

Chapter 61: Strange Symbol

“The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era... the mysterious ruler above the gray fog... King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck...” Audrey Hall recited the three descriptions to herself silently. She suddenly felt a tumultuous wave of emotion go through her, preventing her from maintaining her Spectator state.

As an enthusiast of mysticism, she had learned Hermes that was used in rituals and had tested out the rituals that fellow noble enthusiasts mentioned in private gatherings before she was pulled into the gray fog or made formal contact with Beyonder powers.

None of those rituals had any effects, but they had given Audrey a basic understanding of the structure of incantations.

Thus, she knew clearly what these three incantations described and signified.

The descriptions usually described one of the seven gods that looked over this world!

Thus, The Fool’s incantation was claiming status equal to the Lady of Crimson, Mother of Concealment, and the Empress of Misfortune and Horror!

Is Mr. Fool the unknown, mysterious, powerful, godlike entity that Glaint spoke of? The source of danger that we must avoid in rituals? Audrey quickly recalled the comments made during the strange rituals which she and her friends did not dare attempt back then. She was momentarily at a loss for words.

Alger Wilson, who knew and understood much more than Audrey, shivered from the bottom of his heart.

If the ritualistic magic which Mr. Fool designed truly points to him to allow him to accept our requests, w-we would have to be addressing him with Him. He is to be addressed in the third person, which is reserved for gods...

How lucky, how smart I was to act in concert with him and not do anything foolish. Even when I was testing him, I did not step beyond the boundaries of normalcy...

Could he perhaps be an ancient, mysterious, horrifying existence, only that he does not appear before us in his true form and name... The Primordial Demoness, the Hidden Sage, or the true Creator which many mysterious churches believe in?

Alger understood that The Fool he was looking at now might not be his true form. He might not even have a gender or be a humanoid creature.

Klein propped his forehead up with one hand and tapped on the table with the other hand. He acutely noticed the changes happening to The Hanged Man and Justice.

But he acted as though nothing happened, as if everything was within his expectations. He continued without any care.

"I pray for your help.

"I pray for your loving grace.

“I pray for you to give me a good dream.

“Moon flower, an herb that belongs to the red moon, please bestow your powers to my incantation!

“Fingered citron, an herb that belongs to the sun, please bestow your powers to my incantation.”

...

He finished describing the incantations that belonged to another type of ritual. After he was done, he smiled.

“Lady, sir, have you memorized it?”

“Ah...” Audrey exhaled. She quickly covered her mouth and recalled seriously.

With her improved memory as a Spectator, she quickly processed the information and repeated the incantations as a form of confirmation.

Alger acted more normally. His pen did not stop for a moment, no matter what he was thinking about.

After Klein confirmed that Audrey was correct, he smiled and said, “If this test is successful, then we shall modify the ritual next time to achieve what we want to do.”

“I hope that you will have the time to complete the ritual no later than Wednesday.”

He intended to come in here again on Thursday night to ascertain if the ritualistic magic was successful.

As for why he did not allow The Hanged Man and Justice to directly request a leave of absence, Klein was worried that he would be unable to discern if the results were from them asking for leave or merely the outcome of an attempt of the ritualistic magic. Was he to pull them into the Gathering if that happened?

“By your will.” Audrey and Alger replied respectfully, collecting themselves.

“According to The Hanged Man’s suggestion last week, we shall have a time for casual conversation after all official issues have been discussed. Who shall begin?” Klein gave a hand gesture signaling for someone to start.

Audrey sighed and said, “Mr. Fool, the suggestion you made regarding the exam selection and the separation between civil and political matters has received the approval of many members of parliament. Perhaps it could become a reality. Of course, with the efficiency of this government, the bill will only appear half a year from now at the earliest.”

She was not worried that The Hanged Man would track her down using this piece of information. She had intentionally and intermittently dropped hints and guided those proud wives to think that they had conceived the idea. Those ladies had rushed to tell their husbands, their fathers, and their brothers.

At that moment Audrey felt as though she was watching a flock of golden peacocks showcasing their tail feathers.

She believed that those women would drill it in themselves that they came up with the idea to claim the glory for themselves.

They would soon forget about what Audrey's role in the matter was, fighting among themselves to see who thought of the suggestion first.

Using this remarkable way to change the system of a kingdom gave Audrey a weird sense of satisfaction, as if she had found a way for a Spectator to influence the plot of a play.

"Let's hope so," Alger replied sarcastically.

He paused for a few seconds, then glanced at The Fool. He deliberated before saying, "In recent decades, the amount of activities of the various secret organizations has seen an upward trend. In fact, there are even new secret organizations appearing, some of them having reached scale with a good number of Beyonders."

