

Chapter 40: Mysticism Curriculum

“An interesting trick?”

Klein asked out of extreme curiosity.

Old Neil chuckled and said, “I’ll complete my patrol of the armory, storeroom, and archives. Use the two cups on the table to make two cups of coffee. In one of the cups, put something unpleasant. As for what it is, you can decide for yourself. Use your imagination. The only request from me is to not waste too much coffee powder. Those are coffee beans grown on the Feynapotter plateau and hand ground by me!”

“Alright.” Although Klein was unsure what Old Neil was up to, he happily agreed to it.

He watched him open the iron gates to the armory with a copper key and then heard the echoing footsteps inside. Slowly, he settled the cups down and confirmed that there was still hot water in the kettle.

He removed the silver tin can’s lid and using a tiny spoon with a metallic sheen, Klein scooped a spoonful of rich aromatic coffee powder into each of the two cups. Then, he poured in the hot water and stirred it.

As a transmigrator who came from an era abundant in resources, he was no stranger to coffee. However, it was only limited to instant coffee.

After finishing the task, Klein pondered for a moment and sat

down. He crossed his right leg and took some of the mud which had stained the bottom of his leather boots and placed it in the left cup.

Then, he carefully stirred it again until the colors and smells of the two cups of coffee were practically indistinguishable.

A few minutes later, Old Neil walked out the armory while swinging his keys. He then closed the iron gates with a clang.

“Are you done?” He turned his slightly turbid dark red eyes over and looked at Klein across the table.

“Yes,” replied Klein with a nod.

Old Neil chuckled and removed the silver chain around his wrist and sat down.

His expression quickly turned serene. He held out his chain-holding left hand and allowed it to hang over the coffee cup to his right. The moonstone nearly touched the liquid.

Amid the relaxing calmness, the moonstone trembled suddenly. It began spinning the chain in a counterclockwise manner.

“This cup is the one with the unpleasant thing,” said Old Neil surely.

Without waiting for Klein to confirm, he put away the silver chain and picked up the other cup of coffee and took a sip.

“Do you like bitter coffee? I’m used to having a tablespoon of sugar and a tablespoon of milk.”

Klein did not reply but instead asked with his interest piqued, “Your divination sure is accurate. Was it because of the moonstone? That was moonstone, right?”

“This is known as pendulum dowsing in divination. It’s also called spirit dowsing. It relies on your own Astral Projection’s connection with the spirit world and the cosmos to communicate with spiritual intelligence through the aid of natural materials such as crystals, gems, or special metals. The good and bad of things can be divined... Let’s talk about the two cups of coffee. A counterclockwise motion implies bad, while a clockwise motion is good. If it doesn’t move, it’s neither good nor bad. You can write the statement on a piece of paper. Take note, it’s a statement and not a question.” Old Neil put down the cup of coffee and explained in detail.

Klein asked as though he was thinking, “Does that mean one shouldn’t use questioning sentences?”

“Yes, you cannot use ‘is so-and-so willing to be my fiancée,’ but you should instead use ‘so-and-so is willing to be my fiancée.’ Write it on a piece of paper and place it on the desk. Then use your dominant hand to hold the pendulum chain. Take note, use your dominant hand,” said Old Neil with a chuckle. “When doing so, keep your arm straight. Adjust the chain’s length and make the moonstone hang just above the piece of paper to the point of almost touching what we wrote. Then, close your eyes and repeat the sentence seven times in your mind. Open your eyes when you are done and see if the spirit pendulum turns or not. If it doesn’t, close your eyes again and repeat the process until it moves.”

Klein nodded slightly and asked, “Counterclockwise means ‘no,’ and clockwise means ‘yes?’”

“It can also be interpreted as success or failure,” corrected Old Neil. He taught Klein the other usages and details of spirit pendulum divination.

Klein pondered over the matter and discovered that it was a very useful divination trick. For instance, he could quickly use it in an unfamiliar environment to determine if the food he was offered was poisonous or not. He did not need any additional knowledge of field biology.

Of course, such divination methods were overly simple. The answers he could receive were limited to two or three. There was no way for deeper investigation or interpretation. For example, although something could be harmful to the body, it could become very beneficial after some processing. An example was certain foods. They were indeed damaging to the body, but nothing serious. If one was on the brink of starving, eating it would not be a huge problem. These were things that spirit dowsing could not determine.

“I will have to quickly save money to buy crystals or pure silver to create a spirit pendulum...” Klein sighed.

Old Neil looked at him in puzzlement.

“You can apply for one directly. This is a standard issue for Beyonders, especially Beyonders like us who take on a support role. There’s still a topaz and pure silver spirit pendulum in the armory.”

“But I’m still not a formal member of the team...” Klein’s heart palpitated in excitement, but he felt a little hesitant.

Old Neil chuckled and said, “For Beyonders, regardless of whether they are formal members or not, they have to be

provided with conveniences in other areas since there's no pay rise.”

