

What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! #Chapter 2 : What Was the Point of Crossing Over Without a Cheat - Read What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 2 : What Was the Point of Crossing Over Without a Cheat

Chapter 2: What Was the Point of Crossing Over Without a Cheat

Two minutes later, Leon left the room holding a money pouch filled with gold and silver coins, feeling quite satisfied. He ignored the sounds of bitter crying behind him, as well as the repeated curses of “robber” that followed only after he had gone far away.

After turning into an alley, he made sure no one was around, then took out the pouch and opened it. Inside were three gold coins stamped with a shield, each worth ten thalers, and six one-thaler silver coins stamped with a wolf's head.

He took two silver wolf coins from his own pocket and put them in, then took out two gold shields from the pouch and played with them in his hand.

The Church did indeed have a system for punishing malicious debt defaults, but if Leon chose not to report it, then naturally no one would know.

What he had said to Lia Foster earlier was basically all bluff. The days when you could just slip a heretical token on someone and have them thrown into the Inquisition were long gone; the Church's laws had undergone multiple reforms.

The Inquisition was still not exactly a clean place, but trying witches was a major case that underwent strict scrutiny and required complete evidence.

If Leon really framed her using such methods, then when she counter-accused him, the one in trouble would actually be Leon.

But how would a woman who thought the Church staff coming to collect debts was just a menial worker know these inner workings? Such petty intimidation tricks were still very effective on most people.

Eighteen thalers—three thousand six hundred fenni. That was no small gain for Leon.

The wages of low-ranking Inquisitors were not high.

Leon worked almost every day without rest from morning till night, yet in a month he could only get twenty-three thalers, equivalent to four thousand six hundred fenni—about the same as his previous life's monthly salary of four to five thousand as an overworked corporate drone.

Even so, without deliberately skimming anything, being an Inquisitor feared by ordinary people and receiving a stable salary from the Church was still far better than being a farmer or dock porter in this world.

Given the prices in this world, as long as one did not spend extravagantly, it was still possible to save a little.

Leon had once tried to do this job properly, until an investigation into an underworld gang smuggling Magical Beast materials.

He was attacked by a gang member attempting to break out and escape with a crossbow bolt.

Fortunately, the bolt did not penetrate him and only grazed his left upper arm. Unfortunately, it was coated with poison extracted from a Magical Beast.

After being treated by the Church-affiliated Holy Healing Monastery, his life was no longer in danger, but it left behind some aftereffects.

At the healed wound, a patch of purple scar tissue remained. When it flared up, it itched unbearably, as if the itch reached straight into the bones. If left untreated, it would worsen into intense pain—so painful that one would want to tear the arm off.

This world had no proper workers' compensation system.

The Church only provided him with emergency treatment; the aftereffects were not within their coverage.

Because of this, Leon had to spend one-third of his monthly salary buying expensive holy water from the Holy Healing Monastery to apply and ease the symptoms.

Even then, to save money he had to stretch out the intervals between doses, enduring several days of discomfort every month.

If he kept doing this job, who knew what kind of trouble might happen again someday.

But given Leon's current situation, he could not afford to lose this already rare job in this world.

Without sufficient savings, losing a stable source of income while dragging along such an illness would mean a miserable death sooner or later.

Working earnestly and responsibly for the Church only to end up being continuously squeezed by it—Leon had finally figured it out. Not even five thousand a month, and you wanted him to risk his life?

Slacking off a bit and skimming some oil was what he truly owed himself. Handing these fines over to such a Church was purely feeding them to the dogs.

Not to mention, given what he knew about his superior, those fines would ultimately be pocketed by the director anyway—far better for them to go straight into his own pocket!

It was just that, at his lowly position, the oil he could skim was extremely limited. Today's situation already counted as striking it rich.

People died for wealth; birds died for food.

Who would have thought that after crossing into this world, he would still be trapped by money just like in his previous life as a corporate drone.

“Sigh, what's the point of crossing over without a cheat?”

Complaining in his heart, Leon casually tossed the gold coin once before slipping it into the inner pocket of his clothes, then went back to report in.

After finishing a day of running around town collecting debts, he returned to the Inquisition. By then, the sky had already grown dark.

He quickened his pace along the corridor toward the submission office. Just after turning a corner, he unexpectedly came face to face with two tall men walking side by side in armor.

Seeing the crest on their armor, Leon was slightly startled.

Before he could react, the knight closer to him rather forcefully reached out and shoved him aside, coldly leaving behind a single “Move” without even turning his head.

