

Chapter 44: Fate

Leonard's singing sounded like a lullaby as it lightly resounded through the doors and into the winding wooden stairwell.

Klein's mind immediately turned torpid. He felt like he saw a silent moonlight and serene rippling lake.

His eyelids rapidly turned heavy as if he were about to fall asleep standing.

Amid these indistinct sensations, he also felt a strange, formless, and indifferent focus on his back. It felt like he was wandering the spirit world himself.

A baffling sense of *déjà vu* suffused as Klein suddenly found his train of thought once again. With his strong spiritual perception and extreme familiarity with Cogitation, he barely escaped the influence of the Midnight Poem.

However, he remained serene and could hardly evoke any emotions.

Soon, Leonard stopped singing as he turned his head with a smile.

"I'm considering asking Captain's permission to apply for a Feynapotter lute. How can there not be an accompaniment when singing?"

"Heh heh, I'm just kidding. I can hear them asleep."

The black-haired, green-eyed Nighthawk with his poetic vibe took a stride forward and walked to the door that separated them from the kidnappers and hostage.

He suddenly moved his shoulder and threw a punch at the door's lock.

Crack!

The wooden board around the lock shattered in a muffled manner.

"This requires precise control." Leonard turned his head and smiled. He then reached his hand into the hole and opened the door.

Klein, who had regained consciousness, was not as confident as him. He reached under his armpit, drew his revolver, and turned the cylinder, making sure that he could shoot at a moment's notice.

As the door swung back, he saw a man sleeping on a table with a gun by his feet. Another man was rubbing his eyes in a daze while trying to stand up.

Bam!

Leonard slid forward and struck the awakening kidnapper unconscious.

Klein planned to enter as well when he suddenly sensed something. He turned around abruptly and faced the stairwell.

Tap. Tap. Tap. Footsteps were approaching from below. It became clear that “something” was a hatless man in a brown coat circling the stairwell in his progression toward the third floor while hugging a paper bag of bread.

Suddenly, he stopped. He saw a gun’s barrel aiming at him with a metallic luster.

His pupils reflected a young man dressed in a halved top hat, black formal suit with a bow tie of the same color. It also reflected the cane which rested along the rail and the dangerous revolver.

“Do not move. Raise your hands. Three, two, one...” Klein’s tone was deep but relaxed.

He held the revolver with both hands as he tried to imagine the man as a target from his practice.

Amid the tense atmosphere, the man in the brown coat threw the bag of bread and slowly raised his hands.

“Sir, is this a kind of a joke? Has there been a misunderstanding?” He stared intently at the finger that Klein had placed on the trigger as he forced a smile.

Klein was temporarily unable to determine if he was an accomplice or a neighbor, but he did not reveal any abnormalities. He said in a deep voice, “Do not attempt to resist. Someone will determine if it’s a misunderstanding in a while.”

At that moment, Leonard, who had finished handling the kidnappers, walked out and noticed the man in the stairwell. He

said leisurely, “So the kidnappers have another accomplice responsible for buying and delivering food?”

Upon hearing this, the man’s pupils constricted as he suddenly raised his foot and kicked the bag of bread up in an attempt to block Klein’s vision.

Seemingly unaffected, Klein coldly pulled the trigger like his usual training.

Bang!

Blood burst out from the man’s left shoulder.

He tumbled to the ground and attempted to escape from the second floor; however, Leonard had already reached his hand towards the handrail before leveraging himself to jump over.

With a dull thud, Leonard landed on the man from above.

The man fainted as Leonard swatted away some of the blood that had splattered on him. He looked up at Klein and chuckled.

“Nice shooting.”

I was trying to hit his legs... The corner of Klein’s mouth twitched in an indiscernible manner as he caught a whiff of the smell of blood.

He discovered that despite not having any enhancements to his visual, auditory, or tactile senses after consuming the Seer

potion, he could still “see” obstructed objects and “hear” faint footsteps, allowing him to take preemptive judgment.

Was this in the scope of spiritual perception? Klein nodded in thought as he watched Leonard find a sharp dagger in the accomplice’s possession and “drag” him into the room.

With a gun and cane in each hand, Klein entered the kidnapper’s room. They saw Elliott Vickroy jolt awake from the gunshot as he straightened his body and sat up slowly from a huddled position.

Leonard had securely tied up the three kidnappers with the rope they used against Elliott. Bunched together, they were thrown in a corner. The lack of rope was made up by tearing their clothes.

The unconscious man who had been shot in the shoulder was bandaged, but Leonard disdained getting his hands dirty, so he did not help him extract the bullet.

“W-who are you people?” Elliott stammered in pleasant delight when he saw the scene before him.

“Yes, you guessed right. Very precise.” The genuflecting Leonard answered casually.

I never expected this bastard to have some humor cells in him... Klein lowered his revolver and said to Elliott, “We are mercenaries hired by your father. You can also call us security personnel.”

“Phew, for real? Have I been saved?” Elliott said joyfully without daring to make any movements.

It was apparent that he had suffered quite harshly in the short few hours of being a kidnapping victim. He did not have the kind of rashness someone his age normally would have.

Leonard stood up and said to Klein, "Go downstairs and find some patrolling cops. Get them to inform the tobacco merchant. I do not wish to walk out with a child and four idiots like a kidnapper."

Klein, who was wondering about the aftermath, nodded. He put away his revolver, picked up his cane, and walked to the staircase.

