

# **What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! #Chapter 21 : Dinner Is Livelier When Everyone Eats Together - Read What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 21 : Dinner Is Livelier When Everyone Eats Together**

Chapter 21: Dinner Is Livelier When Everyone Eats Together

More than an hour later, Leon brought Rena from Estuary Village to Melissa's home to conduct another diagnosis for Sally.

After continuously taking the medicine for two full courses, Sally's symptoms had gradually improved.

Just earlier that day, amid a wave of pain, strength had returned to her upper limbs, allowing her to move them again and even sit up with someone's support.

But at the same time, she had suddenly started coughing.

Leon could not tell whether this development was good or bad, so to be safe, he hurriedly borrowed a horse, rode out of the city, and invited "Bishop Leona" over.

Rena treated Sally for about ten minutes.

In the end, she calmly nodded to the worried Melissa at the bedside and said, "The medicinal effects are the same as expected. Mrs. Sally's bodily mobility is recovering. As for the coughing, it occasionally appears during the experiments and may be related to the gradual adaptation of internal sensation. It usually eases after a couple of days. I brought some commonly used medicine with me—taking it should make her feel more comfortable."

"So... that means she's getting better?" Melissa asked cautiously.

"It would be more accurate to say that the medicine has tentatively taken effect," Rena chose her words carefully.

"In that case, we can continue administering it at the current dosage. After another two to four courses, if the effects continue to match expectations, her lower limbs may also recover a certain degree of mobility."

"I still have a chance... to walk on my own?" Sally leaned against the pillow propped at the head of the bed and turned her face toward Rena as she asked.

"Judging from the current situation, yes," Rena replied.

Melissa was overjoyed and hugged Sally's arm.

"Mom! Did you hear that?"

"Mhm..." Sally smiled and raised her hand to gently stroke the back of her daughter's hand.

When she realized that the back of Melissa's hand had become much rougher than she remembered, undisguised heartache surfaced in her eyes.

"Melissa, you've really suffered during this time..." Sally sighed deeply, extending her trembling hand to gently touch the area around Melissa's ear, where the side hair had already been cut clean.

Melissa's nose tingled, tears welling up in her eyes again, but in the end she broke into a smile and shook her head at her mother.

Being able to see her mother improving made all the hardships she had endured finally feel worthwhile.

After quite a while, Melissa calmed herself, wiped the corner of her eyes, and turned to Rena.

"Bishop... um, even if she can recover to the point of walking, is there really no chance of a cure?"

She still remembered Rena saying that the medicine could not completely cure the illness.

But seeing such a clear improvement in her mother's condition, she could not help but begin to harbor further hope.

"I'm very sorry. At present, the medicine can indeed greatly restore mobility, but the erosion of the internal organs can only be slowed slightly. Although it can extend lifespan somewhat, in the end I'm afraid... you should still prepare yourselves mentally," Rena lowered her gaze, avoiding Melissa's eyes.

"Thank you, Bishop. I already came to terms with it long ago—I was probably never meant to live very long," Sally said with an open expression, reaching out to pull Melissa into her arms.

"Being able to live like a proper person again in this final stretch, to have the chance to hold my Melissa once more—I have nothing left to ask for!"

Looking at Sally and Melissa, Rena suddenly remembered how her grandmother had once sat by her bedside like this, gently stroking her hair and holding her while saying similar words.

After a long moment, she spoke softly, "I'll continue having Inquisitor Set bring the medicine over. Since the drug trials here have shown results, I'll stay on for a while longer. These results are very important to my research, and I'll continue studying them."

"Thank you, Bishop. We will never forget your kindness."

Amid Sally and Melissa's repeated expressions of gratitude, Rena rose to take her leave.

Melissa then escorted Rena downstairs.

Leon was still waiting below.

Upon hearing the results of the treatment, he also let out a sigh of relief.

"It's good that she's improving. Melissa looked so frightened earlier—it really scared me. I thought something had happened to Mrs. Hesh."

Although he had long prepared himself mentally, if Rena's medicine had caused anything to happen to Sally, he certainly would not have felt good about it either.

"I was just too excited... suddenly seeing Mom get up by herself..." Melissa said shyly.

"In any case, it's good that the medicine works. I'll continue following up on this. We'll still need your cooperation for my research going forward," Rena turned to Leon.

"Inquisitor Set, I'll trouble you to see me off."

She herself was still not very skilled at riding horses.

This entire trip had been made with Leon escorting her on a borrowed horse.

Sharing a horse with Leon was somewhat awkward, but it was still better than her, a young woman, walking alone out of the city at night.

Leon smiled slightly when he heard this.

"Bishop, have you had dinner yet? If you don't mind, would you like to stay and eat together?"

"Well, I—"

Rena was just about to decline when Leon continued, “I happened to receive a bonus today and bought a whole roast suckling pig, with some butter-roasted potatoes. It’s probably a bit cold by now, but reheated it should still taste good. There’s also a bottle of passable apple cider from around here. It’s rare that I can barely scrape together something decent to host you—please don’t dislike it.”

Melissa looked at Leon in surprise.

She had not known he had brought back such a feast.

“Roast suckling pig...” Rena also stared blankly at Leon and subconsciously swallowed.

She usually lived quite frugally and rarely had the chance to eat so well.

“Would you be willing?” Leon signaled to Rena with his eyes.

Fortunately, Melissa was still in shock and did not notice the rather undignified look on this “Bishop Leona’s” face.

“Ah...” Rena snapped back to her senses, quickly adjusted her expression, and replied in a deliberately calm tone, “With such hospitality from the Inquisitor, how could I possibly disdain it? Very well—please forgive my intrusion this evening.”

“I—I’ll go tidy up first!” Melissa reacted at last and rushed into the hall in a fluster.

“Oh right, if Mrs. Hesh can already sit up now, would it be possible to have her come down to eat together as well? If that’s okay, I can carry her down,” Leon suddenly suggested.

“Well, with her current condition, if getting up poses no problem, then it’s not impossible. But you must be careful—don’t let the patient fall,” Rena replied after some consideration.

“Brother Leon, you don’t need to go to all that trouble. I can just bring the food upstairs later,” Melissa tried to persuade him.

“I’ll go ask Mrs. Hesh whether she’s willing,” Leon said with a smile as he headed upstairs.

“Dinner is always livelier when everyone eats together.”

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

## **What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! #Chapter 22 : Hannah Granny's Scheme - Read What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 22 : Hannah Granny's Scheme**

Chapter 22: Hannah Granny's Scheme

"Alright, shall we stop here?" Rena suddenly spoke while sitting on horseback.

Leon, seated behind her, pulled the reins and slowly brought the horse to a halt.

"This spot is fine?"

From here, the village entrance was already visible, but it was still quite some distance from Rena's house in the mountains.

"There are still quite a few people in the village who recognize me. Wearing this outfit isn't appropriate, and it's best not to let anyone see me together with you."

Supported by Leon, Rena dismounted.

She immediately removed the nun's robe draped over her body and put it away.

"That's true," Leon agreed.

After all, what they were jointly doing was illegal business.

Letting people who knew Rena witness the two of them acting together near the village carried a certain amount of risk.

Even when they usually worked in the back mountain, they tried their best to avoid drawing attention.

"Thank you for treating me today. Dinner was very delicious," Rena looked up and thanked Leon.

"No need to be so polite. After all, it was paid for with the money from selling Mana. You could say we each paid half," Leon replied with a smile.

"Hey, you didn't discuss that with me!" Rena protested, then relented, "But... fine, I guess that works."

