

Chapter 96: Daly's Guess

By the afternoon of the next day, Klein had fully recovered from any signs of exhaustion. He walked into the Blackthorn Security Company with steady footsteps.

"Good morning, Klein. The weather is so cool and beautiful today, I'm looking forward to tonight's feast." Rozanne who was wearing a light green dress greeted him with a smile from behind the reception desk.

Klein deliberately touched his stomach and said, "Miss Rozanne, you shouldn't be talking about that so early in the morning! I'm already sick of today's mission that has yet to arrive. I only hope for the evening to arrive sooner."

"Me too." Rozanne chuckled.

She looked to the left and right, then she beckoned for Klein to come closer. She lowered her voice and said, "I met Madam Daly earlier."

"Spirit Medium Madam Daly?" Klein asked in surprise.

The most famous Spirit Medium from Awwa County had been living at Enmat Harbor all this time, and it wasn't a short distance from Tingen.

"Yes." Rozanne gave a firm nod and said, "But, she has already left. Ah, she is my ideal Beyonder. If I were to become a Spirit Medium, I would leave Tingen and travel all around the world by myself. To Intis, to Feysac, to Feynapotter, to the Southern

Continent; to the vast prairies, primitive forests, and snow-covered plains!"

Lady, be aware of the Nighthawks' rules... Klein shook his head in amusement.

"Even Madam Daly has to apply and obtain permission to leave Enmat Harbor."

"I know that, but you can't just remind me about it now and shatter my dreams!" Rozanne said peeved. "The truth is, I would never become a Beyonder. It's too dangerous. I don't know when I'll die from sudden gunfire. From what I've seen, Beyonders are basically people who turn themselves into monsters to fight against monsters."

"Archbishop Chanis said that we are guardians, but also a bunch of miserable wretches that are constantly fighting against threats and madness," Klein replied, sighing. The quote had left a deep impression on him.

To fight against the abyss, we have to endure the corruption of the abyss.

The two of them fell silent in unison. Rozanne was the first to break the silence as she pursed her lips towards the partition and said, "Captain wanted you to meet him when you arrived."

"Alright." With his hat and cane in hand, Klein passed through the partition and entered Dunn's office after knocking on the door.

A middle-aged gentleman with deep and serene gray eyes and a

high hairline put down his coffee cup and said with a smile.

“Daly was here.”

“Can’t say that I’m surprised; Rozanne had just informed me,” Klein replied with a smile.

Dunn didn’t mind his humor but sighed.

“Daly was just transferred to the Backlund diocese, which is the world’s busiest and most crowded city. They have the highest population of Beyonders and the most opportunities... She has a higher chance of becoming an archbishop or a senior deacon than me.”

“Why?” Klein asked curiously as he took a seat.

Dunn thought for nearly twenty seconds before answering, “She has a unique talent in mastering and exploiting Sequence potions... I’ve mentioned the internal rule of the Nighthawks before. If you want to consume the next potion in the Sequence, you’ll have to wait three years and go through a strict examination to prevent any loss of control. But typically, three years is far from sufficient. I spent three years going from a Sleepless to a Midnight Poet. It took me nine years to go from a Midnight Poet to Nightmare—a full nine years. And to go from Nightmare to Sequence 6, I’ve already spent three years. I have no idea how many more years I need.

“When our bodies age and our energy starts to decline, even if we overcome the latent dangers, we shouldn’t attempt advancing anymore. This is because the risk of losing control at that point is so high that no one is willing to risk it.

“As for Daly, she is different from me and most Beyonders. After she became a Corpse Collector, she handed in a special application after only a year. She hoped to consume the follow-up potion immediately. What surprised everyone was that she actually passed through the stricter examination and obtained the Gravedigger potion.

“It only took her one more year to go from Gravedigger to Spirit Medium. Heh, this year will be her fifth year as a Beyonder. She is only twenty-four this year, young enough to have many opportunities ahead of her.”

On the surface, she's the most famous spirit medium in Awwa County, but she truly is an actual Spirit Medium... Isn't that acting? Old Neil had apparently mentioned that Madam Daly had similar tendencies... Klein felt that he had grasped the key reason for Madam Daly's quick ascension through the ranks.

“Captain, you're young enough as well. You're only in your thirties,” Klein comforted Dunn, but added in his heart, *It's just that your memory isn't that great...*

Dunn drank a sip of his coffee. He shook his head and smiled bitterly.

“Why didn't you ask Madam Daly about her method of mastering and exploiting Sequence potions?” Klein purposely asked.

Dunn put down his coffee cup and massaged his temples as he spoke.

“She told me to become a true Nightmare... I don't know what that means.”

Play the role of a Nightmare. Man, a Nightmare sounds sinister...
Klein creased his eyebrows and temporarily fell silent.

Then, Dunn took out his smoking pipe and sniffed at it.

“Daly and I discussed the possibility of Seer’s follow-up potion being Clown. Assuming that the member of the Seers didn’t lie to you, she brought up an interesting hypothesis.”

“What hypothesis?” Klein asked hurriedly, his eyes turning bright.

He had once used a divination method to determine if Clown was the follow-up potion of Seer. The answer he received had been vague, but it seemed close to being a confirmation.

Dunn’s deep and serene gray eyes swept his gaze at him while he said in thought, “A normal Sequence pathway proceeds in a stepped manner. They advance according to a particular similarity. For instance, Sleepless, Midnight Poet, and Nightmare are all obviously related to the darkness of the night, as well as the peaceful sleep and tranquility that is generated from sleep. It can be imagined that every subsequent Sequence would have identical traits, only with more power and a wider scope. They might be linked to secrets, disaster, horror, the crimson moon, etc...

