

## I! Cleaner 26

Chapter 26: 0022 Drinking is harmful to health... Being too confident is also\_1

"Give it to him, I don't need the menu."

Adjusting the hem of her bright red, high-waist, tight-fitting dress, the woman with red hair, even more striking than the lingering sunset hues, sat gracefully by the restaurant window and waved off the menu handed by the waiter. She deftly ordered,

"Start with a dozen Bass pale ales to whet the appetite, awaken a bottle of Bordeaux Margaux to clear the malt taste of the beer, then a bottle each of affordable classics from Bowmore, Talisker, Glenfiddich.

Finally, wait until I've... we've both had enough, then bring out a Macallan whiskey aged in sherry casks to finish, and a bottle of Captain Morgan's black rum to go.

Hmm... that should be all for now. Oh, right, put the name Leon Laine on the tab and send the bill to the Purification Bureau under the police department. We'll pay on payday."

"..."

Watching the red-haired woman settle the menu... or rather the drinks menu in under five seconds, and even set up a tab, Leon held another menu and couldn't help but feel a bit uneasy. With a forced smile, he reminded,

"Chief, everything you've ordered is liquor, shouldn't we order some food?"

"Ah, it's fine, you eat if you want, don't mind me, as long as I have something to drink."

"..."

\*Drink without eating anything? So you're planning to drink yourself to death here?\*

Opening the menu to the liquor section, Leon found the types of drinks the woman had ordered, and saw five or six prominent "spirits" labels in dark colors. He felt a tingling sensation on his scalp.

According to the Kingdom's commerce department's guidelines, beverages with an alcohol content of over 30% had to be labeled as spirits. But these were not just spirits; they bore dark color labels meaning the alcohol content was at least 40%.

\*Why on earth did I think it was a good idea to treat her to drinks!\*

Looking at the menu that wasn't overpriced but certainly not cheap, Leon regretted his decision deeply but couldn't bring himself to spend too much money.

After much hesitation, he finally picked a shepherd's pie, layered with lamb, mashed potatoes, and lettuce. He also ordered a small assortment of veal with vegetables for after the meal, intending to pack it up for his younger siblings at home, then nervously awaited his chief's performance.

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"Whew~ How nostalgic~"

Downing half a dozen light beers with an elegance that Leon couldn't comprehend, while the other patrons whispered among themselves, Olivia swept her red hair behind her ear. She leaned down to sniff lightly at the opening of the decanter, and a cute blush spread across her cheeks.

"Raspberry, toasted bread, a rich coffee aroma, and a faint scent of truffles~ It's been so long since I've had such a refined drink~"

"..."

\*Could it really be that good?\*

Spooked by the appreciative look on the red-haired woman's face, Leon secretly sniffed but only caught a light fruity aroma, no trace of anything else, which made him frown in doubt.

\*Bread and coffee... must be a trick.\*

"What? Don't believe me?"

Noticing Leon's expression, the red-haired woman picked up a glass, poured him half a glass of crimson wine, and smiled as she handed it over.

"Want to try?"

"Um..."

Slightly irritated by the pungent smell of alcohol, Leon, who didn't drink, instinctively wrinkled his nose and wanted to refuse.

But, considering he had paid for this drink, and quite a bit at that, his hand moved against his will and he accepted the glass. Following the method the red-haired woman had taught him, he took a large sip and swished the wine around his mouth before swallowing.

"So, how was it?"

Watching Leon's face scrunch up in reaction to the sourness, the red-haired woman rested her chin on her hand, observing his flushed cheeks. She teased him, "For someone new to wine, it's usually better to start with something sweeter. This more robust dry wine might be a bit too much... hehe, little guy, want some more?"

"Hiss..."

Taking a couple of breaths to ease the slight unpleasant sourness around his teeth, Leon's eyes unexpectedly brightened.

"Yes! And I'd like a glass of everything else as well!"

His quick change of attitude wasn't due to him finding the allure of alcohol or being agitated by the red-haired woman's teasing manner, but rather because...

[Upon first tasting a "craft" level fine wine, you have activated the Black Iron Level Badge "Newcomer to the Wine Country"]

[Newcomer to the Wine Country: No need to persuade me, I know, that loving it will harm my life, but that which fails to bring me joy is longer and duller than life itself.]

[Equip Effect: For a period after consuming alcoholic beverages, fear, trepidation, and panic, among other negative emotions, will have a weakened impact on you.]

[Advancement Route: Taste ten kinds of fine wines above the "craft" level to automatically advance this badge to the bronze badge "Epicure of the Wine Country," current progress 1/10.]

[Hidden Traits (No Need to Equip): Your alcohol tolerance has greatly increased.]

...

\*Never thought you'd have a knack for drinking...\*

Seeing Leon's eyes light up with excitement, the red-haired woman, who initially just wanted to tease him, felt energized herself. She poured him a high-proof whiskey, tapping the golden liquid through the glass as she explained with a smile,

"This is a single malt whiskey aged over ten years in a barrel, its aroma similar to cinnamon and vanilla, quite strong but with a very smooth finish if you sip it properly.

Like this... now, if your tongue is sensitive enough, you should be able to taste the matured flavors akin to dried fruits and oak... Alright~"

Before she could finish her introduction, Leon picked up the glass and downed it in one gulp, causing him to cough and bring tears to his eyes, the woman with red hair couldn't help but shake her head in amusement,

"You drank too fast, you know? This one had an alcohol content four times higher than the last one, wasn't that spicy hot? You... huh? You want more?"

"Yes!"

After blinking his eyes and slowly recovering, Leon glanced at the increased alcohol capacity noted under "Newcomer to the Wine Country" on his badge panel. With a mind set on earning more badges, he confidently nodded and said,

"I feel like my alcohol tolerance is actually quite good. Even if it might not match yours, it's probably not that far off... Well, I'll just have one glass each."

Oh? Not far off, huh?

As if he had opened Pandora's box, with those words, the red-haired beauty, who initially planned to have a small drinking session, raised an eyebrow and grinned, signaling the waiter again.

"Then let's drink to our heart's content today~ Don't worry, I'll cover the rest, no need to spend your salary~"

When a new round of drinks was brought over by six breathless waiters, the red-haired beauty smiling as she stood to pour became the last image in Leon's memory for the night...

...

"Ugh... why is the sun up again?"

Holding his throbbing head, Leon woke with a start from his small bed at home, feeling hungry. Staring in shock at the sun that had strangely reappeared above the horizon, he widened his eyes in surprise.

\*When we started drinking, the sun had just set! Did I sleep an entire day away?\*

As he shakily called up his badge panel and saw the brilliantly shining "Martyr of the Wine Country," he was stunned for a moment and found his lips trembling involuntarily.

\*Black Iron - bronze - silver - gold... gold?\*

\*Did I level up three badges in one night? How much did I drink?!!!\*