"I'm joking. Of course this meal was on me. I already split the money as soon as I got it. Just like we agreed—twenty thousand Fenni per gram of Mana, eight hundred per Head-Hunting Rabbit. That's twenty-two thousand four hundred Fenni in total. This is your half." Leon handed Rena the pre-divided money pouch.

“Count it.”

Rena took the pouch and opened it.

Inside were five Gold Shields and six Silver Wolves—no more, no less, fifty-six Thaler Silver Coins, which was eleven thousand two hundred Fenni.

In the past, when she accumulated four months’ worth of goods and sold them to Hannah Weisland, she would receive about this much money.

This time, she had merely killed three Head-Hunting Rabbits, and she had earned over ten thousand!

Rena stared blankly at the money in the pouch.

Earlier, she had harbored some doubts about Leon’s promised purchase price of twenty thousand per gram, but now Leon had fulfilled his promise with real gold and silver.

“Thanks,” Rena carefully put the pouch away.

“We’ll earn a lot more money from here on, but be careful not to spend too extravagantly. Showing wealth easily attracts attention,” Leon reminded her.

“That’s something you should be telling yourself. Who was it that went and bought a feast the moment money came in?” Rena frowned and stared at Leon.

“It was just a one-time celebration. Don’t make it sound like you didn’t eat any. You really should’ve looked in a mirror back then—you were practically drooling!” Leon teased her.

“W-What drooling! It was only because you insisted on inviting me...” Rena lowered her head shyly and muttered softly.

“No matter what, it was really great that you stayed to eat together. I haven’t seen Mrs. Hesh and Melissa that happy in a long time. That’s all thanks to you.” Leon looked straight into Rena’s eyes and said seriously.

“I was just researching my own medicine.” Rena avoided Leon’s gaze slightly.

“But no matter what, thank you.”

“You’ve already thanked me,” Leon reminded her.

Whether it was for the meal or the money, Rena had already expressed her thanks.

“I’m thanking you for giving meaning to my research. All this time, I’ve been worried that what I was researching would end up being useless—just like back then, when I couldn’t save my grandmother... Leon, meeting you might not have been entirely a bad thing.” Rena said earnestly.

Seeing her medicine help the Hesh mother and daughter escape the shadow of illness—even if only temporarily—somewhat made up, for Rena, the regret of not being able to save her grandmother back then.

Leon stared at Rena for a while, then said, “So you always thought meeting me was a bad thing before, right?”

“What do you think? What else could it have been?” Rena snorted back.

Leon shrugged, then asked, “By the way, I wanted to ask—at the current pace of your research, is there actually any chance that Mrs. Hesh can be cured?”

Rena thought seriously for a moment, then replied, “I can’t guarantee that. Judging from the current effects, the general direction of the formula should be correct. It’s just that the medicinal effect needs to be improved. One direction is to find more effective ingredients, and the other is to use higher-purity Mana.”

“Higher-purity Mana?” Leon immediately perked up at the mention of this.

“Is there any way to increase Mana purity?”

“I don’t know. Right now, the limit I can purify to is seventy-five percent. That’s already higher than what my grandmother could achieve back then. Maybe there are more powerful Witches who can extract Mana of even higher purity,” Rena answered.

“Once the next batch ships out and we have funds, maybe we can try buying some higher-purity Mana through underground channels to test it. If it’s just for research, the cost won’t be too high. But as far as I know, Hamel Town doesn’t seem to circulate goods with purity higher than yours,” Leon pondered.

“I’ll ask around first.”

Hearing Leon say this, Rena smiled softly.

Purchasing higher-purity Mana would be an extra expense for Leon, and he was doing it both to help Sally and Melissa, and to help her research.

“Then I’ll leave it to you,” Rena smiled with narrowed eyes.

Then she turned around, lifting her lantern.

“I’ll head back now.”

“Be careful on your way.

See you tomorrow,” Leon said.

“Mm, see you tomorrow.” Rena bid Leon farewell and walked all the way to the village entrance.

When she looked back, she saw Leon still standing in the distance, holding the lantern and watching her off.

She laughed, raised her hand, and waved.

Only then did Leon mount his horse and turn back.

“Hmm hmm hmm hmm hmm...”

Rena softly hummed a little tune as she passed through the village and returned to her mountain dwelling.

Her research medicine had achieved the expected results on patients, giving her a strong sense of accomplishment.

Coupled with the slight buzz from two cups of apple cider, her mood was better than it had ever been.

That was, until she saw Hannah Weisland sitting in front of her house, holding a lantern.

“Granny Hannah?” Rena froze in place, caught completely off guard.

“Ah, Rena, you’re finally back.” Seeing Rena, a smile appeared on Hannah’s wrinkled face.

She stood up, dusted herself off, and walked over to Rena.

“Granny Hannah, it’s so late. What brings you here?” Rena asked, forcing herself to stay calm.

Seeing Hannah visit her at such a time meant to avoid attention gave her a very bad premonition.

“I haven’t seen you much lately. The tomatoes and cabbages in the field are growing well, so I brought some over for you.” Hannah smiled broadly and pointed at the vegetables in the cloth bag at her feet.

Ever since before, she would occasionally come to visit Rena, who lived here alone, and would bring vegetables harvested from the fields.

Rena had always been very grateful for Granny Hannah's care, but after Leon told her about the possibility that Hannah had been deceiving her all along, Rena's view of her inevitably changed.

"Thank you, Granny Hannah..." Rena thought for a moment, then looked seriously at Hannah.

"Is that the only reason you came?"

Hannah rubbed her hands together and pondered for a bit.

In the end, she still spoke her true purpose: "Rena, how about trying to... do that business again? The two of us, together. Let's start over."

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

## **What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! #Chapter 23 : Robbed - Read What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 23 : Robbed**

Chapter 23: Robbed

As Rena had expected, Hannah came here intending to persuade her to resume the Mana business.

"Grandma Hannah, I already explained this very clearly to you before. I have no intention of continuing anymore," Rena gave a straightforward reply.

"You should also think about stopping. Once you've been caught once, you'll already be on the Church's radar. If you're caught again, you might not be as lucky as you were this time."

Now that she had decided to cooperate with Leon, she would definitely have to cut ties with Hannah.

Even without Leon's involvement, Hannah was already someone registered by the Inquisition.

From now on, whenever Hannah entered the city, she would attract the attention of patrolling guards and Inquisitors.

The risk of being caught again was extremely high, and that would, in turn, threaten Rena as well.

She had already spoken to Hannah about this in advance.

At the time, Hannah had tried to persuade her to lie low for a while and think it over later, but Rena had firmly refused.

Rena's advice for her to stop was both for her own self-preservation and for Hannah's sake.

Yet after all this time, Hannah had still come looking for her.

"Oh my, don't say it like that. You should really think it through carefully. Otherwise, how are you going to live in the future? Have you been eating properly lately?" Hannah put on a concerned expression.

"There's no need for you to worry, Grandma. I'll figure something out myself. Anyway... this doesn't really make much money," Rena said expressionlessly as she looked straight into Hannah's eyes.

"Grandma Hannah, you should have saved up quite a bit over these past two years. That should already be enough, shouldn't it? Don't keep doing something this dangerous."

At Hannah's purchasing price, Rena's annual income was actually not much different from that of a tavern waitress.

If Hannah had been selling those goods at normal market prices, she should already have accumulated a decent sum by now.

Hearing this, Hannah's expression changed.

"Y-you, what are you saying? I didn't make much money either. We're all the same, aren't we? Just trying to make a living..."

Faced with Hannah's vague response, Rena interrupted her.

"Those Mana supplies—when you sold them, did you really only get that little money?"

