

## Chapter 128: The Impoverished Fool

After eating lunch, Klein only rested for half an hour before he rushed to the Shooting Club to practice with his revolver. He didn't dare to relax, not one bit.

After practicing his shooting skills day after day and expending more than a thousand bullets, he was finally shooting well enough to earn Dunn Smith's basic approval. He was pretty good at fixed-target shooting.

After practicing for a while, he put away his revolver and took the public carriage to a stop close to the house of his combat teacher, Gawain. Then, he walked for ten minutes before arriving at the door.

He changed into his knight training suit that had been left to dry in the sun. After running, skipping rope, lifting weights, squatting, and other exercises, not to mention footwork and punching training, he was covered in sweat and felt exhausted.

"Take a break for fifteen minutes." Gawain's blond white hair and deep facial lines made him look hard and stern. He took out his pocket watch and flipped it open to glance at the time.

Since they first began training, he had ultimately maintained his silence. He only spoke to Klein when there was a need to switch training methods or to correct one of Klein's mistakes whenever one arose.

Klein panted for air, but he didn't dare to rest straightaway. He paced back and forth slowly. The most direct feedback of his combat training was that he was much tanner. His skin had

turned bronze under the sun.

Gawain put away his pocket watch and stood next to the crude training field behind his house. He crossed his arms as he watched Klein cool down. He was as quiet as a marble statue.

“Teacher, besides fighting with fists, would you teach me how to use a straight sword, broadsword, rapier, and spear?” Klein asked proactively. He was in a good mood, as he had just digested the Seer potion.

He had seen weapons like the straight sword and rapier in Gawain’s collection room before. There was also chest armor and full body armor. He knew that Gawain wasn’t only good at fighting hand-to-hand.

Bathed in sunlight, Gawain swept his gaze at Klein. He lowered his voice and replied, “It’s useless for you to learn any of those. Those weapons have all fallen behind the times, and their only place is in museums or the private collections of collectors...”

He fell silent for a few seconds before adding with a voice that had experienced the vicissitudes of life, “They have been eliminated... You should focus on guns. Even combat is merely supplementary.”

Klein looked at his listless teacher and chuckled as he spoke.

“I don’t think so.”

“Every minister, every Member of Parliament, every general, everyone of them thinks so,” Gawain said, clenching his teeth.

Klein stopped and acted like he was a true keyboard warrior. He responded with ease and fluency, “No, they have merely retreated from the front lines of a battlefield. They still have their uses elsewhere.

“Why does combat have to be used against firearms? They could be used together. I believe a person who is more flexible, swifter in action, and quicker in response could use guns in a more effective manner.”

When he saw Gawain’s eyes suddenly sharpen, Klein turned smug and continued, “The other weapons aren’t eliminated either. They only need some enhancement to be more portable...”

“...We could form a squad with high maneuverability. A group that’s designed to circle the front lines and launch an attack from behind the enemy and fight right to their core. In such a small-scale surprise attack, a warrior who has outstanding hand-to-hand abilities and familiarity with various kinds of weapons could play an important role. You can imagine such a scene...”

Klein gave full play to his ability of knowing a bit of everything. He mixed and matched all the combat tactics the special forces on Earth had and described them to his teacher.

He wasn’t sure when Gawain’s breathing became heavier. He stood there without moving an inch, seemingly unwilling to break the scenes he imagined.

Klein stole a glance at the man’s reaction. He felt smug in his head as he cleared his throat and said in a restrained manner, “Teacher, what do you think about my plan? Is there any possibility of realizing it?”

Gawain's body quivered as though he just awoken from a dream. He looked deeply into Klein's eyes and said, "Your break is doing you well. Repeat the whole set of exercises ten times."

*Huh?* Klein looked lost.

Very soon, he started running and snapped back to reality. He roared in his heart, *Ten sets? Teacher, no!*

I don't want to celebrate my complete digestion of the Seer potion like this!

*Hey, didn't you gain any inspiration at all?...*

Looking at Klein running towards the other side of the training field, Gawain suddenly uncrossed his arms and covered his face with one hand.

He closed his eyes tightly, and the wrinkles on his face were deep and obvious.

...

After nearly puking from exhaustion, Klein took a shower, changed clothes, and bade a still silent Gawain farewell. He took the public carriage and left.

He didn't return home directly but headed to Evil Dragon Bar near the harbor. He planned to inquire about the price of Beyonder ingredients and buy items for making charms.

On the way, Klein kept his mind on his tiny stash that he was carrying with him. He forced himself to stay alert and reached his destination with great difficulty.

"I need to save four pounds for the remaining balance that I owe to the detective company. I can only use three pounds and five soli tonight..." He touched the paper notes in his pocket before grabbing his cane and alighting the carriage.

At that moment, the sun had already begun slipping below the horizon. All the houses were gradually tainted with a twilight luster. The boxing matches and rat-baiting with dogs were already warming up in Evil Dragon Bar.