“Maybe the word ‘perk’ is more suitable. I’ll apply with Captain later!” Klein clenched his fists secretly as he made up his mind.

How was he to know if Captain would approve his request without trying?

“Alright,” said Old Neil with a smile. “We can officially begin our mysticism curriculum. The basics consist of symbolism. Do you know what symbolism means?”

Klein recalled the bits and pieces he had heard and the things he had seen and heard from his spirit world and the gray fog. He deliberated and said, “Regardless of the spirit world or the illusory cosmos, as well as the unknown realms, they are beyond our sensory world. It’s not something that can be accurately described by the information our ears, nose, and eyes obtain. What we obtain are simply indescribable experiences and direct revelations. They also appear as abstract characters or pictorial symbols. These symbols represent different items and different meanings.”

“Very accurate. As expected of a Seer.” Old Neil nodded solemnly. “Only by grasping the ability to interpret the symbols can you really take the next step into the world of mysticism. Yes, the pictures on tarot cards and each of the elements in the pictures are symbols. They are man-made symbols that help us understand and interpret primordial revelations.”

He pulled out a piece of paper and picked up a fountain pen beside him. He drew a short curve.

Following that, he added a few vertical lines beneath the curve.

He looked up at Klein and asked, “Do you know what this symbol represents?”

Klein looked at it for quite a while before saying hesitatingly, “Eyelashes?”

“...” Old Neil exhaled. “This is the symbol of the Bumper Harvest constellation. This is the Thunderous constellation, and this is the Frost constellation...”

He casually drew a few more symbols.

As Klein memorized them, he could not help but comment, “The names of these constellations are really... especially unsophisticated. Yes, unsophisticated!”

How tacky and primordial...

Old Neil revealed a smile.

“Emperor Roselle thought the same back then. He always had the intention of changing the constellation names to things like Virgo, Cancer, and Scorpio. Unfortunately, he did not have the strength to go against tradition. At the very least, these constellations’ old names and the corresponding dates that they represent guide farming and harvests.”

“I have to say that Emperor Roselle sure is a person with ideas.” Klein was at a loss for words.

Yes, Emperor Roselle was likely a decent person when he was alive...

Old Neil was unable to understand Klein's humor as he continued explaining the various basic symbols, such as the various constellations, the sun, the crimson moon, the Brown Planet, the Scarlet Planet, and the Blue Planet.

While talking about these, he would teach Klein how to draw the divination astrolabe and indicate what things to pay attention to. He also taught the materials and creation of a crystal ball, and the choice of incantations. The teachings overwhelmed Klein.

If not for his discovery that the Seer potion had improved his memory slightly, he would have long asked Old Neil to stop to aid his digesting of the information.

"That's all for today's mysticism class. Think over it yourself and ask me if you have any questions." Old Neil took out a gold pocket watch and opened it with a snap to check the time. "Do not forget to read the historical documents I prepared for you. To be frank, I feel fear seeing them."

"Alright." Klein took the pieces of paper that were sketched with symbols by Old Neil. He quickly went through the mysticism knowledge he learned today to prevent himself from forgetting it.

Old Neil took a sip of a newly brewed cup of coffee and said, "Memory itself won't do. You have to use it often. That way, you can make the knowledge instinctual. Also, Cogitation has to be carried on every day. Only more practice and usage will allow you to grasp the power of the potion, digging into the mysteries it hides away and removing its unpleasant effects."

With this raised, Klein recalled acting and the Divination Club. He probed, "My potion's abilities are related to divination. Practicing by myself will not do. I need to make contact with lots

of people and divine for them to quickly grasp it. I plan on joining the Divination Club after having some spare cash—the one on Howes Street in North Borough—to become a real Seer.”

This was not something he could hide from the Nighthawks in the future. It was better to prepare them.

“Your idea is very similar to Daly’s. She has always clamored to be a real Spirit Medium.” Old Neil shook his head and laughed. “But why must you wait till you have spare cash? You can apply to Dunn and get him to approve of the expenses!”

“Organizations like a Divination Club might also have cultists or members of evil organizations in them. As a civilian staff member of the Nighthawks and a standard Beyonder, your membership makes it easy for us to monitor them. It’s part of the job! We would regularly monitor these places, but as we lack manpower, we can’t keep watch on them for long. Now, it can be handled to you.”

I can do that? As he looked at Old Neil’s serious expression, Klein was dumbfounded.

This is making an expense claim for private matters!

I know nothing about such matters...

Indeed, I’m just a keyboard warrior...

“You wish to use your own money to do this?” Old Neil smiled as he added when he saw Klein’s face.

Klein immediately shook his head as he answered firmly, “I plan on reporting it to Captain!”

Old Neil nodded in satisfaction and looked at the cup of coffee with the unpleasant thing inside. It had not been poured away.

“What did you put in there?”

Klein smiled embarrassingly.

“It’s just some dirt underneath my boots. Its color and your coffee powder looks almost the same.”

Old Neil was taken aback as he suddenly clasped his mouth and roared, “Why aren’t you pouring it away yet!?”