"Of course..." Hannah answered instinctively, but when she saw Rena staring straight at her, she subconsciously avoided her gaze and asked with a hint of guilt, "What's wrong with you? Why are you suddenly asking this?"

Observing Hannah's reaction, Rena already had a pretty clear answer in her heart.

Before, she had considered the possibility that Hannah, like herself, might not have known the true value of Mana and had simply been cheated by others.

But seeing Hannah's reaction now, she was convinced that what Leon had said was true—that Hannah had been taking advantage of her ignorance all along.

"That's enough, Grandma Hannah. Since things have come to this, please stop. In the future, we should minimize contact. It'll be good for both you and me," Rena said as she walked past Hannah, opened the door, and went inside.

"It's already very late. You should head back and rest early too."

Rena closed the door, leaving Hannah standing there alone, stunned.

Could it be that she already knew about the deception? What should she do from now on... Hannah's heart sank deeper and deeper.

Although she had indeed saved quite a bit of money through Rena over the years, in her view it was still not enough to secure her youngest son's and grandson's entire lives.

Back then, when she persuaded her daughter-in-law to remarry her youngest son, she had promised a large annual subsidy, as well as an inheritance.

Had this little girl really stopped so easily, just like her grandmother had back then?

No—maybe she was still secretly selling on her own? Come to think of it, she hadn't been around lately when Hannah went to look for her.

When she asked the people at the village entrance, they said Rena often left the village, and even when she didn't leave, she was sometimes not at home.

No one knew whether she had gone into the mountains or somewhere else.

Thinking of this, Hannah had already circled around to the backyard of the house.

She slowly reached into the pocket of her apron, feeling for the ring of keys she carried with her.

Her rough fingers rubbed back and forth over one particular key, her eyes fixed intently on the cellar door, before she chose to hide in the bushes.

Hannah waited patiently in the woods.

After quite a while, the light in the forest cottage finally went out.

She stayed hidden for some time longer before tiptoeing out and feeling her way toward the cellar door in the backyard.

She glanced around, then carefully took out her key.

In the past, when Rena went on long trips, she had lent her the key so she could replenish the Magical Beasts' feed and water.

At the time, Hannah had been cautious enough to secretly make a copy of the key.

Today, it finally came in handy.

If this girl was still doing this business, there should be Mana stored in the cellar.

If she was still doing it, then Hannah could soften her up a bit and pressure her into continuing to sell the Mana to her.

If that didn't work, she would just have to tear off the pretense and scare her a little... This girl might be a Witch, but she was actually easy to deal with.

With that thought, she inserted the key into the large padlock hanging on the cellar door—and suddenly felt that something was wrong.

Hannah frowned and tried turning the key.

It wouldn't turn.

She tried several more times, finally confirming that the key didn't match.

That little girl—she actually changed the lock!?

Then that meant she really was still secretly doing this business on her own.

What should she do? With some tools, this door wouldn't be impossible to pry open, but the noise would be too loud.

She would have to wait until Rena wasn't around to do it.

Tomorrow.

She would come back during the day, when Rena wasn't home.

After all, she seemed to be out quite often during the daytime lately...

Thinking this, Hannah could only quietly leave the backyard.

At the same time, inside the house.

In the pitch-black room, Rena stared at the crack in the window, covering her mouth and holding her breath.

She recalled what Leon had once warned her about:

“Even if you tell Hannah Weisland that you’ve stopped dealing in Mana, you still need to be careful of her. Avoid her as much as possible in the village. I’ll replace the locks on your house and cellar later. When you go out, be careful not to be followed.

“If she comes to you again to persuade you to cooperate with her, you need to be especially cautious. After dealing with her, inform me as soon as possible, and don’t do anything unnecessary in the meantime. You can’t imagine how many tricks a greedy old woman from a village like this can have.”

Considering the possibility that Grandma Hannah might have deceived her before, after Leon said this, Rena had at least kept her guard up.

Yet Hannah had actually tried to open the cellar and steal things.

Even though, in reality, there were no longer any Magical Beasts or Mana in the cellar.

Seeing Hannah sneak out of the backyard, Rena took a deep breath and tried hard to calm herself down.

She put her clothes back on and went to the door, gently opening it to observe outside.

She quietly stepped out, locked the door, and then headed up the mountain path.

From afar, she vaguely caught sight of Hannah’s back and carefully followed her.

Hannah went all the way back to the house where she lived alone in the village and went inside.

Even after confirming from a distance that Hannah had returned home, Rena, who was hiding behind a nearby pile of straw, still didn’t relax.

What should she do now?

Rena thought uneasily, and in the end realized that she simply couldn’t handle this matter on her own.

After thinking it over again and again, she finally made a decision and quickly headed toward the station at the village entrance, where the lights were still on.

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

## **What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! #Chapter 24 : Reporting a Witch - Read What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 24 : Reporting a Witch**

Chapter 24: Reporting a Witch

Late at night, Hamel Town.

“Is everything you said true?” Leon asked Rena for confirmation.

Rena nodded vigorously.

Once she was certain that Granny Hannah had ulterior motives, she did not dare delay.

She immediately went to the relay station, used the excuse that she was feeling unwell and needed to enter town to have medicine prepared, hired a carriage to rush into town, and then found Leon again.

Leon’s brows knitted tightly, his heart sinking nonstop.

The most ideal scenario he had once imagined was that after being arrested once, Hannah would become cautious, fear further consequences, and after Rena mentioned quitting this line of work, completely wash her hands of it.

Because of this, he had kept an eye on Hannah for a period of time.

During that interval, she appeared to have behaved herself.

Yet he had never expected that after all this time, she would still harbor thoughts of returning to her old trade.

Now that things had already happened, the problem had to be dealt with.

It might even require considering certain matters... matters he had always been unwilling to consider before.

“I understand. For tonight, find an inn and rest. Tomorrow, enter the mountains from the mountain path on the other side and work from there. Do not pass through the village. Leave Hannah Weisland’s matter to me,” Leon said expressionlessly.

“You... what are you planning to do?” Rena blinked as she looked at Leon.

“I will handle it,” Leon replied briefly.

Early the next morning.

“Grandma, Mom, I’m going to school.”

Near the entrance of River Mouth Village, a house stood where a teenage boy wearing the Parish School’s robe stepped out.

He carried a lunch basket in one hand and a stack of books in the other.

“Be careful on the road. After school, come straight home. Don’t wander around town. Absolutely don’t go to those neighborhoods in the south of the city, especially Bourbon Street. It’s full of bad people. I keep hearing about young folks getting tricked there lately...”

Hannah Weisland stood up and walked her grandson to the door, nagging as she reminded him.

“Alright, alright, I know, Grandma. You’ve said this a hundred times already,” the boy said, then turned and ran off along the small path.

“Has Henry gotten thinner lately?” Hannah turned back into the house and looked at her daughter-in-law, who was sitting inside sewing clothes.

“You need to keep an eye on him and make sure he eats well. This child has always eaten little since he was young.”

“That was ages ago,” her daughter-in-law said with a smile.

“He eats two big bowls of meat porridge every meal now. He’s just grown taller recently, so he looks thinner.”

“Right, right, he should eat more,” Hannah said with a smile.

She reached into her apron pocket, took out a small bag of money, and placed it on the table.

“Buy more meat for the family. He’s at the age where he needs it to grow.”

“Thank you, Mother,” her daughter-in-law said gratefully, looking at Hannah.

“Truly, if not for you, Henry wouldn’t be able to afford to attend school in town...”

