

Chapter 164: Miserable Wretches

The color of fresh blood was reflected in Klein's eyes as they intently locked onto the flowing liquid.

Just then, there was a light cough from within the house. Old Neil spoke with a raspy voice, "Dunn, why are you here?"

Dunn's gray eyes were extremely deep. His mellow voice replied calmly, "I heard that you're sick, so we came to visit."

There was a sudden silence in the house. A few seconds later, Old Neil roared in anger and terror, "No! You're lying!"

Without waiting for Klein and company to say a word, his tone suddenly became weak.

"Yes, I know my condition isn't quite right."

Old Neil... Klein closed his eyes, but the bloody liquid that was seeping through the gap of the door didn't cease.

Then, Old Neil raised his voice and said, "All this time, I've never hurt anyone, nor have I thought of hurting anyone! I never—I never betrayed the secrets of the Nighthawks, one even one! At the most—at the most, I've made claims for undeserving expenses. I really haven't committed any evil!"

"Klein!" He suddenly shouted like he usually did. "I told you about the maxim of the Mystery Pryers, 'Do as you wish, but do no harm.' I still live by this saying. I'd rather be patient—I'd

rather endure than do things that will harm others...”

With that said, he pleaded sincerely, in fear, “Dunn, Royale, Klein, go back. Go back. Wait till tomorrow—by tomorrow, I’ll be back to normal. I swear—I swear to the Goddess, I wouldn’t harm anyone. Really!”

Dunn closed his eyes and asked extremely gently, “What do you plan on doing? What have you been trying to do all this while?”

“Me?” Old Neil was confused at first before he described with a tone filled with hope, “I’m trying to resurrect Celeste. Dunn, I found a way, I’m on the right track!

“You should have heard about it. Back then, I made a mistake during the ritualistic magic to treat her illness, so I failed. I failed to save her. I now know it was because I had yet to master mysticism. But now, I now have enough knowledge and experience to complete everything! It’s regrettable that I wasn’t inspired by the maxim of the Mystery Pryers and Daly’s example. I missed the best opportunity. If-if I was a High-Sequence Beyonder, all of this would become extremely easy.” As he spoke, Old Neil’s voice sounded tearful, “No, I cannot give up again... Dunn, go back. Go back, please. I beg of you.”

Klein clenched his teeth as he heard the Captain ask emotionally, “How do you plan on resurrecting Celeste?”

Old Neil instantly became very excited.

“I’ll use the ‘Alchemical Life’ method to create an immortal body for her. Dunn, you might not know of it, but Sequence 4 Beyonders from the Church of Earth Mother are good at this. The corresponding Sequence in the Savant pathway can barely do it as well. Yes, I will complete it with the aid of God’s favor.

“Then, I’ll summon her spirit from the spirit world and pray for God’s help to combine her spirit and body together.

“Isn’t it a great idea?”

Dunn lifted the corner of his lips forcefully and said, “Yes, it’s a great idea. Old Neil, let us in. Perhaps we can help you.”

“...Dunn, are you still not willing to let me off the hook?” Old Neil pleaded, “Go back, just go back. I’ll return to normal tomorrow, really. Dunn, I swear I’ll never steal your coffee beans again. Klein, Royale, I swear I won’t make you help me with my undeserved claims! Really!”

In Klein’s and Royale’s blurry vision, Dunn lowered his head before lifting it up again. “Old Neil, you’re misunderstanding something. We’re here to visit you. You are our teammate. You’re sick, and you aren’t well. We definitely needed to visit you. Open the door. Let us see you so that we can be certain. If you’re really okay, we’ll return immediately. As you know, there are especially many missions recently. We have to monitor the asylum while we take care of various other sudden incidents.”

Old Neil hesitated for a moment before saying, “There’s really nothing serious about my condition, really. I’ll recover by tomorrow.”

The bloody water that flowed out through the gap under the door went down the stairs, towards the stone path, and onto the garden’s soil.

“Old Neil, we’ve known each other for about fifteen years now, right? We’ve worked on countless missions together. I’m really concerned and worried about you. I have to see you with my own eyes before I’ll be at ease,” Dunn said gently.

“...Alright,” Old Neil pouted. “There’s really nothing wrong with me.”

With a creak, the door opened slowly. Klein quickly wiped his eyes and allowed his sight to return to normal.

Then, he saw that the carpet in the lobby was red and sticky, covered in blood and hair.

He looked forward and up, only to realize that the living room’s floor, ceiling, round table, piano, and chairs were all covered in the same disgusting, sticky and hairy liquid.

