

Chapter 14: The Medium

A true medium... Klein repeated this description inwardly, and did not speak again. He followed Dunn Smith down the carriage.

Welch's place in Tingen was a detached house with a garden. The road outside the hollowed metal gates allowed four carriages to pass through at once. Street lamps lined the sides of the road every fifty meters. They looked different from the ones Klein had seen in his previous life. They were gas lamps and the height of every lamp was about that of an adult male so that it was convenient to light the lamps.

The black metal was closely appressed to the glass, forming a checkered pattern, casting out classical paper lantern-like 'artworks.' Coldness and warmth were intertwined while darkness and light coexisted.

Walking along the pathway blanketed by rays from the sunset, Klein and Dunn Smith entered Welch's rented place through the ajar metal gate.

Facing the main entrance was a cemented road that led straight to a two-floored bungalow. Two carriages could go at once.

There was a garden on the left and a lawn to the right. The pleasantly faint fragrance from the flowers mixed with the cool scent of the fresh grass made one feel happy and relaxed.

As soon as he stepped in, Klein shivered and peered around.

He felt that in the garden, somewhere in the lawn, on the roof,

behind the swing, somewhere in a dark corner, pairs of eyes were observing him!

There was clearly no one here; yet, Klein felt as if he was on a crowded street.

This strange contrast—this peculiar feeling—tensed him up. A chill ran up his spine.

“Something’s wrong!” he couldn’t help but exclaim to Dunn.

Dunn’s expression remained unchanged as he walked beside him and replied calmly, “Just ignore them.”

Since the “Nighthawk” had said so, Klein tolerated the chilling feeling of not being able to notice the perpetrator despite being followed, spied, and observed. Step by step, he arrived at the main entrance of the bungalow.

If this goes on any longer, I will go crazy... As Dunn reached out his hand to knock on the door, Klein quickly turned around. Flowers swayed in the wind, without a person in sight.

“Come in, gentlemen.” A seemingly ethereal voice came from inside the house.

Dunn turned the doorknob, pushed the door open and said to a woman on the sofa, “Daly, any results?”

The chandelier in the living room was unlit. A set of two leather couches surrounded a marble coffee table.

On the table was a lit candle, but the light emitted a cobalt blue glow. It covered the half-enclosed living room, dining room, and kitchen in a strange, eerie hue.

On the middle of the sofa sat a lady in a hooded black robe who wore blue eyeshadow and blush. An exposed silver bracelet with a hanging white crystal pendant was worn around her wrist.

At the first sight of her, Klein had an inexplicable feeling. She was dressed just like a real medium...

Was she stereotyping herself?

Daly, the “medium” with uncanny beauty, took a quick glance at Klein with her twinkling emerald eyes. She looked at Dunn Smith and said, “The original spirits have all disappeared, including that of Welch’s and Naya’s. Right now, all these little rascals know nothing at all.”

Spirits? Spirit Medium... All the invisible things that were spying on him previously were spirits? There were so many of them? Klein removed his hat and placed it across his chest, bowing slightly as he said, “Good evening, Madam.”

Dunn Smith sighed. “That’s tricky...”

“Daly, this is Klein Moretti. See if you can get anything out of him.”

The medium, Daly, shifted her gaze onto Klein immediately. She pointed at a single armchair and said, “Please, take a seat.”

“Thank you.” Klein nodded, took a few steps over, and sat down obediently. His heart raced uncontrollably.

Whether I survive, whether I get through this successfully or have my secrets exposed will all depend on whatever happens next!

And the thing that made him feel the most helpless was that he had nothing to rely on. He could only place his hopes on his inherent specialness...

This feeling really sucks... Klein thought bitterly.

Next, Dunn sat on the two-seater sofa opposite of Klein. Daly took out two thumb-sized glass bottles from her waist pouch.

Her emerald eyes smiled at Klein as she said, “I need a bit of help here. After all, you are not an enemy, I can’t treat you harshly. That might make you uncomfortable or put you in pain. It might even leave some serious after-effects on you. I will give you some fragrances, making you feel tender and smooth, which will allow you to let loose bit by bit so that you can truly indulge in those feelings.”