“You’re saying such polite things again. Attending the Church’s school is what gives a child prospects. If he can’t go to the Church, at least he can find work at the town office. You don’t need to worry about the tuition—leave it to these old bones of mine,” Hannah said with a laugh, waving her hand.

Then she headed toward the door.

“I’ll go tend the fields now.”

“Take care,” her daughter-in-law called after her.

Hannah left her younger son’s home, greeted familiar villagers along the way, and soon returned to the old house where she lived.

“It’s about time,” Hannah muttered as she entered her woodshed.

She packed tools such as an axe, hammer, and awl into a bundle, hid them carefully, and slung it over her back.

The lock on the cellar was sturdy, but the door panel itself was not particularly strong.

If she wanted to pry off the lock along with the nails fixing it in place, it was not impossible.

An old woman who had worked the fields all her life still had that much strength.

Carrying her things, she set off toward Rena’s house.

She did not notice that a young man stood at a distant crossroads, casting a cold glance in her direction, watching as she walked step by step toward the mountains.

After approaching Rena’s house, Hannah first hid her tools in the forest.

Then she went to the front door, looked around, and tried knocking.

“Rena, Rena, are you home? There was something important I forgot to tell you yesterday!”

Seeing no response, she circled to the back, checked the cellar door, then knocked on the back door and called out a few times before pricking up her ears to listen.

The house seemed completely devoid of any human presence.

The cellar was also locked from the outside.

Rena was clearly not inside and appeared to have gone out.

Not working alone in the cellar and instead going out on her own—had that girl really found her own channels to sell the goods?

Then it was all the more necessary to pry open the cellar and inspect it carefully.

Best if she could seize some evidence...

She retrieved the bundle she had hidden in the woods and had just taken out her tools to start prying at the lock when a sudden voice rang out:

“Good day, Mrs. Weisland.”

“Ah!” Hannah was startled, and the tools in her hands fell to the ground.

She spun around abruptly and saw a man appear outside the fence of the backyard, causing her to panic.

She had clearly looked around earlier and seen no one nearby.

This person was like someone who had appeared out of thin air.

“What are you doing here?” Leon asked, staring at Hannah.

“You, you are...?” Hannah looked Leon up and down in alarm and confusion.

She quickly became certain that he was not from the village and did not know how he had recognized her.

“We met a few months ago. Does that ring a bell now?” Leon said bluntly as he produced his silver badge as an Inquisitor.

“Ah!” Terror immediately spread across Hannah’s face.

She finally remembered.

About three months ago, it had been this very young man who had escorted her to the Inquisition for trial.

“Looks like you remember. Then you should know why I’ve been keeping an eye on you. Did you think that after leaving the Inquisition, we would simply stop paying attention to you? I’ll ask you again—what are you doing here?” Leon asked once more.

Why would an Inquisitor suddenly appear here? Could it be that ever since her arrest, she had constantly been under surveillance?

At this moment, Hannah felt as if she had fallen into an icy abyss.

“My lord, I was just... just...” Hannah stammered.

“What? You couldn’t sell Mana anymore, so you started stealing instead?” Leon pressed.

“No, no, that’s not it. I was just... entrusted by someone to help repair a cellar,” Hannah finally managed to come up with an excuse.

“Repairing a locked cellar door with an awl and a hammer? Is this excuse meant to show how little respect you have for the Church’s Inquisitors?” Leon’s expression darkened instantly.

“I, I didn’t—” Hannah waved her hands repeatedly, trying to argue.

“Still not telling the truth? Then it seems this problem is quite serious,” Leon said as he interrogated her.

“Do you want to be arrested a second time? Don’t think you can always settle things with money. I hear your grandson is studying at a Church school. Do you know how much impact your arrest by the Church this time would have on your family?”

These words were meant to intimidate Hannah.

In reality, after several rounds of reform, Church law had already abolished many collective punishment practices.

Let alone grandparents trafficking Magical Beast materials—even if a mother were a Witch, the Church would not prosecute underage children.

At most, they would be sent to reform institutions established by the Church for one or two years of centralized education, to make them fully aware of the sins committed by their relatives.

After that, their future prospects would not be severely affected.

In fact, to establish an image of benevolence, the Church would even deliberately select outstanding students from these reform institutions to enter Church service.

Of course, Leon knew that ordinary people were mostly unaware of such details.

This was simply a common interrogation tactic.

“My lord, I was just momentarily led astray. Inquisitor, you don’t know how much our family needs money. My eldest son died for the country, my younger son lost a leg, my—” Hannah put on a miserable face and began rambling, trying to sell her misery to Leon.

“Enough. Tell me what you are doing,” Leon interrupted coldly.

Hannah’s breathing grew rapid.

Being followed here by an Inquisitor meant that everything was basically over.

At this point, if she wanted to protect herself and her family, there was no other way...

"My lord, this is..." Hannah swallowed hard, forcing her voice to sound calm.

"This is for collecting evidence for the Church."

"What did you say?" Leon narrowed his eyes.

"I... I agonized over this for months, and in the end, I decided to do the right thing," Hannah said slowly as she looked at Leon.

"Inquisitor, it's good that you're here. I want to report something to the Church!"

"....." Leon took a deep breath upon hearing this.

On the way here, he had actually been very clear about what he needed to do.

It was just that taking that step was not so easy.

And now, after repeatedly pressing Hannah, he had finally heard the words that forced him to make up his mind.

"Very well," Leon said, nodding lightly at Hannah.

"What information do you have to report to me?"

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

## **What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! #Chapter 25 : The Corpse Was Speaking - Read What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 25 : The Corpse Was Speaking**

Chapter 25: The Corpse Was Speaking

Hannah Weisland opened her mouth.

A flicker of hesitation suddenly surfaced, but under Leon's gaze, it only lasted a brief moment before vanishing.

"Sir, let me tell you. Actually, there is a Witch living in this village!" Hannah spoke with a solemn expression.

“A Witch lives here?” Leon turned his head and sized up Rena’s wooden house from top to bottom.

“Here?”

“Yes! Absolutely true!” Hannah answered with firm conviction.

“So the things you sold before were supplied by this Witch?” Leon began to question her.

“Well...” Hannah hesitated slightly at this point.

“Relax. There’s no evidence for the money you earned in the past, so it’s not easy to pursue responsibility. If your report has merit, we won’t bother going after that either,” Leon said, seeing through Hannah’s concern.

With such a guarantee, Hannah seemed to feel more at ease.

“Yes. They all came from her. She raised Magical Beasts herself and then extracted Mana from them.”

“Describe this Witch to me,” Leon ordered.

“Her name is Rena. She shares her grandmother’s surname, Lothark. She’s sixteen this year. She was abandoned by her parents when she was young and was raised by her grandmother. Her grandmother was a local from this village, Carol Lothark, and she was also a Witch. This house was left behind by her. Three years ago, Carol died of Saltification Disease, and after that, Rena lived here alone.” Hannah confessed the details on the spot.

“How do you know so much? And why would this Witch named Rena feel at ease letting you resell goods for her?” Leon asked.

“That’s a long story. Carol was actually a distant cousin of mine. We knew each other in the village when we were young, and later we kept some contact. When she was dying from illness, I accidentally discovered that both she and her granddaughter were Witches. Carol asked me to keep it a secret. I softened my heart and agreed—after all, her life was miserable, and the child was pitiful too. Carol entrusted me to look after her granddaughter, so I started helping with reselling...” Hannah rambled on with her explanation.

Leon sneered inwardly after hearing this.

Hannah’s situation was something he had already heard from Rena.

The part about being relatives was true, but Hannah had not discovered it by accident.

