

Chapter 121: Leonard's Hypothesis

After hearing Klein's and Frye's guesses, Leonard tugged on his collar and paced about, saying, "Then we have to investigate everyone in the workhouse who came into contact with Salus, as well as everyone he came across after he went bankrupt and was chased out of the house. It's very troublesome indeed... Time is of the essence. Let's split up and do a cursory check here, then head to the third reported death in the West Borough and leave the rest to the police."

"Alright," Klein answered without hesitation.

Frye didn't have any objections. He turned towards the people who had been sleeping near Salus last night.

Klein was about to find someone to question when he suddenly saw Leonard shooting looks at him. He was motioning at the side hall of the workhouse with his chin.

What does he want? Klein was a little lost. He acted as though nothing had happened and strolled around the hall, then followed Leonard into the side hall while Frye was distracted. They made their way through the partition to a silent corner which had no one else around.

"I have a hypothesis," Leonard suddenly said, stopping in front of a shattered window.

Klein looked around in confusion. "What's your hypothesis?"

Leonard with his deep green eyes, he returned a question, "If

there were no supernatural factors, what do you think Mrs. Lauwis's outcome would've been?"

Klein thought for a moment, then said solemnly, "The same, just delayed by a week or two, perhaps a month. But to a family like theirs, they would've only seen the doctor when she really was at her limit. As long as her heart problems turned for the worse, there would be no way for her to be saved."

"Then what about Salus? If he hadn't been instigated by someone, what kind of end would he have?" Leonard asked again.

Klein pondered and said, "From the description in the information, Salus was already very angry about his bankruptcy, and was furious that no one saved him. I think that he would've exacted his vengeance sooner or later, but not at the people at the workhouse. He might've targeted the boss that made him bankrupt or the staff of the bank that seized his house."

"What would the result of his revenge be?" Leonard pressed on.

"Without a doubt, he had already decided to end his life. He would have died no matter what the result of his revenge was." Klein gave an affirmative answer.

Leonard nodded and revealed his signature flippant smile.

"Then can we conclude that Mrs Lauwis and Salus were both people fated to die soon?"

Klein was a 'knowledgeable' keyboard warrior. Upon hearing the question, he immediately had a guess.

“You’re saying that their deaths were moved forward by some supernatural factors? But why?”

“A more accurate description would be, their ‘life force’ had been shortened by some supernatural factor. It was stolen. And life force is the best material when it comes to summoning evil gods and devils or conducting terrifying curses.” Leonard smiled as he corrected Klein’s guess.

“Summoning evil gods and devils or conducting terrifying curses...” Klein looked into Leonard’s emerald eyes and said, half in doubt, “You seem to be very sure of this? But, for the time being, our investigation sample is only at two...”

Leonard laughed cynically. “Klein, there’s no need for any pretense between us. I saw you break free from the control of Sealed Artifact 2-049, and I know that you’re special. And you should be able to sense that I’m a little different from the average Beyonder.”

His smile disappeared as he looked into Klein’s eyes.

“I’ve told you that there are many special people in this world that can always do things others can’t, such as you... and me.

“This world has a long history. There are many magical items that people wish to obtain, to control. They wish to become the stars of their own show. There aren’t many people like that, but it’s impossible that there are only one or two of them.

“I don’t think that a Beyonder with his or her secrets is a bad person or an evil thug. I don’t think that we even need to be clear on where their special abilities come from, and what they represent... As long as your actions are not endangering me, the Nighthawks, or Tingen City, then you’re still my partner.

Similarly, I hope that you'll look at me with the same attitude. Of course, it's best not to speak of this to the higher-ups. Those fogies are old fashioned and conservative, always thinking that special people like us will definitely lose control, definitely feel the pull and temptation of the evil gods or devils."

But I have more secrets than you can ever imagine... Klein thought to himself. He said frankly, "I share the same sentiments as you. I'll only look at your actions and your motives and don't care about how special you are. I will also try not to probe into your secrets."

After saying this, he added in his heart, No, actually I do mind and am very curious, but I'm putting up with it for now. Hmm, Leonard thinks that he is the star of a show? What kind of encounters did he have, and what kind of magical items does he possess?

Leonard unfastened the buttons of his shirt and nodded with a chuckle.

"I'm glad that we have this understanding.

"In action novels, this is called the meeting of two protagonists. The wheels of history are set in motion.

How shameless! Klein gave a perfunctory smile.

He knew that the phrase "wheels of history are set in motion" came from Emperor Roselle...

Leonard paced around quickly, his green eyes brightened as he curled the corners of his mouth.