As he went down the stairs, he had a nagging feeling that he had forgotten something. In addition, he heard Leonard say to Elliott, "Don't be nervous. You will soon see your father, mother, and your old butler, Klee. Why don't we play a round of Quint?"

...

Klein held back his laughter and walked out into the streets. With the help of pedestrians, he found two patrolling policemen.

He did not use his badge and identification as a member of the Special Operations Department; instead, he used his identity as a professional security company and recounted the happenings factually.

As for him holding a gun, he was not worried at all. He had received an all-purpose weapon permit the day before yesterday. His application was accelerated by going through internal channels.

The two policemen exchanged looks and one of them left to gather reinforcements and inform the Vickroy family. The other policeman followed Klein to the kidnappers' room.

After waiting for more than forty minutes, Leonard signaled to Klein while the policeman was not paying attention. Klein was to sneak out of the room with him.

"Trust me, heading to the police station is an extreme waste of time. Let's leave first," the Nighthawk with the poetic bearing explained with a relaxed look.

Since Leonard was making it clear that he would take any responsibility for any repercussions, he did not retort and followed in tow.

Almost five minutes later, a few carriages rushed to the building where the kidnappers were. The old butler, Klee, disembarked with his portly master, Vickroy.

Up to this moment in time, he was still in a daze. He found it incredulous that news would come so fast. It felt like a dream.

Suddenly, he heard a crisp snap as he turned around.

A two-wheeled carriage drove past with its windows open. The black-haired and green-eyed Leonard had snapped his fingers again.

After passing by Vickroy's carriage, Leonard closed the window, turned around, and looked at Klein.

He extended his right hand and smiled.

“It was a pleasure working with you!”

I don't think we are on that good terms... Klein politely shook his head.

He did not expect the kidnapping case to be resolved so quickly. All he could do was marvel at the capabilities of Beyonders. Even though he was just a half-assed Sequence 9 Beyonder, he was able to do many inconceivable things.

“This is a celebratory gesture of peace among aristocrats after a clash of swords,” explained Leonard with a smile.

“I know.” Klein had many aristocratic classmates.

He looked outside the window and said with a frown, “Shouldn’t we confirm with Mr. Klee? If he believes that the police rescued Elliott, our commission will be halved.”

A total of 100 pounds!

There was no doubt about their providing of the kidnappers’ location from their ‘meeting’ from before.

“Don’t mind it. To us, money isn’t that important,” said Leonard with a shrug.

...It's very important to me!

Klein forced a polite smile and said, “Many poets died early from poverty.”

Leonard chuckled.

“I believe Elliott would not lie on this matter. I can tell that he still has some of his innocence left in him. However, you will not get much of the 200 pound commission either.”

“How much would I get?” asked Klein immediately.

“As the unspoken rule has always been, half of the commission would be handed to Mrs. Orianna as additional funding for the team. The remaining would be split among members. A pity you aren’t a formal member; you will only get about ten percent of the remaining half.”

10 pounds? That isn’t bad either... Klein pretended to feel the pinch as he asked, “Aren’t you worried that the kidnappers will realize that they were under the influence of a Beyonder’s powers after they wake up?”

“They will not suspect anything. They will only believe that the weather was good and very conducive for sleeping, leading to them dozing off. They will even believe that the song existed only in their dreams. This is something we have verified before,” answered Leonard very confidently. “Instead, it’s your demon hunting bullets that might arouse suspicion. Of course, you being a queer who enjoys mysticism would be a perfectly reasonable explanation.”

“I see.” Klein was relieved. He just kept feeling like he had forgotten or overlooked something.

...

After returning to Zouteland Street, Klein did not wait for Klee's arrival. He strolled to Welch's place and took a different route home. On the way, he bought some beef and olives for dinner.

The meal was enjoyable as always, with the same three siblings chatting idly. However, there was an additional visitor.

He was a worker responsible for collecting one penny for the gas meter.

The evening grew dark as the siblings bade each other good night and returned to their rooms.

Klein was sleeping soundly when he was suddenly awoken by something familiar outside. He opened the door in puzzlement and arrived outside the bedroom that no one stayed in.

He pushed open the mottled door and saw a gray desk.

There was a notebook on the table and its cover was made of hard paper. It was completely black in color.

A baffling sense of *déjà vu* arose in him as he walked over and opened the notebook.

The page he flipped open to was of a picture—a picture of someone dressed in gorgeous clothes and splendid headdress—The Fool!

Beneath The Fool was a line in Hermes.

“Everyone will die, including me.”

Horror gripped Klein’s heart as he suddenly realized that the corner of The Fool’s mouth was curving up!

Ffffffff!

He sat up in shock as he saw crimson moonlight penetrate his curtains. He saw his bookshelf and desk and the silhouette of his own bedroom. He realized that he had had a nightmare.

As a Seer, he knew what dreams typically portend. Therefore, he began to seriously search through his recollections.

Klein froze up when he did because he knew what he had missed out on today!

While he was immersed in Leonard’s singing, he had sensed a formless and indifferent focus on his back.

The feeling of being observed felt different from the usual Cogitation or experience he had from using Spirit Vision. It gave him a sense of *déjà vu*!

*According to Captain Dunn, once a feeling of *déjà vu* arose in him, it probably means...*

Klein suddenly sat straight and confirmed the feeling.

Yes, it's that notebook! That Antigonus family's notebook!