She had known long ago that Carol was a Witch, which was why she had been entrusted.

The reason she said it that way was probably because she feared being questioned about why she had not reported it to the Church earlier.

Rena's grandmother had never thought that Rena would continue researching medicine for Saltification Disease.

She had likely worried that Rena might think of using it to make money, so she had never told Rena about the value of Mana.

As a result, Hannah had taken advantage of this point.

There were plenty of cases in this world where relatives took advantage of one another.

"So now, for the sake of protecting yourself, you're reporting her on the spot?" Leon bluntly exposed Hannah's motive.

"N-no..." Hannah replied awkwardly.

"It's just that... after being awakened by you, I finally realized my mistake. I can't keep making the same mistake over and over again. No matter how pitiful Rena is, she's still a Witch. Accepting the Church's punishment to cleanse her sins would be good for her!"

"Oh? Then you don't care how much the bounty is?" Leon asked deliberately.

"A bounty? There's even a bounty?" A glimmer of light appeared in Hannah's eyes.

"Of course. Reporting a Witch comes with a bounty. Depending on the severity of the Witch's crimes, the size of the bounty, and how much assistance the informant provides, the reward fluctuates. It can range from tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands," Leon probed casually.

Seeing Hannah's eyes light up, he suddenly changed his tone.

"But the premise is that you make a sufficient contribution during the process. Capturing a Witch isn't as simple as you making an accusation. You have to help me provide evidence—that's what counts as a contribution. So, do you know where the Altar she uses to extract Mana is located?"

"I do! It's in the Cellar!" Hannah exposed it without hesitation.

Thankfully, that was her reaction... Leon felt relieved inwardly.

After this test, he suddenly felt much lighter psychologically.

“Sir, she changed the lock, but I guarantee the Altar is inside. Actually, I was here precisely to confirm it before reporting to the Church!” Hannah said with a resolute expression.

“This lock looks quite sturdy,” Leon said.

“It’s fine. I brought tools. It can be pried open,” Hannah replied.

“Are you sure there’s something inside? What if there isn’t? Without crucial evidence, after putting on this whole farce with you and inexplicably carrying out a forced entry investigation, what if I get demoted when I go back? Who can guarantee that you’re not just playing me?” Leon suddenly pressed her.

“How would I dare do something like that?” Hannah defended herself in a panic.

“No need to rush. She lives here anyway. After we catch her, we can search her, find the key, open the door, and catch her red-handed—that would be best. Where is she now? Do you know?” Leon asked.

“Well... I’m not sure either. She used to handle those Magical Beasts in the Cellar. But recently, I’ve had the feeling that she often goes out. Sometimes she goes into the city, and sometimes it seems like she goes into the mountains...” Hannah said.

“Have you seen her? Followed her?” Leon asked alertly.

“No. I haven’t seen her much lately. When I do see her, she always looks sneaky, very cautious... How could these old bones of mine keep up with a young person?” Hannah exaggerated as she spoke.

“Does anyone else know about this Witch’s identity?” Leon confirmed in a low voice.

“Other than me, no one else knows. I only told you, sir!” Hannah answered with certainty.

Leon let out a long breath.

“No matter what, she’ll definitely come back at night, right?”

“Yes. You can wait here for a while,” Hannah nodded.

“No need to just wait. Since you mentioned that she might have gone into the mountains, there’s a place I’m somewhat concerned about. We might as well go check it out first. Come with me. If we find her there, we might be able to catch her red-handed directly.”

“What place are you talking about?” Hannah asked in confusion.

“Just come with me and see. You must properly act as the on-site witness. You want the bounty, don't you? If you do, stop talking nonsense, pack up your things, and hand them to me,” Leon said, pointing at the tools on the ground.

“All right, I'll do as you say, sir.” Hannah could only obediently pack up the things she had brought into a bundle and hand it to Leon.

Leon took the bundle, inspected the tools inside with his gaze, then put it away and said to Hannah, “Let's go.”

After some time, the two ventured deep into the mountains.

Hannah was walking so hard that she was panting heavily.

When Leon stopped at a slope, she could not help but ask, “Sir, where exactly are we going to look?”

Leon glanced at Hannah.

Compared to dragging along a heavy dead object, it was naturally less effort to let the other party walk to the destination herself.

“We're already here. Up there, there's a hidden heretical ruin. Let's go up and take a look. You said she recently went into the mountains, so we need to confirm whether she's had any contact with this place,” Leon said expressionlessly.

“You climb up first.”

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

## **What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! #Chapter 26 : Killing Is Easy, Disposing of the Body Is Hard - Read What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 26 : Killing Is Easy, Disposing of the Body Is Hard**

Chapter 26: Killing Is Easy, Disposing of the Body Is Hard

Inside the labyrinth's workshop, Rena was burying her head in work.

She was preparing feed for the Magical Beasts, mixing grass picked from the labyrinth with scraps of minced meat bought from the butcher.

In most people's eyes, Head-Hunting Rabbits were carnivorous, but in reality they could also eat grass.

Rena usually fed them a mixture of grains, pasture grass, and a small amount of meat.

As for Slimes, there was never any need to worry about feeding them—anything they could digest, they would eat.

Whether plants or animal flesh, even bones and hair, as long as they were given enough time, they could digest everything cleanly.

Now that she was raising them inside the labyrinth, she could gather wild grass and tender leaves directly from within.

According to the notes her grandmother had left behind, plants in the labyrinth would also absorb a small amount of Mana.

When Magical Beasts consumed these plants, the Mana would gradually accumulate within their bodies.

Using labyrinth plants to feed Magical Beasts should, to some extent, also increase Mana output.

Just as she was about to pour the mixed feed into a bucket and dump it into the breeding pool, she heard footsteps.

“Hm?” Rena subconsciously turned her head.

As the footsteps drew closer, she vaguely sensed that something was off—this didn’t sound like only one person.

Then she saw Hannah and Leon walking in one after the other.

Hannah was nervously glancing around, while Leon’s face was dark and gloomy.

Rena felt as if she had been struck by a heavy blow on the spot.

The wooden bucket in her hands clanged to the ground, and the feed spilled everywhere.

Hannah finally noticed Rena, suddenly cried out “Ah,” pointed at her, and shouted loudly, “F-found her, sir!”

Rena stood frozen in place, unable to react for a moment.

“Is it her?” Leon asked coldly.

“You’d better identify her properly if you want the bounty.”

“Yes, she’s the Witch!” Hannah said without the slightest hesitation.

Rena suddenly understood something and stared at Hannah in disbelief.

“Granny Hannah, you—”

“Y-you shut up, don’t say anything!” Hannah hurriedly shouted in a trembling voice, cutting Rena off.

“Confess, Rena, this is for your own good!!”

Rena shifted her gaze to Leon.

As their eyes met, Leon gave her a look, then raised his right hand behind Hannah’s back.

In his hand, he was gripping tightly the hammer taken from Hannah’s bundle.

Using a gun would consume bullets, and there was also the risk of ricochets.

Using an axe blade would leave a large amount of blood that would need to be dealt with.

After considering everything along the way, he ultimately chose a blunt weapon.

For an instant, Rena was about to widen her eyes and scream, but at that moment, an inexplicable thought flashed through her mind, making her suppress the impulse.

“Sir, hurry and arrest her—” Hannah was still speaking.

At that moment, Leon hardened his heart and swung the hammer down heavily.

With a dull, heavy impact, Hannah’s consciousness was smashed into a bottomless abyss.

With a thud, her entire body collapsed to the ground, not even letting out a single cry.

Leon looked at Hannah lying motionless on the ground before him and suddenly felt a wave of slight dizziness.

