

Chapter 108: Deep Into The Night

Despite not being dawn yet, the well-ventilated but quiet and dark underground was illuminated by gas lamps. The dim yellow light emitted from the gas lamps were protected by glass, allowing them to steadily shine throughout the empty and quiet tunnel.

Klein sat in the duty room and casually flipped through the newspapers, magazines, and books piled before him. He directed some of his attention outside, to prevent anyone from charging inside the Chanis Gate.

His trench coat and top hat were hung on the clothes rack near the entrance while his cane was leaning against the wall where it could be easily retrieved.

The rich aroma of coffee filled the air, and Klein couldn't help but take a whiff. He massaged his temples to fight against the heavy head feeling he was experiencing and the weariness of his body.

As a college student back on Earth, he often slept at five in the morning and woke up at noon. In the past two to three years of his working life, he often stayed up all night, to the point of being able to attend work energetically the next day. However, it was all thanks to the games that were too exhilarating, novels that were too interesting, television shows and movies that were too entertaining.

This world obviously didn't possess any of the necessities needed for staying up all night.

“Seriously, Emperor Roselle. If you want to posture, do it properly. Pour your limited life into an unlimited enterprise. Lead the people of this world into the information age!” Klein muttered silently. He could only console himself that there were at least newspapers, magazines, and increasingly interesting novels.

At first, he wanted to focus on his studies to restrain his sleepiness. However, practically speaking, it conflicted with his duty. Once he entered that state, he would easily overlook any movements outside and any changes to the situation at the Chanis Gate.

Phew. Klein picked up his coffee cup and carefully blew at it.

He took a sip and let the fragrant taste swish around his mouth before letting the liquid slowly flow down his throat.

“Fermo Coffee from the Paz Valley, very bitter but very refreshing,” Klein gave a compliment and put down his coffee cup.

The Paz Valley was located in the Southern Continent, a region that produced high-quality coffee beans. It was currently being fought over by the Intis Republic and the Loen Kingdom. They both built colonist settlements on the left and right banks of the Paz Valley, and had destroyed the original Paz Kingdom.

In the eerie silence, Klein casually picked up a magazine and realized that it was Ladies Aesthetic, which talked about fashion and dating.

“This must be from Rozanne...” he murmured in amusement as he flipped through it with his interest piqued.

Maybe it was due to the sudden advancement of camera technology in the past decade or so, not only did the magazine use a lot of illustrations, it even used monochrome pictures as their content—just like the newspapers.

They fashionably invited the famous play and musical actors to model the charms and the magical pairing of the clothing. In a short span of seven years, the new regional Backlund magazine became a mainstream magazine that spread across the nation.

“The dress looks nice, she’s pretty too...” Klein flipped through it casually and didn’t hide his aesthetic inclinations.

He was a man that had matured normally both in body and mind. He had always appreciated beautiful ladies, but he had long set his goal—to find a way home. Hence, he tried his best to keep his distance from the opposite sex, so that he didn’t waste the other person’s time or leave behind any emotional baggage.

As for streetwalkers, he was quite a germaphobe in that aspect.

Benson and Melissa were already shackles that couldn’t be removed. He could only find the means to make it up to them in the future... Klein suddenly felt his heart heavy and he couldn’t help but let out a sigh.

The further he strayed away from home, the more he felt melancholic during quiet late nights.

He suddenly lost his interest in looking at beautiful women and put down the magazine in his hands. He picked up a novel instead.

“Stormwind Mountain Villa, author, Fors Wall,” Klein read the content on the cover.

The tranquil night, dim yellow light, and the leatherbound book reminded him of his younger days when he rented books. Hence, he continued to read simply because of nostalgia.

Stormwind Mountain Villa was a novel about Lady Sissi, who was 1.65 meters tall and weighed ninety-eight pounds. It was a story of her embarking as a home tutor in the Fruys Mountain Villa.

“One pound is about half a kilogram... Is this Jane Eyre of an alternate world?” Klein caressed his fingers against the smooth paper as he began making guesses of the subsequent content.

However, just as he thought it was a romance novel, an evil spirit emerged in the story. When he believed that it was a ghost story, Lady Sissi revealed herself as a detective and made a marvelous deduction.

Just as Klein felt that it was definitely a detective novel, the main male character took a heavy blow to the head and lost his memory. Then, it became a heart-rending drama.

“...In the end, it’s still a romance book.” Klein closed the book and drank a mouthful of coffee.

Thump!

Thump! Thump! Thump!

A ferocious knocking was suddenly heard as it reverberated in the dim and quiet empty corridor.

Klein jumped in shock as he immediately turned tense.

He instinctively drew his revolver from his underarm holster, adjusted the cylinder and hammer. Then, he slowly walked to the door and looked for the source of the sound.

Thump! Thump! Thump!