Are you trying to ask me for the reason? I have not even gained access to information about illegal organizations... Klein merely smiled without commenting on The Hanged Man's news. He changed the subject and said vaguely, "An ancient power is about to wake from its slumber."

For example, the power represented by the Antigonus family diary...

"Is that so..." Alger muttered softly to himself, as though he recalled something.

Klein swept his gaze toward The Hanged Man, then past Justice and said with a smile, "If there is nothing else to share, then let's end today's gathering here."

“By your will.” Audrey and Alger stood up together.

Klein moved his finger and severed his connection with the dark red stars. He watched as the two figures vanished from the magnificent palace.

He stood up and turned toward his own chair which was also the back of the Seat of Honor at the bronze table. He looked at its symbol.

Radiant stars formed a strange symbol. It was not a symbol that fit anything in Klein’s present understanding of mysticism.

He observed it closely before identifying the “Pupil-less Eye,” a symbol representing concealment. He also saw Contorted Lines that represented change. Each of the symbols were missing a portion and were overlapped with each other, creating a new symbol.

An incomplete concealment and an incomplete change... What do we get when we add them together? Klein creased his brows and muttered to himself, unable to come up with an answer.

He retracted his gaze and walked along the ancient, magnificent palace. His eyes scanned every corner of the palace.

“Back when I casually imagined this place, it was merely a rough concept; I did not describe the shape of the palace, table, or chairs... Where does this design come from? The best choice? The first prototype? Or are they a reflection of reality?” Klein suddenly had a question he neglected previously as he looked at the palace.

Sigh, I have to say that even though I am a keyboard warrior, I am lacking experience in many areas. I am also not observant enough, to the point of only realizing this question now... With such a self-reflection, Klein made a serious effort to examine every corner of the palace, but did not find any other living things or anything strange.

Klein did not dare to venture deeper, which seemed to be an illusory land without boundaries. He was afraid that he would end up completely lost.

Wow, this place is indeed filled with mysteries... Who knows if there will be any changes to this area when I become more powerful... Klein sighed. He unleashed his spirituality and enveloped himself within, causing him to feel the rapid rush of plummeting.

Everything flew past quickly. All kinds of illusions shattered. He tore through the grayish-white fog and saw reality. He saw the table, curtains, and clothes rack in his room.

...

Backlund, Empress Borough.

Audrey saw the oil painting that hung on the wall. She felt the softness the down-feathered pillow under her head provided.

She did not stand up immediately; instead, she seriously recalled what had happened during the gathering, as if she was watching a play she had already watched.

“Mr. Fool had a certain confidence in his tone when he told us to

try the ritual and gave us the descriptions of the mysterious ruler, the King of Yellow and Black... Confidence..." Audrey exhaled as she was analyzing this silently, her body shuddering slightly.

Forget it, since I cannot fight it, there's no need to think too much about it... Mr. Fool has always appeared friendly; he should be an entity that has a respect for order... Audrey's mood improved rapidly. She thought about her acting, and the weakening backlash of the potion.

She hummed a merry tune and got off her bed. She walked toward the door and adjusted her state of mind, taking on her state as a Spectator.

As she opened the door of the room, she saw a maid walking past. She saw the old calluses on her hands, the marks on her face, and other similar details. She could deduce many things from these observations.

At this point, Audrey had a strange feeling. She quickly turned to look at the shaded corner of the balcony.

She saw her golden retriever Susie sitting there, silently observing her, just like how she observed the maid.

My Goddess... Audrey's lips twitched as she sighed. She wanted so much to hide her face.

...

On the Sonia Sea, in the heavily protected captain's quarters.

Alger woke up and noticed that nothing had changed around him. It was as if nothing had happened.

He sighed and thought to himself, *An ancient existence?*

...

Klein, who had exited the ritual, pulled open the curtains. He took out his notebook and began writing once again.

He recalled the contents of Emperor Roselle's diary, hoping to reinforce the memory through writing and prevent himself from forgetting it in the future.

Klein reread the notes several times after he finished writing. Finally, he tore the notes up and incinerated them.

I shouldn't forget the most salient points if I do this once a week. But with time and the increasing complexity of my missions... How unfortunate, I do not have better ideas for the time being. I have not learned any cryptography... Klein collected himself and stretched his neck. He planned on heading to the Divination Club.

A Seer was defined differently by different people. No one could say that another person's methods were wrong. So, Klein, who did not know which kind of Seer fit the requirements of the potion, could only correct it as he experimented to ascertain which one was the best fit!