He stepped forward and reached out to check her breathing—there was none left.

Dead...

Only after realizing this did Leon’s breathing begin to grow heavy.

In the end, he had still done it.

This was his first time killing someone.

When he was an Inquisitor, he had fought with underworld gangs before.

He had been shot by crossbow bolts and had injured people with a gun.

But those situations were basically just both sides firing wildly at each other.

Rather than slaughter, it was more like a chaotic brawl.

Flintlock pistols of this era could only fire one shot at a time, and their accuracy and penetration were laughable.

He had never truly shot someone dead with a gun.

Like today—carrying a clear intent to murder, picking up a weapon, aiming at a vital point, and striking—this was a first in his life.

The sensation transmitted back through the hammer when it struck the skull was still vividly lingering in his palm.

“Ah...” Rena, who had been frozen in place, finally woke as if from a dream, a frightened sound leaking from her mouth.

“Rena.” Leon looked at her and sighed helplessly.

“You... you...” Rena glanced at the corpse on the ground and began trembling uncontrollably.

She had personally witnessed a murder.

This kind of shock was also a first in her life.

“She wanted to report you! You saw it yourself—what choice did I have other than killing her?” Leon stared at Rena and asked in return.

Rena was stunned on the spot, not knowing what to say.

At that moment, the same thought had also flashed through her mind, which was why she subconsciously controlled her reaction and allowed Leon to kill Hannah.

But even if she had reacted, it wouldn't have changed the outcome.

Hannah was an old woman—facing a Leon who had already made up his mind to kill, she had no chance of survival at all.

“Listen carefully! I’ve already killed her. No one has seen me have contact with her—at least not that I know of. So what we need to do now is deal with the body. And for the next couple of days, you haven’t seen her, and neither have I! Do you understand?” Leon said as he dragged the corpse over to the breeding pool, which was pressed down by an iron barred gate.

He set the body down and began feeling around on himself for the key.

Rena finally snapped out of it and asked blankly, “What are you going to do?”

“I told you, deal with the body!” Leon said, taking out the key to the breeding pool’s iron barred gate.

“You control the Magical Beasts. I’ll throw the body in.”

These Magical Beasts had been fed Rena’s blood.

Under the effect of the Blood Pact, they obeyed her.

Normally, when Rena was present, under the influence of the intent she emitted, they would all appear exceptionally docile and show no aggression whatsoever—even if they were seized and slaughtered, they would not resist.

As long as Rena gave a signal, they would carry out corresponding actions according to her instructions—following, feeding, even mating.

Leon also knew that Rena could make these Magical Beasts instantly become frenzied, launching a desperate, all-out attack on a designated target.

As the saying went, killing was easy; disposing of the body was hard.

A corpse was the most important collection of clues in a murder case.

As long as the body was discovered, the fact of death itself would be made public.

The cause of death, time, location, and various details could all be uncovered one by one.

If handled improperly, even disguising it as drowning or falling off a cliff could reveal problems.

If there was no way to perfectly disguise the cause of death, the best solution was to make the body disappear—to make this person vanish from the world.

People would be unable to guess whether she drowned or fell, whether she was eaten by beasts or murdered, and would not even be able to determine whether she was alive or dead.

The simplest method was to bury the body in the mountains.

However, if it was buried too shallowly, it might be exposed by rain erosion or mudslides.

Sometimes wild animals would smell it and dig the body out, and there were also hunters and woodcutters moving about in the mountains.

Fortunately, they had a better method.

“You’re going to let the Magical Beasts eat the body!?” Rena’s eyes widened round.

“There’s no better way to handle it than making the body completely disappear without leaving even a trace!” Leon said as he opened the iron barred gate, dragged the corpse over, and pushed it straight into the breeding pool.

By now, a new generation of Head-Hunting Rabbits had already been bred in the pool, and the Slimes had split and multiplied twice.

Their numbers were already quite considerable.

The Head-Hunting Rabbits would eat the flesh and organs, while the Slimes could decompose all bodily tissues and even part of the clothing.

Throwing the corpse into the breeding pool, it would soon vanish without a trace!

The body rolled down along the pool wall and slammed into the bottom with a dull sound.

The Head-Hunting Rabbits scattered to avoid it, while two Slimes were hit directly, their slime splashing everywhere.

At that moment, a faint groan sounded from within the breeding pool.

Both Leon and Rena caught the sound, and their scalps instantly went numb.

Leon looked down in disbelief and saw that Hannah Weisland’s “corpse” had actually moved again!

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

## **What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! #Chapter 27 : Accomplices - Read What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 27 : Accomplices**

Chapter 27: Accomplices

At this moment, Leon truly wanted to slap himself hard.

After all, he was still a novice when it came to killing.

After smashing Hannah Weisland down, he had focused entirely on the follow-up handling and had actually made a mistake at the most crucial step—confirming death—simply checking her breath and concluding she was already dead!

The possibility of someone reviving after suffering a severe blow and stopping breathing was very small, but it was not nonexistent!

“Mm... mm... help...” After Hannah, who had rolled to the bottom of the pool, regained consciousness, all she felt was splitting pain in her head.

Her face was covered, and she could not see anything.

She struggled to crawl up, but her hands and feet refused to obey her.

Rena trembled as she stepped forward.

After taking a glance at the situation at the bottom of the pool, she was so frightened that she staggered backward.

She looked at Leon in terror and asked in a shaking voice, “Th-then what should we do now?”

“Save me... Rena, save me...” Hearing Rena’s voice, Hannah called out unconsciously, her awareness hazy.

“Tch!” Leon frowned, shut the barred gate again and locked it, stepped back from the pool, then turned toward Rena.

“Do it!”

“Eh?” Rena looked as if she could not understand what Leon was saying at all.

“Do it. Let the Magical Beasts finish her off!” Leon said in a low, steady voice.

In this situation, letting the Magical Beasts deliver the fatal blow to Hannah was undoubtedly the simplest solution.

But Rena only looked back at Leon in a complete daze.

Leon meant for her to personally control the Magical Beasts to kill Hannah—how could she possibly make up her mind on the spot and carry out murder with her own hands?

At this moment, Hannah finally used her trembling hand to tear off the clothes wrapped around her head.

What entered her field of vision were countless Head-Hunting Rabbits with red-glowing eyes and Slimes continuously making squelching sounds—she had fallen into the breeding pool, with the Magical Beasts encircling her layer by layer, all poised to strike.

All Magical Beasts possessed extremely strong hostility toward humans, not to mention that these Magical Beasts also had predatory instincts.

The Church's doctrines claimed that the Primordial Witch Moilai detested humans, and one piece of evidence was the inexplicable hostility her created Magical Beasts showed toward humanity.

The only reason they had not attacked Hannah yet was because Rena's ability was suppressing their instincts.

"Ah! Ahhhhh!!" Realizing her situation, Hannah lay prone on the ground and screamed in terror.

"No! Don't! I was wrong, I was wrong! Please spare me!"

"Stop hesitating and do it!" Leon urged Rena.

The longer Hannah was allowed to keep talking, the harder it would become to act.

"I... I..." Rena was at a complete loss.

"Let me go! I swear I absolutely won't say anything about what happened today! Wuwu... I did it all for my family... I don't want to die! I don't want to die!!" Hannah begged in tears.

"Shut up!" Leon roared irritably toward the bottom of the breeding pool.

"So in order for you and your family to live well, Rena deserved to die? You clearly knew what would happen to Rena if she was caught by the Church, yet you still sold her out. People like you deserve to die the most!!"

Then Leon turned and shouted at Rena, “Rena!”