Old Neil’s head hung in the air, connected to the ceiling by a thick liquid. His forehead and cheeks each had a pair of eyes. They were cold and ruthless eyes with no eyelashes.

The piano’s keys were dancing on their own, playing a melodious tune.

“Dunn, look. I’m really okay,” Old Neil said with a radiant smile. “Royale, Klein, you think so too, right?”

The moment he opened his mouth, Klein saw the same thick, hairy, and bloody liquid flowing inside it.

Dunn’s gray eyes shimmered as he chatted like everything was normal.

“Old Neil, where did you learn the Alchemical Life and resurrection ritual from?”

Old Neil replied excitedly, “I heard it. I tried the first part, and confirmed its authenticity! It’s a gift from God! He kept describing it in my ears. He kept describing, He is—He is...”

Old Neil’s voice came to a halt. More than ten seconds later, he continued in fear and at an apparent loss, “He is the Hidden Sage...”

The Hidden Sage? Isn’t that the non-anthropomorphic god that the Moses Ascetic Order believes in? The god that was resurrected, bringing about evil and corruption... The Moses Ascetic Order has the complete Mystery Pryer Sequence... Klein’s heart stirred as many thoughts came to him.

Upon mentioning the Hidden Sage, Old Neil seemed to finally awaken. He looked around vacantly and observed everything.

In the indescribable silence, his six eyes looked towards Dunn, and he said with a bitter smile, “So it turns out—it turns out that I’ve already become a monster...”

Without waiting for Dunn and the others to reply, Old Neil suddenly revealed a smile, one of groveling, fear, and cowardice.

“Let me go. I’ll go deep into the mountains and won’t appear again. I’ll never harm anyone. I’ll only attempt my ritual quietly, really. Let me go, please. I beg of you.”

Just then, Klein felt something illusory shatter before his eyes.

Then, Old Neil’s four cold-looking lashless eyes flashed with a dark glow and locked onto Dunn. His expression suddenly turned cold.

“You’re pulling me into a dream!

“No, it’s useless! My eyes can see through all of that!”

The sticky blood that covered the ceiling, floor, and walls started squirming, like a giant opening its mouth to swallow Klein and company. Old Neil’s head grew blurry like overlapping afterimages.

Klein didn’t fumble for his revolver; instead, he extended his hand into his pocket and planned to use his Slumber Charm.

Suddenly, everything calmed down before him. The sticky, bloody liquid suddenly turned placid like a still lake.

Old Neil lost his coldness, hatred, desire, and all other expressions. He became quiet and peaceful.

It was unknown when Dunn had thrown Sealed Artifact 3-0611 into the blood.

The four lashless eyes on Old Neil’s forehead and cheeks slowly closed, seemingly having lost the desire to keep them open.

Any living creature that came into contact with the Peaceful Hair Strands would turn peaceful and lose all motivation until the end of their life.

Dunn, Klein, and Royale drew their guns at the same time and aimed at Old Neil’s head.

Then, Old Neil revealed a look of extreme fear. He was struggling, his strong desire to live fought against the effects of Sealed Artifact 3-0611.

The four extra eyes disappeared. The wrinkles at the corners of his eyes and mouth were still deep, his hair was still white, his crimson eyes were still turbid, just like when Klein had first met him.

“Dunn, do you remember the time I saved you...

“Royale, do you remember when I helped you redeem your family’s lives...

“Klein, do you remember how I taught you mysticism every day? Do you remember when we talked about how to make claims? Do you remember how I made you hand-ground coffee? Do you remember when we fought against a Mandated Punisher Rampager?”

...

The illusory pleading echoed in Klein’s ears, and his right hand that was holding the revolver trembled. He found it difficult to pull the trigger.

Bang! Bang!

The two silver demon hunting bullets flew out and penetrated Old Neil’s head one after another.

Klein watched as the familiar, abnormal face revealed a hopeless

expression. He saw the man's skull tear open, the red and white within spurting in all directions.

The sticky blood that coated their surroundings started shrinking as it flowed back into Old Neil's broken head that had fallen to the ground. Dunn and Royale lowered their guns simultaneously, and all was silent.

Klein looked at everything before him—Old Neil's "corpse" was becoming a ball of rotten flesh. He saw that there was a pair of eyes, crimson and crystal clear, yet incredibly pained amidst the blood and flesh.

He felt like everything that had happened was just a dream and found it impossible to bring himself into believing the sequence of events and how it had ended.

He stood dumbfounded as he saw Dunn take two steps forward, his figure stooped.

Dunn looked at Old Neil's "corpse" and muttered heavily, "We are guardians, but also a bunch of miserable wretches that are constantly fighting against threats and madness."