That sounded wrong... Klein gaped as his eyes were filled with shock.

Seated across him, Dunn laughed and said, “Don’t be weirded out. We are different from the fellows from the Church of Storms. Here, the ladies can also verbally tease men. In this regard, you should be able to understand. Your mother was a devout believer of the Goddess. You and your brother used to attend Sunday school at Church.”

“I understand. It’s just that I never thought that she would be such a... such a...” Klein gestured, as he could not find the right words. He almost blurted out the direct translation for “veteran driver [1]”.

Dunn curved the corners of his mouth up and said, “Don’t worry. Actually, Daly seldom does this. She just wants to use these methods to calm you down. She prefers corpses over men.”

“You make me sound perverted,” Daly interjected with a smile.

She opened one of the little bottles and dripped a few drops onto the bright blue candle flame.

“Night vanilla, slumber flower, and chamomile, all distilled and extracted to form this aromatic floral essence. I call it ‘Amantha;’ it means tranquility in the Hermes language. It smells really amazing.”

As they chatted, the candle flame flickered, evaporating the floral essence and filling the room with its aroma.

A beautifully enchanting aroma found its way into Klein’s nostrils. He no longer felt tensed up. He was instantly calm as if he was gazing into the darkness of the silent night.

“This bottle is called the Eye of the Spirit. Barks and leaves of drago and poplar trees are sun-dried for seven days and decocted thrice. Then, they are immersed in Lanti Wine. Of course, there would be several incantations while we’re at it...” As Daly described the liquid, the amber substance dripped onto the cobalt blue candle flame.

Upon smelling the ethereal scent of the aromatic wine, Klein noticed that the candle flame was dancing wildly. The luster of Daly's blue eyeshadow and blush shone oddly, to the extent of him seeing double.

"It is a great helping hand for mediumship. It is also a floral essence that is sufficiently enchanting..."

As Daly explained continuously, Klein felt as if her voice was coming from all around.

Bewildered, Klein looked around and realized that everything was swaying and in a blur. He felt like he was shrouded by layers and layers of fog. Even his body was swaying as it phased away before he began floating and then losing his balance.

Colors blended like an impressionist painting—the reds were redder, the blues were bluer, and the blacks were blacker—appearing more defined than usual. It was dreamy and hazy. Distinct murmurs from the surroundings came through as if hundreds and thousands of people who could not be seen were debating.

"This feels similar to the luck enhancement ritual I did before, but without the kind of madness that makes your head feel like exploding..." Klein looked around and thought questioningly.

At this moment, his vision was locked onto a pair of eyes that were crystal clear like emerald. On a blurry "sofa" sat Daly in a black robe. Eccentrically, her gaze concentrated on the tip of Klein's head. She smiled and in a gentle voice, said, "Let me properly introduce myself. I am the Spirit Medium, Daly."

I can still... have rational thoughts... It's like when I was at that luck enhancement ritual and that gathering... The thought

crossed Klein's mind as he intentionally behaved muddled and said, "Hello there..."

"The mental worlds of humans are extremely vast. Many secrets are hidden within the mind. Look at the ocean—what we know about it is all on the superficial level. But in reality, deep in the ocean, there is a larger unseen portion. Other than islands, there is the entire ocean. There is the boundless sky that symbolizes the spiritual world..."

"You are the spirit of your body. Not only do you know of the islands above, but you also know of the things hidden beneath the sea, as well as the entire ocean..."

"Anything that exists leaves some traces behind. The superficial memories of the islands may be wiped out, but what is left under the sea and the entire ocean will definitely have a corresponding projection left in it..."

Daly went on and on, bewitching Klein. The vague surrounding winds and shadows took on similar forms. It was as though Klein's spirit was fully exposed in the form of an ocean, waiting for him to search and discover.

Klein watched patiently, as he 'churned' the ocean occasionally. Then, in an airy voice, he replied, "No... I can't remember... I have forgotten..."

He expressed his agony at just the right level.

Daly tried to guide him once again, but the clear-headed Klein was unaffected.