Rena’s shoulders jolted in fright.

“It’s either her death or ours!! No matter what, she cannot be allowed to live today. Give her a quick end!!” Leon said resolutely, staring into Rena’s eyes.

“Either her death or ours...”

Rena subconsciously repeated it softly.

After clearly realizing their current situation, her delayed survival instinct finally began to drive her body.

That’s right—she did not want to be caught by the Church! She did not want to die either!!

When she came back to her senses, Rena realized that she had already placed her right thumb and index finger into her mouth, pressing against her tongue and forming the posture for a whistled signal—this was the signal she habitually used to command Magical Beasts to attack.

As long as she produced this sharp sound with attacking intent, all the Magical Beasts under her control would become frenzied.

“Stop... don’t!”

“Do it, Rena!!”

Leon’s roar drowned out Hannah’s sobbing.

In the end, Rena steeled her heart, closed her eyes, and blew the whistle.

The Head-Hunting Rabbits in the breeding pool finally received permission from their master’s will and shot forward like arrows loosed from a bow, cold light flashing at the joints of their hind legs.

“No—” Hannah’s final cry was cut short.

The first Head-Hunting Rabbit that pounced brushed past her neck; with a light slash of the blade on its hind leg, her throat was cut open.

Leon and Rena saw blood spray between the bars, and Hannah made no further sound.

After that, rustling noises rose from the bottom of the pool, exactly like the sounds the Magical Beasts made when feeding after they were usually given food.

The two stood there motionless, like two statues, neither of them stepping forward immediately to confirm the situation.

Rena felt her mind go completely blank.

After a long while, her legs gave out, and she collapsed onto the ground.

Hearing the noise, Leon turned around to look at Rena.

Rena looked up at him, then suddenly recoiled backward in terror.

“Can you not look at me with that kind of gaze?” Leon said with dissatisfaction, his heart aching sharply.

Killing Hannah had been for self-preservation, but also to protect Rena.

Yet now Rena was looking at him in such terror, as if she were sizing up a pure murderer.

Rena gradually came back to her senses, and a chill rapidly tightened its grip around her.

Although Leon had been urging her to act the entire time, in the end she had still ordered the Magical Beasts to attack of her own will.

She was the one who killed Hannah.

She was the murderer.

How could she possibly remain uninvolved?

“I killed someone...” Rena’s whole body began to tremble.

She hugged her head in terror and sobbed softly.

“I killed someone! I killed someone!”

Sensing that Rena’s mental state was on the verge of collapse, Leon’s expression turned grave.

He quickly stepped forward, squatted down in front of her, reached out to grab her wrist, and soothed her in a low voice:

“Rena, Rena! Calm down! You didn’t kill her. After I smashed her like that, she was already beyond saving—you just gave her a quick end! And get this straight: she wanted to kill you. For a little money, she wanted to send you to the stake. She

deserved to die! You were just protecting yourself! Do you understand? We just wanted to live. What did we do wrong?"

Rena sobbed a few more times and finally stopped trembling.

After quite a while, she raised her tear-streaked face and stared blankly at Leon as she asked:

"Then next time, if we're discovered by someone else, do we still have to do this? Are we... going to keep using this excuse to kill people and silence them?"

Leon was rendered speechless on the spot.

Rena was unexpectedly seeing this matter more clearly than he had anticipated.

Indeed, this time it could be said that Hannah deserved to die—but what about the next time?

If some innocent person discovered their secret and, purely out of the common sense of justice in this world, reported them to the Church, would they also have to keep killing to silence them, again using the excuse that they wanted to live?

"When you first became a Witch, did you think about what you'd do if you were discovered?" Leon asked in return.

Rena thought for a moment and shook her head in confusion.

"I don't know. I was just thinking about saving people..."

"I was just thinking about making money too," Leon sighed.

The two fell into silence.

In truth, they were the same—both engaging in forbidden acts for their own purposes, without seriously considering what they would do if they were discovered.

Anyone who did such things more or less harbored the lucky thought of "as long as I'm not found out."

Now, they were already thorough accomplices, whether in producing and selling Mana or in killing to silence others.

"No one knows what the future will be like. What's done is done, and there's no point in overthinking things you can't figure out!" After a long while, Leon stood up first, his face expressionless.

“Let’s deal with the problem in front of us first!”

With that, he walked over, picked up the wooden bucket that had fallen to the ground, scooped some water from the trough, carried it to the edge of the breeding pool, and began washing the bloodstains off the bars.

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

## **What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! #Chapter 28 : Man-Eating Magical Beasts - Read What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 28 : Man-Eating Magical Beasts**

Chapter 28: Man-Eating Magical Beasts

Three weeks later, at night, in Rena’s cellar.

Rena held a candle as she opened the cellar door and slowly walked down the steps.

Behind her, Leon followed with difficulty, carrying two barrels of Mana preparations.

Rena lit several more candles, illuminating the cellar.

After Leon set the barrels down, he turned to confirm with her, “Is it enough to just pour the stuff into the distiller?”

“Mhm.” Rena replied softly, her back to Leon as she prepared the basin and lid of the distiller on the altar.

Looking at Rena’s back, Leon quietly sighed.

In the first few days after Hannah Weisland’s death, the two of them had lived in constant fear.

To be on the safe side, Leon had Rena stay at his house for a period of time while he personally managed the workshop and observed the progress of disposing of the corpse.

Just as Leon had expected, on the day after Hannah went missing, her youngest son mobilized the village’s self-defense group to search the mountains once.

Someone had also gone to question Rena, but Rena—having been repeatedly instructed by Leon—calmly denied having seen Hannah and even went into the mountains with the villagers to search for her.

No one suspected Rena.

Mrs. Weisland had always conducted business with Rena discreetly, only occasionally running into her in the village.

In the eyes of the villagers, Rena did not have much interaction with Mrs. Weisland, merely being the granddaughter of a distant cousin.

By comparison, many people in the village had far more complicated relationships with Hannah Weisland.

After two days of fruitless searching, the villagers had no choice but to give up.

By now, only the Weisland family's youngest son was still insisting on asking around about his mother's whereabouts.

He had even gone to the town guards, who could only tactfully inform him that his mother had been involved in illegal dealings, and that her disappearance might be related to the underworld she had come into contact with—something ordinary people were not qualified to investigate.

In the end, Hannah's disappearance was merely registered by the security office and the Inquisition, and no in-depth investigation was carried out.

After all, not even a body had been found, so there was nothing to pursue.

By now, not even scraps of Hannah's corpse remained.

Leon had taken the remnants of her clothing and burned them, and the stone used in the killing had been thrown into the river, leaving no evidence behind.

Thus, the murder committed by him and Rena had been completely buried in darkness.

But for the two of them, it was still impossible to pretend that nothing had happened.

Over the past half month or so, they had spoken far less than before, and they had barely even exchanged glances.

Leon could clearly feel that after Hannah's death, Rena had obviously distanced herself from him, as if they had returned to the time when they had first begun cooperating.

But calling it a cold war did not quite fit either.

They were not lovers or family.

Apart from their business cooperation, they actually had no other relationship.

Rationally speaking, maintaining a certain distance was normal.

It was just that Leon still somewhat missed the period when Rena's relationship with him had eased during the time they were treating Mrs. Sairi Hesh.

If they had always maintained this distant state from the beginning, it would not have mattered much.

But having once grown familiar enough to joke and laugh together, only to suddenly become cold again—this contrast was what made it most unbearable.

In fact, looking back now, even without Leon's involvement, the business between Mrs. Weisland and Rena was bound to run into trouble sooner or later.