“Certain Sequence pathways appear unrelated, but when we analyze them in detail, we can still find similarities, such as Assassin and Instigator. Their implied similarity is to bring people calamities, pain, sorrow, and despair. Hence, the follow-up Sequences should abide by this pattern.”

Klein paid close attention and asked proactively, “But Seer and Clown doesn’t have such a connection?”

“Yeah.” Dunn nodded and said, “Daly believes that there might be Sequence pathways that share another kind of relationship. After all, there’s a lot we do not know.”

He paused for a moment before saying, “Daly said that, in this sort of pathway, the low to mid Sequence potions would respectively provide the Beyonder an ability that seems brand new and unrelated to the others. When the Beyonder reaches a point of qualitative change, these abilities will mix into an abnormally powerful ‘job’ that includes them all.”

“In other words, the pathway doesn’t advance step by step, but instead it’s a relationship of dissection and combination.”

Klein listened intently, but he felt lost. Dunn lifted his right hand and said, “A normal Sequence pathway advances a bit at a time, just like a child growing up. A growing child becomes taller, stronger, heavier, and more mature from a young age.”

“While special Sequence pathways are more like...”

Having said this, Dunn lifted up his thumb.

“This is Sequence 9.”

Then, he lifted up his index finger.

“This is Sequence 8.”

Then, he gradually lifted up the rest of his fingers.

“Each and every finger is independent, and doesn’t seem to be related to the others. But in the end...”

When he said the word ‘end,’ Dunn clenched his fingers into a tight fist!

“I understand now.” Klein was suddenly enlightened. He agreed with Lady Daly’s guess and the Captain’s metaphor.

Maybe that’s how it is? He nodded in deep thought.

Sequence 8 Clown and Sequence 9 Seer are completely different and have brand new abilities. And according to the description from the Nighthawks’ intelligence, the corresponding Sequence 7 and Sequence 8 Clown don’t share any similarities either...

Klein fell silent for a while before curiously pressing on, “At which stage would the different abilities combine to form a qualitative change?”

Dunn took another sip of coffee and chuckled.

“Daly and I guessed Sequence 4!”

“Why?” Klein blurted out.

“Because according to the way the churches categorize Sequences, Sequence 4 is the beginning point of the higher Sequences. It is said that merely achieving such a level brings about qualitative changes in vitality and energy. In ancient times, Sequence 4 Beyonders were qualified to be called demigods in the Fourth Epoch. It’s a pity that such Beyonders are

very rare in this era,” Dunn said wistfully.

“If Sequence 4 to Sequence 1 are High-Sequence Beyonders, then who are the Low-Sequence Beyonders?” Klein asked with interest.

“Sequences 9 through 7 were considered as Low-Sequences a thousand years ago. But, in recent centuries, Beyonders are few in number and each church has listed Sequence 7 as a Mid-Sequence.” Dunn laughed in a self-deprecating manner.

Sequence 9 and Sequence 8 are Low-Sequences. Then, Sequences 7 through 5 are Mid-Sequences. Finally, those Sequence 4 and above are High-Sequences... Klein repeated in his head and inevitably felt a yearning for that.

Emperor Roselle was a High-Sequence Beyond!

However, the higher the Sequence, the greater the risk of losing control... Klein thought to himself in fear.

He asked as though in a seemingly casual manner, “What is the Sequence 4 potion for the Church of the Goddess called?”

“In actual fact, I’m not sure. My security clearance isn’t high enough for me to be privy to that information. I’ll be able to read them when I become a diocese bishop or Nighthawks deacon.” Dunn shook his head and smiled. “In fact, at least half of the Church’s thirteen archbishops and nine senior deacons at the top of the Church’s hierarchy are below Sequence 4. Hmm, that’s just me being optimistic. The archbishop Ince Zangwill, who became wanted, lost control when he tried to advance to Sequence 4.”

The one who stole Sealed Artifact '0-08?' His potion was apparently called Gatekeeper... Klein thought and probed, "Is Sleepless Sequence 5 Gatekeeper?"

"No, that's in Spirit Medium's pathway. You'll be allowed to access that information when you reach Sequence 7 and become a bishop or a Captain of a Nighthawks team."

Gatekeeper is Sequence 5 of the Spirit Medium pathway? Does it mean that it's keeping watch over the gates to Hell? Or keeping watch over the gates to the Spirit World? Klein guessed.

"Alright, go to Old Neil and continue with your studies." Dunn smiled and said, "Don't forget about dinner tonight, at Old Will's Restaurant. Reservations have been made. I'll introduce you to the rest of the Nighthawks officially."

"Alright, I've already prepared the money." Klein forced a smile.

"No, there's no need. Have you forgotten that we have additional bonuses? The part about you completing an assigned mission." Dunn waved.

Klein was momentarily taken aback before replying with a beaming smile, "Alright, Captain."

He turned around and walked towards the door, while counting inwardly, *Three, two, one... Eh, why didn't Captain call me back?*

Klein dragged out "one" for a very long time, only to be surprised that Captain Dunn Smith hadn't forgotten add anything.

A miracle...

...

In the armory, Old Neil stole a glance at Klein, who was in a good mood.

“Don’t be obsessed with tonight’s dinner. You still have a lot of things to learn, such as more ritualistic magic, ancient Hermes, Dragonese, Elvish, and many more.”

“Yeah, every afternoon besides your day off, you have to have at least two hours of combat training with an instructor.”

“Combat training? Captain didn’t mention it...” Klein was shocked.

Old Neil nodded and didn’t hesitate to answer, “He forgot.”