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The thumping became more and more intense. Klein looked in the direction of the sound and saw the black outward-swinging gates that were engraved with seven Sacred Emblems.

“Sounds from beyond the Chanis Gate?” He squinted his eyes and his heart was beating like a drum.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Klein saw Chanis Gate shake gently, and he sensed the massive impact it was withstanding.

“It can’t be, right... I’m encountering something on my first day on duty? Did I get an unlucky constitution after I transmigrated?” Klein’s right hand broke into cold sweat as it held the revolver.

Very soon, he recalled the Captain’s instruction: do not open

Chanis Gate no matter what you hear, unless it is opened from the inside.

Uh, could this be a normal phenomenon? Klein suddenly calmed down.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Thump! Thump! Thump! The commotion beyond the Chanis Gate grew in intensity, but the heavy black metal gates only shook. Otherwise, it didn't show any unusual signs.

"This is normal. I nearly died from the shock..." Klein muttered, before he prepared to return to the duty room.

Just then, he heard a sharp grinding noise. He looked at the heavy Chanis Gate bulging outwards as a crack appeared on its surface!

Zing!

In the jarring noise, Klein's almost fixed eyes saw a figure. Its height was about the length of a man's arm, and it was wearing a classic, black, miniaturized regal gown. There was an obvious stain on the gown.

It had a not-so-exquisite face, black eyes, and tightly sealed lips.

It was a cloth puppet, a toy cloth puppet!

At that moment, when Klein was about to subconsciously raised his gun to take aim, the cloth puppet leaned heavily into the crack in Chanis Gate and unfurled the paper it was holding.

There were many symbols that represented concealment on the paper, some that Klein knew and some that he had yet to learn. Together, they formed a vertical eye!

Klein had yet to understand the situation when the regal-gowned puppet was suddenly dragged back by a shapeless force to the back of Chanis Gate!

Creak!

Chanis Gate closed once again, with no more knocking or pounding sounds.

The basement regained its tranquility and silence as though nothing had happened.

“I have to inform Captain that Chanis Gate was opened from the inside... But it closed itself...” At that moment, Klein’s mental facilities returned to him as he felt alarm, fear, and doubt.

A few seconds later, he recalled what the cloth puppet was. Since he was an official member of the Nighthawks, he was given the clearance to know about the Grade 3 Sealed Artifact sealed behind Chanis Gate.

“Number: 0625.

“Name: Misfortune Cloth Puppet.

“Danger Grade: 3. Considerably dangerous. It has to be used carefully. It can only be requested for operations that require three or more people.

“Security classification: Official Nighthawk member or above.

“Sealing method: Only needs to be separated from humans.

“Description: The cloth puppet is wearing a regal gown which was popular in around the year 1300. The gown has a stain that is almost impossible to remove. It is uncertain if the stain was present from the very beginning.

“In a few tragic cases of individual family financial crises recorded in Tingen, the police noticed the existence of the puppet. It was always placed in the children’s bedroom, on the side table next to the bed.

“A few Nighthawks accepted the request and started an investigation on the puppet.

“The initial evaluation determined that it brought misfortune, causing people around it to be unlucky and find themselves in danger. Finally, they would die one after another. It only took two weeks for the tester to reach the brink of bankruptcy.

“The puppet doesn’t have any living traits. It doesn’t have any inclinations of escaping the seal.

“Through extended periods of experimentation, we discovered that as long as one does not come within ten meters of it for more than half an hour a day, one wouldn’t be tainted with misfortune. If misfortune has befallen someone, the person will immediately have his situation turn for the better as long as the misfortune is transferred to another person.

“Appendix: The puppet first appeared in the house of an old lady,

Tess, who lived in the Lower Street of Iron Cross Street. She was a toymaker. Due to old age and her husband's severe illness, with both her children passing on early, she had no choice but to move to the Iron Cross Street's Lower Street.

"This was the last toy she sold. She exchanged the puppet for some poison hemlock and ended her and her husband's lives, having starved for more than three days."

As Klein recalled the information of Sealed Artifact 3-0625, he felt even more doubtful and horrified.

Didn't it say the puppet doesn't have living traits? Didn't it say that it doesn't have any inclinations of escaping the seal?

What did I see just now!?

What dragged it back in the end?

The symbol that was drawn on the paper that it unfurled, what does it mean?

That scene earlier was like how a psychotic murderer deals with his victim as the victim slams on the gates heavily and cries for help desperately, only to be dragged back...

While these thoughts flooded him, Klein decided not to make any decision on his own.

He returned to the duty room and pulled a rope.

The rope tightened, the gear spun, and there was suddenly a hurried ringtone that rang on the second floor of the Blackthorn Security Company.

Leonard Mitchell and the other Sleepless who were playing cards in the recreation room immediately put down their poker cards and ran to the basement.