After passing through the billiard room and numerous rooms, Klein finally entered the underground market.

He looked to the left and right, but he didn't see Monster Ademisaul who was always active around there.

"Didn't Old Neil say that Ademisaul only managed to survive because the boss of Evil Dragon Bar feeds him?" Klein asked himself curiously.

As a Nighthawk, he remained vigilant to matters like that. He approached the brawny man guarding the door and asked, "Where's Ademisaul?"

The brawny man replied without a smile, "I have no idea where he's sleeping. He's been like that lately. He lies down in shivers and chants 'Dead, dead, all corpses, everyone has to die.'"

*What scenes did he see this time? What triggered him? Klein*

creased his eyebrows slightly and asked for more details. He wanted to know where Ademisaul was sleeping, but the guard didn't know either.

*When I'm done, I'll look for him via divination to see what he's been through...* After taking note of this, Klein walked towards one of the two rooms at the end of the trading market.

According to Old Neil, the room on the left was for loans and repayment, while the room on the right was for the buying and selling of precious items, including Beyonder ingredients.

When he opened the door to enter the room on the right, Klein realized that there was a partition that separated it into two spaces, the inside and the outside. There were another three customers waiting on the outside.

He lowered his silk top hat and queued behind the three customers. He leaned his body forward and supported himself with the cane as he waited in silence.

Soon, the door of the partition opened and a customer in a bluish-gray harbor worker uniform came out. He kept his head low and left in a hurry.

Klein lightly clicked his left molar twice and looked at the man with Spirit Vision. He then looked at the other three customers. There was nothing wrong with them other than the usual minor illnesses that people had.

After another ten plus minutes, it was finally his turn.

He opened the door and entered the room that was lit with a

kerosene lamp.

He locked the door and took the seat that belonged to the customer. He looked towards the old man wearing a black felt hat opposite him.

“I’d like to know what Beyonder ingredients you have, and at what prices they are being sold.”

The cheek muscles of the elder were droopy and the wrinkles at the corner of his eyes were deep, but his body was well-built. He didn’t find Klein’s request weird because many customers weren’t willing to let another person know what they wanted to buy before they confirmed that the seller had it available. Generally, they wished to be introduced to all options.

The old man flipped to the newest pages of the notebook, stole a glance at Klein, and took a sip of his honey wine before he said, “Water Ghost’s brain tissue costs from three to fifteen pounds depending on how intact it is. Star Crystal, 150 pounds per 50 grams. 200 pounds for one Queen Bee Grass. 170 pounds for an adult black-spotted frog... 280 pounds for Human-faced Rose, but there’s only one...”

Klein controlled his emotional response. After he listened to the old man’s introduction, he was surprised that an underground trading place like this had fewer than thirty Beyonder ingredients.

As he touched the notes worth seven pounds in his pocket and thought of Miss Justice’s attitude towards a thousand pounds, he sighed.

“Unfortunately, there is nothing I want.”

without waiting for the elder to pose any further questions, he quickly turned around to open the door and made an exit.

He returned to the underground market and looked around blankly. He stood there for a while and sighed with a bitter smile.

*I'm probably the poorest boss among all the secret organizations... That only steeled his resolve of getting ingredients internally from the Nighthawks or through exchanges with Justice or The Hanged Man.*

After circling the underground market twice, Klein picked and purchased ingredients to make charms, such as a partially-finished silver piece, herbal powders needed for rituals, and natural ores. He spent one pound and fifteen soli in total.

*My private stash of money only has five pounds ten soli left. Excluding the final payment to the detective, I still have one pound ten soli... After Klein silently did the math regarding his financial situation, he felt helpless.*

Of course, he knew very well that he had only been working for just over a month. If the time span had been extended to a year, he should have been able to save up more than a hundred pounds.

“In another two weeks, I’ll have to tell Benson and Melissa that I’ve gotten a raise to three pounds. We can hire a maidservant, but I won’t have a private stash of money anymore...” Klein thought as he walked towards the exit of the underground market.

Just then, he saw Old Neil in his classic black robe entering slowly.

“Got everything?” Old Neil greeted with a chuckle.

“Yes,” Klein answered frankly.

Old Neil tsked immediately. “You came really early.”

“That’s because I’m still hungry, but you’ve already had your dinner.” Klein chatted casually with Old Neil.

After a while, the boss of Evil Dragon Bar, Swain, walked in with his navy officer uniform draped over him. He approached the two of them with a mask of solemnity and lowered his voice.

“I need your help.”

“What happened?” Old Neil suddenly turned serious, and Klein couldn’t help but feel a tug at his heartstrings.

Swain’s brown hair was messy, and there was a strong smell of alcohol in his breath. He replied in a low voice, “A member from the Mandated Punishers has lost control nearby. We have to finish him before he harms any commoners!”