Leon did not comment on it at all and obediently retreated to the wall.

From their attire and crests, he immediately recognized them as fully appointed knights with rank titles within the Church.

Within the Church, the status of Inquisitors could not be compared with that of these knights.

Fully appointed knights were the Church's elite—transcendent beings blessed by the Four Gods.

The director of the Hamel Town Inquisition, Caron Eso, was likewise a first-rank transcendent blessed by the gods. Even though he commanded over thirty lower-ranking Inquisitors, within the Church's hierarchy he was only equivalent to the lowest-ranked fully appointed knight.

But the reason Leon dared not make a sound was not just because of these two knights who had suddenly appeared in the Inquisition.

He glanced sideways and saw that behind the two knights, his immediate superior—Caron, the director of the Hamel Town Inquisition—was wearing an unthinkably gentle and accommodating expression, walking and conversing with a short elderly man, nodding and bowing from time to time.

The old man wore a red priestly robe embroidered with the Creator Church's emblem: a four-pointed star surrounded by orderly geometric patterns. At a glance, he was clearly a high-ranking bishop.

Behind the two of them followed a young woman dressed as a nun.

She was exceptionally tall. Her pure white nun's dress was also embroidered with the Creator Church's emblem.

Ebony-black hair, glossy and smooth, was wrapped in a white veil and braided into a long plait hanging down her back, with a long fringe on the left side covering her left eye.

She cradled a thick tome in her arms, looking like a secretary assisting the bishop with clerical work.

But if she were a secretary, her attitude was a bit too casual.

She did not join their conversation at all. Even when the old man spoke, she showed no sign of listening attentively, merely gazing around with a cold, indifferent expression.

There was no doubt that a highly esteemed figure from the Church had come to visit.

In the corridor, aside from Leon, there were several of his colleagues. Like him, they all stood properly against the wall, bowing their heads in salute as the elderly man and the nun passed by. Leon followed suit without saying a word.

As he lowered his head, he did not notice that when the young nun passed by him, she deliberately turned her head and examined him several times.

Leon formed a guess in his heart. Those two knights, whose status was comparable to that of their director, were merely guards. Most likely, a major figure from the Creator Church was passing through Hamel Town for some reason and had temporarily come to inspect the Church's institutions.

After these important figures passed them by and disappeared around another corner under the director's accompaniment, Leon and the other Inquisitors finally raised their heads and let out long breaths.

An older Inquisitor spotted Leon and immediately put on a stern face, beckoning him over.

“What is it, Captain?” Leon walked over.

“Come with me—quickly!!” the Inquisitor who served as Leon’s captain urged him, leading him at a run up the stairs on the other side.

Leon followed in confusion. When he saw the captain reach the door of the director’s office upstairs, he glanced around and then actually took out the office key and opened the door.

The captain gestured for Leon to keep watch outside. He darted in and out quickly, emerging with a bulging black cloth sack in his hands.

He then stuffed the dark sack into Leon’s arms and whispered:

“Listen carefully. Hurry and take this out, then deliver it to Snake Mouth Alley in the east of the city. At the deepest part of the alley there’s an old junk shop, with an owl painted on the door...”

Leon’s heart skipped a beat as he sensed what this was about. Just as he was about to open the sack to see what was inside, the captain barked, “Don’t look! Absolutely don’t open it before you get there!”

“This is the stuff confiscated from this morning’s prisoner, right?” Leon asked in a low voice.

“Don’t ask. Just do it!”

The captain said in a commanding tone. “The shop owner is a sharp-mouthed, skinny old man. Tell him ‘Roddy introduced me,’ and he’ll understand. Give him the goods and he’ll give you money. At seven in the evening, bring the money back here to me...”

Hearing this, Leon was completely certain of what was going on.

Earlier that morning, the Inquisition had caught a smuggler illegally selling Magical Beast materials.

From the disguised cart stall, they had seized a batch of processed low-tier Magical Beast corpses and a small piece of Mana.

The Church explicitly forbade the trade of Magical Beasts, especially Mana extracted from them.

This was because Magical Beasts were the evil creations of the Primordial Witch Moilai, and Mana was the crystallization of her evil power. Only witches blessed by Moilai could extract Mana from Magical Beasts.

However, high-purity Mana was said to have miraculous effects in slowing aging.

Many wealthy individuals secretly hired alchemists to continuously purchase Mana to research elixirs of immortality.