“Alright, I’ll be honest; I’m quite confident that the victims of these deaths would’ve died within the next three months, but their deaths have been brought forward to the past two weeks by someone, through some means. The other party’s motive should be to summon evil gods or devils, or conduct a terrifying, large-scale curse.”

“It is easy for the culprit to hide their murders, given that their victims already showed signs that they were going to die soon. This wouldn’t attract the attention of the police department, or be disrupted by the Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, or Machinery Hivemind during the culprit’s preparatory phase...” Klein muttered to himself and analyzed the culprit’s thought process.

Leonard smiled and agreed, “That’s right. If three healthy, normal people were to suddenly drop dead, it would definitely attract attention and bring about an investigation.”

“Then how are we going to find the altar used for the ritual? Regardless of whether the culprit wants to summon an evil god, devil, or conduct a terrible curse, he or she would need a sacrificial altar, a ritual. The harvested life force would also have to be stored in a similar place.” Klein chose to believe in Leonard, for he didn’t have any other clues and was unable to make any other deductions.

It doesn’t hurt to try!

Leonard laughed and said, “Klein, isn’t that within your professional domain? Can’t you imagine what is happening around an altar like that?”

Without waiting for Klein to answer, Leonard described, “A thick aura of death with the altar at the center. There wouldn’t be any living things other than the person conducting the ritual in a

ten-meter radius. The surrounding temperature would be at least five degrees lower than the average temperature, with a cold wind blowing past it continuously... And the stolen life force of Mrs. Lauwis and the rest will remain within the altar, sealed by a wall of spirituality..."

Having said that, he looked at Klein and teased, "I think that you would be able to divine roughly where an altar with the following qualities would be."

Klein frowned slightly and replied solemnly, "As long as it's within Tingen City. Furthermore, I would need a quiet place where I wouldn't be disturbed. My house, for example. I would also need the personal belongings of Mrs. Lauwis and the rest, as well."

Klein's heart also skipped a beat. He felt that Leonard was a little too knowledgeable in the dark arts.

"No problem." Leonard laughed. He suddenly stepped past Klein and walked toward the hall, not saying anything more.

That man sure has a unique style... Klein cursed in his heart and followed.

When Leonard found Frye seriously taking notes, he put on a serious tone and said, "I have a hypothesis and was hoping that Klein would give it a try."

"What hypothesis?" Frye asked, appearing cold.

"I'll tell you if there is a result. I don't want to be laughed at by Rozanne and the rest." Leonard gave a whimsical excuse and

changed the subject.

Frye didn't ask any further. He acted according to the instructions and obtained Salus's and Mrs Lauwis's personal belongings from the nearby police station, then met his partners at Klein's house.

"Wait in the living room and don't let anybody disturb me." Klein took out his pocket watch and looked at the time.

It was about six now. Melissa might come back at anytime.

"You can trust us." Leonard put his hands on his hips and paced around the living room. Frye sat silently on the sofa.

Does Leonard have ADHD? Klein pouted and went to his room on the second floor. He locked the door and sealed the room with a wall of spirituality.

After which, he set up an altar and asked for the help of the goddess, eliminating any disturbances.

Then, Klein wrote a divination statement on a piece of paper.

"The position of the altar."

He gave a sweeping statement to prevent himself from missing out on any information.

Grabbing the piece of paper and the belongings of the dead, Klein laid down on his bed. He first recalled the scene Leonard

described, then silently recited the statement seven times.

He didn't try using the world of fog, firstly, because that weird and mysterious Leonard was downstairs. Who knew if he would notice something weird about the ritual. Secondly, his Seer potion was about to be completely digested. It was likely that the aid of the ritual was sufficient for the success of his divination.

Klein would only consider finding an opportunity to enter the world of fog if he didn't get a result. After all, the summoning of an evil god or devil was something that could threaten Benson, Melissa, and himself!

With the help of Cogitation, he quickly entered the dream and saw a hazy, illusory, fragmented scene.

Soon after, an image floated before his eyes.

It was a two-story grayish-blue house bathed in a sunset glow. The windows of the first floor were shut tight and the dark curtains had no gaps. However, they expanded and contracted from time to time.

The soil around the house was dark brown, but nothing was growing in it. The garden around the house seemed to be covered in shadows, dilapidated, and dark.

There was a river flowing silently near the house.

...

Sometime later, Klein exited the dream, having not seen

anything else.

Leonard's hypothesis was correct... Where could that building be? There are too many rivers in Tingen City, such as the West Borough, Southwest Borough, the harbor area, the university area... He opened his eyes and rubbed his temples as he thought, his expression serious.