before didn't seem to have any abnormalities, but I have no time to investigate them one by one..."

"Perhaps I could see which red chimney houses have gotten new tenants recently?"

"Hmm, that's one way to look at it."

...

Sitting silently for another half a minute, he put on his black trousers, bow tie, and underarm holster. He then picked up his sweaty knight training suit from the floor and tossed it into the laundry basket. He opened the door and exited the bathroom. He had just finished his Wednesday afternoon combat training, and he was still at his teacher Gawain's place.

"Hello, Mr. Moretti." Gawain's maidservant happened to pass by, and she quickly bowed.

Klein nodded slightly and pointed at the messy bathroom.

"Could you clean this up, please?"

"Of course, sir. The clothes will be taken care of by the laundry maid. She'll come over at six." The maidservant held her head low when she answered.

Laundry maids had no accommodation or food included, so they weren't hired by only one household. They were normally contracted to handle the laundry from several households. Either they rushed around daily, washing one household's clothes before going to the next, or they would gather all the clothes from different households and take care of it all at the same time, before sending it all back. Only then could they barely make a living.

Klein didn't say much but returned to the living room to bid farewell to the owner who was sitting on the rocking chair.

He saw Gawain nodding lethargically, a light brown blanket covering his legs and the Awwa Evening News in his hands.

Klein knew for a fact that the gentleman bathing in the setting sun's glow was in his early fifties, but his listlessness made him seem like he was already in his eighties.

During combat training, Gawain maintained silence and only give pointers when he needed to. He wasn't one for casual chatting. Klein was so exhausted from the daily training that he had no intention of trying to engage in conversation. Thus, their relationship remained distant.

From his demonstrations, Teacher Gawain's strength is still quite terrifying, and his steps are swift too. I reckon it wouldn't be a problem for him to fight three of me... He has the pay from the police station, and he also bought a plot of land in a village out in the Tingen suburbs that provides a fixed rental... He hires a chef, a maidservant, and a laundry maiden... In the Foodaholic Empire on Earth, a man in his fifties with such wealth would have been traveling the world...

Klein looked away from Gawain and shook his head. Then, he went to the clothes rack to take down his top hat and black trench coat.

After he tidied himself up, he took his cane and exited the house. He walked along the weed-covered stone path towards the gates.

Just then, he saw that there was a two-wheeled carriage stopped outside the metal fence, and there was a man with a familiar face standing next to it.

“Leonard?” Klein muttered, looking suspiciously towards his messy-haired Nighthawks teammate.

Leonard was dressed in a white shirt, black trousers, and buttonless leather boots as he twirled his hat in his hands. When he saw Klein come out from the house, he smiled and asked, “Are you pleasantly surprised?”

Only surprise, without any joy... Klein ignored Leonard's inappropriate behavior and looked into the fake poet's green eyes.

“What happened?”

Leonard put on his hat and said, “Captain wants you to work with me and Frye. Let’s talk about it on the way.”

“Alright.” Klein followed him into the carriage.

As the scene outside of the carriage flew past, Leonard took up the document bag by his side and threw it at Klein.

Klein caught it steadily and took out a document. He then started reading carefully.

“August 11th, 11pm, at a workhouse in West Borough, the bankrupt Salus attempted arson to cause a tragedy. But in the end, he only managed to burn himself to death...”

“August 11th, 10pm, harbor worker, Zid jumped into the Tussock River and ended his poverty-stricken life...”

“August 11th, 8pm, in Iron Cross Street’s Lower Street, Mrs. Lauvis who earned a living by selling matchboxes died of a sudden disease...”

...

Klein was puzzled when he read the first two incidents. He found the deaths very ordinary and common. Not only should it have been beneath the attention of the Nighthawks, even the police force would avoid wasting resources looking into such obvious causes of death.

However, when he read down the list, he slowly creased his eyebrows.

After two pages, he suddenly lifted his head and looked at Leonard.

“Isn’t this too many?”

When the number of ordinary deaths reached a staggering amount, it was difficult to call it normal.

For once, Leonard nodded seriously and said, “The number of death incidents within the past two weeks are five times the normal rate.

“When the Tingen Police headquarters tabulated the data, they realized the problem and quickly passed it over to us, as well as the Mandated Punishers and the Machinery Hivemind.

“Although these death incidents appeared normal during initial investigations, Captain believes we should investigate them once more. It might require the help of divination or ritualistic magic.”

Klein said with a look of enlightenment, “I understand.”

Leonard snapped his fingers and said, “You, me, and Frye are in a team. He’s waiting for us at Iron Cross Street’s Lower Street. Seeka, Royale, and Old Neil are in another team, investigating corresponding incidents in the North Borough. Captain is staying in the security company to respond to any emergencies.”

“Okay.” Klein nodded solemnly and suddenly thought of something. He quickly asked, “Can I drop by my place and leave a note?”

He had to tell his brother and sister that he couldn't dine at home that night because something has cropped up.

Leonard laughed.

"No problem, it's on the way."

With that, Klein calmed down and read over the death incidents again, intending to find a link among the various names, times, and causes of death.

Then, he suddenly realized something.

Is this my first group mission after becoming a Nighthawk?