Mana could also serve as a catalyst to activate the power contained in many Magical Beast materials, allowing the creation of various effect potions and magical tools, letting ordinary people without blessings obtain special powers.

As a result, Mana and other Magical Beast materials had always been in short supply on the black market.

High-purity Mana could rival high-quality gemstones in price and was sold by the carat.

With such enormous profits, no amount of explicit prohibition could stop people from taking risks—not only smugglers, but also some Inquisitors.

Caron, the director of the Hamel Town Inquisition, was one of them.

He secretly embezzled confiscated funds and resold seized goods.

Within this Inquisition, it was hardly a secret anymore. Compared to him, Leon pocketing a bit of fine money was nothing more than child's play.

Most likely, after the contraband was seized, it never went through the normal process of being archived in the evidence room, but was instead sent to the director's office.

Then the director would send someone close to him to find specific channels outside to fence the goods and bring the money back. It seemed that the one usually responsible for running these errands for the director was this very captain above Leon.

But today, with important figures suddenly coming to inspect the Inquisition, the director probably had not anticipated it either.

To prevent those big shots from seeing things they should not see when they came to his office, he likely handed the key to the captain when he went to receive them, instructing him to go upstairs in advance and take the contraband out.

“Who exactly came today...?” Leon lowered his voice and asked.

“Archbishop Rogers of the Creator Church. I heard he’s about to run for Cardinal. The woman is Bishop Weiss, supposedly the current Saintess of the Creator Church... Stop asking so much and hurry!” the captain urged impatiently.

So they really were big shots. Leon thought to himself.

The Cardinals were the joint supreme body of the Four Great Churches, composed of Cardinals selected from archbishops by each Church.

As for so-called Saints and Saintesses, they were merely a popular term—figureheads chosen from outstanding young bishops of each Church to give public sermons at major events. If nothing unexpected happened, they would all be promoted to archbishop very soon.

“Captain, this is a bit inconvenient for me...” Leon tried to refuse.

No joke—when figures of this status came to inspect, there might even be Church knights patrolling the streets outside today. If he ran into them and got questioned, it would be trouble!

“Consider it a favor I owe you! Those people are inspecting right now, and I’m on duty and can’t get away! I’ll give you money when you get back, alright?” The captain pressed Leon’s shoulder firmly.

Money—Leon felt tempted when he heard that. He had long heard that the director had accumulated a considerable fortune through such dealings, and the captain surely got a share as well.

This might be his chance to get involved.

Money—he needed it desperately. As for loyalty to this rotten Church, he did not have the slightest bit.

And the possibility of the captain stealing the key and framing him was not high. The director carried the key with him.

For someone of Leon’s level to steal it would be impossible—he never had the chance to get close. Once confronted, the captain would never be able to explain it away.

“Alright, I understand.” Leon thought for a moment before finally agreeing. “But let me check it first, okay?”

At the very least, he needed to make sure there was no mismatch in the goods or anything missing.

Otherwise, if someone had tampered with it, and it passed through his hands, he would not be able to explain himself.

“Fine, be quick.” Seeing Leon agree, the captain answered decisively and carefully kept watch for him.

Leon opened the sack, confirmed that it was indeed the contraband seized that morning and that the quantities matched, then tied the sack back up and nodded to the captain.

“Remember, don’t touch a single coin of the money you get. The amount’s already been counted. Don’t cause trouble for yourself! Go down the stairs you came from earlier and exit through the side door—don’t let anyone see you!!” After reminding him, the captain added some more details before letting Leon head downstairs.

Leon carried the large sack, which was impossible to hide, and put on an expression of “I’m just taking out the trash” as he walked toward the side door. He did not run into anyone along the way, but his heartbeat still sped up uncontrollably.

Only when the side door of the Inquisition appeared at the end of the corridor did he finally relax a little.

Since Director Caron had sent the captain to take the contraband out, he would surely also take those important figures elsewhere to stall for time. There was really no need for him to be this nervous...

Just as that thought crossed his mind, a strange, cool voice suddenly sounded behind him:

“Wait a moment.”

Leon’s entire body stiffened. His heart, which had just calmed down a little, began pounding at an unprecedented speed.

“Damn it, can’t I really be this unlucky?”

He thought to himself, struggling to keep his face unchanged as he slowly turned around—only to see that the Saintess in pure white had appeared behind him at some point, alone, staring straight at him.

Tip: You can use left, right, A and D keyboard keys to browse between chapters.