“Okay. We shall end here. You may leave.”

“Leave.”

“Leave...”

The airy voice lingered and Daly disappeared. The wind and shadows began calming as the ethereal smell and subtle scent of the aromatic wine became more distinct again.

The colors returned to their normal state and the fuzzy feeling was no longer around. Klein’s body quivered, and he found his balance again.

He opened his eyes, which he had no memory of closing, and noticed that the candle with the bright blue flame was still before him. Dunn Smith was still resting comfortably on the couch. Same for Daly with the black-hooded robe.

“Why did you use the theory that belongs to that bunch of evil madmen, the Psychology Alchemists?” Dunn furrowed his eyebrows and stared at Daly.

As Daly put away the two little bottles, she replied calmly, “I think it’s pretty accurate. At least, it corresponds with some of the things I’ve made contact with before...”

Without waiting for Dunn’s reply, Daly shrugged and said, “This tricky fellow did not leave a single trace behind.”

Upon hearing this, Klein heaved a huge sigh of relief. Pretentiously, he asked, “Oh, it’s over? What happened? It felt

like I just took a nap..."

That was a pass, right?

Thankfully, I had the 'luck enhancement ritual' as a rehearsal!

"Just take it as such." Dunn interrupted him and looked at Daly. "Have you examined Welch's and Naya's bodies?"

"The corpses can tell us a lot more than you can imagine. It's such a pity that Welch and Naya had indeed committed suicide. So, the force that drove them to it is to be feared. Not a single trace was left behind." Daly stood up and pointed at the candle. "I need some rest."

The cobalt blue glow vanished, and the house was instantly inundated with a blurry shade of crimson.

...

"Congratulations. You can return home now. But do remember, do not reveal this incident to your loved ones. You have to promise this." Dunn said as he led Klein to the door.

Surprised, Klein asked, "Is there no need to examine the curses or the trails left behind by the evil spirits?"

"Daly didn't mention anything about it, so there's no need for it," Dunn answered simply.

Klein calmed down. As the thought of his previous worries came

to mind, he asked hurriedly, “How can I be sure that I will be free from trouble from now on?”

“No worries.” Dunn twitched his lips and said, “Based on statistics of similar incidents in the past, eighty percent of the survivors of the incident do not experience any horrifying after-effects. Yeah... This is based on what I know... roughly... more or less...”

“Then... there’s still one fifth of those poor souls...” Klein did not dare to try his luck.

“Then you can consider joining us as a civilian staff. This way, even if there are any precursors, we can discover it in time,” Dunn said casually as he approached the carriage. “Or simply become a Beyonder. After all, we are not nannies. We can’t babysit you all day long and even watch what you do with women.”

“Can I?” Klein questioned the statement.

Of course, he did not expect much. After all, how was it even possible to be a part of the Nighthawks so easily and obtain the power of the Beyonders?

That was the power of the Beyonders!

Dunn paused, and turned his head sideways to look at him.

“It’s not that you can’t... It depends...”

What? The transition in his words shocked Klein. Klein stared

blankly beside the carriage before answering, “Really?”

Who are you kidding? Is it so easy to become a Beyonder?

Dunn laughed lightly; his gray eyes were hidden in the shadow of the carriage.

“You don’t believe me, huh? Actually, when you become a Nighthawk you lose a lot. For instance, freedom.

“Even if we don’t talk about this now, there is another issue. Firstly, you are not a member of the clergy, nor a devotee. You can’t pick whatever you want or choose the safest approach.”

“And secondly...” Dunn held onto the handle and hopped onto the carriage as he went on. “Among the cases that we—us, the Mandated Punishers, the Machinery Hivemind and other Judiciaries—have to deal with annually, a quarter of them were a result of Beyonders who lost control.”

A quarter... Beyonders who lost control... Klein was dumbfounded.

Just then, Dunn turned slightly. His gray eyes were deep. With no sign of a smile, he continued, “And among the quarter of cases, a large number of them are our teammates.”

1. Veteran driver is an Internet slang phrase describing people who are very experienced in particular domains, especially sexually-related things such as posting pornographic resources.