The foreseeable outcome was that when Hannah was caught again, she would sell Rena out, and then Rena would be captured by the Inquisition.

Strictly speaking, Leon's intervention had ensured Rena's safety.

But from another angle, Leon's involvement had greatly accelerated Hannah's betrayal of Rena.

His failure to cleanly deal with Hannah had also directly forced Rena to kill someone herself.

On this point, Leon felt he had nothing to argue in his defense.

Leon stood nearby with his arms folded, watching Rena repeatedly extract Mana and purify it.

Occasionally, he would step forward to lend a hand—helping her lift the wooden barrels filled with Mana reagents and pour them into the distiller, or pouring the distilled liquid from the apparatus into the waste barrel.

Throughout the entire process, not a single word was spoken.

This was their first large-scale harvest.

Using reagents, they refined two large barrels of Mana preparations.

The two of them worked back and forth for two full hours before finally completing the extraction from one barrel.

When Leon saw the amount of Mana Rena poured onto the scale, he knew that this harvest was greater than he had imagined.

After all the Mana had been extracted and weighed, the final result was sixty-two carats.

Added to what they had accumulated previously, it totaled seventy-one carats—just over fourteen grams—worth more than two hundred and eighty thousand.

It far exceeded Leon's expectations.

After that, Rena used a glass rod to take a bit of Mana and stirred it into a black reagent.

The reagent quickly turned red.

Rena held it up to compare it against the flame, and suddenly let out a surprised "Eh."

"What is it?" Leon asked instinctively.

Rena did not answer.

She carefully observed the color of the reagent, then took out an old book, flipped to a certain page, and meticulously compared it with the color chart drawn there.

"The purity has increased..." Rena murmured.

"What?"

"The purity of the Mana has increased. The Mana refined this time has a purity of about seventy-eight percent. I've never extracted Mana with such high purity before!" Rena said in astonishment.

Leon was equally surprised.

The last time, the purity had only been just over seventy percent.

This time it had reached seventy-eight percent, even a bit higher than the limit Rena had previously been able to refine.

"Why? Is it because they were raised in the labyrinth for a long time?" Leon asked instinctively.

"No, theoretically, raising them in the labyrinth would only affect the total amount of Mana, not the purity..." Rena muttered to herself.

Leon also realized that this guess did not hold up.

The few Magical Beasts they had slaughtered earlier had also been raised in the labyrinth for a while, but the extracted Mana had only increased in quantity, with no significant change in purity.

Suddenly, the two of them widened their eyes at the same time, both realizing the reason simultaneously.

If there was anything different about this batch of Magical Beasts... it was that they had eaten Hannah Weisland's corpse.

They had eaten a human!

“.....”

The two fell into silence.

No one brought the topic up.

Leon knew very well that discussing this now would only make their relationship even worse, and it was meaningless.

They could not possibly continue killing people just to feed Magical Beasts for the sake of increasing Mana purity.

Magical Beasts were creations of the Primordial Witch Moilai, beings that appeared out of nowhere within the labyrinth.

Like ordinary creatures, they needed to eat and sleep, and they would mate and reproduce.

The difference was that they possessed physiological structures far more suited for combat, vastly surpassing animals of the same size, and Mana flowed within their bodies, with some species possessing special powers.

Beyond that, they harbored an extraordinary hostility toward humans.

Once they detected a human, even non-carnivorous Magical Beasts would become abnormally violent.

Whether they were resting, feeding, or even hunting other creatures, the moment they discovered a human, they would lock onto humans as their target.

Among humans, they especially loathed Transcendents blessed by the Four Gods of Origin.

It was said that when Church knights entered a labyrinth, even Magical Beasts that were natural enemies would band together and swarm to attack the intruders.

Legend held that the Four Gods of Origin created humans as the lords of all living things, granting them eternal life and wisdom.

But the evil Moilai hated the gods and humanity.

She cast a curse upon living beings, corrupting eternal life, giving birth to pain and death.

To protect humanity, the gods sealed Moilai forever beneath the earth.

And now, they had discovered that Magical Beasts that had eaten humans produced Mana of higher purity, as if those beasts had received some additional kind of “blessing.” It seemed to further corroborate the Church’s doctrine that Moilai loathed humanity.

After thinking it over, Leon tentatively spoke, “I’ll take ten grams of Mana to sell. The rest, you keep for research. How does that sound?”

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

## **What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! #Chapter 29 : Ants on the Same Rope - Read What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 29 : Ants on the Same Rope**

Chapter 29: Ants on the Same Rope

Hearing Leon say this, Rena was greatly surprised.

“Is that really okay?”

This was the first time she had obtained Mana of such high purity.

She very much wanted to keep more of it for research.

In theory, the higher the Mana purity, the better the effects of the Magical Potions produced through Mana activation.

An increase of five percent in purity was probably still not enough to allow the medicine she was currently researching to leap straight to the point of reversing the progression of Saltification Disease.

However, as long as there were clearly observable effects, it would at least point her toward a concrete research direction.

But Leon’s greatest objective was making money.

He should have wanted to sell as much as possible for the highest price.

Yet now, Leon had taken the initiative to propose keeping more than four full grams of Mana.

“This batch’s output far exceeded my expectations. There’s still room for our production to increase going forward, so I’m not in a rush. It’s rare to get Mana of such high purity—maybe it’ll allow your research to break through. We’ll still split the money fifty-fifty as usual,” Leon said.

“There’s no need for that. You can just deduct it directly from my share,” Rena offered.

“Just consider it my sponsorship for your research. I also hope you can develop a specific cure for Saltification Disease as soon as possible,” Leon said, looking into Rena’s eyes.

“You...” Rena looked at Leon and suddenly realized that she had not really looked him in the face like this for quite some time.

Her heart stirred slightly, and she became aware that this was actually Leon making an active effort to ease the tension between them.

Compared to that bit of money, Leon clearly cared more about his relationship with her.

In truth, Rena herself understood that Hannah’s death was entirely self-inflicted.

Leon had been determined to kill Hannah in order to protect her.

Even if Leon had not pulled her into this business, she would sooner or later have been implicated because of Hannah anyway.

From the moment she decided to become a Witch, she had long since fallen into a predicament where exposure meant death.

This was not Leon’s fault.

It was just that the impact of killing someone was far too great.

For several days, she had been unable to sleep.

Even now, with the dust settled and the pressure gradually receding, she still did not know how to face Leon as she had before.

Remaining in such a stiff atmosphere all the time had actually been quite painful for her as well.

Now she understood that Leon felt the same way.

During this period, both of them had wanted to ease the tension between them, but they simply had not found the right opportunity.

Thinking this, she smiled softly and accepted the favor.

“Alright then. Thank you, Leon.”

Lowering her gaze, she thought for a moment, then suddenly spoke again.

“Um... actually, I'd occasionally been thinking about something even before.”

“What is it?” Leon asked.

“Leon, do you want to... let me try treating your injury?” Rena asked tentatively.

“You mean this?” Leon realized she was referring to the lingering aftereffects that had been troubling him all along.

He rolled up his sleeve and revealed the purple scar.

“But didn't you say you'd never researched it before, so you had no idea where to start?”

“What I mean is starting from scratch. Back then, when my grandmother and I began researching Saltification Disease, we also started with nothing but scattered bits of information. Witches pass their knowledge down through generations of mentors and apprentices, so I've preserved a large amount of research material accumulated by my grandmother from her own teacher and those before her.”

Rena looked seriously into Leon's eyes.

“I was thinking that maybe you could use your channels to purchase some Cockatrice Venom extracted from Cockatrices and let me study its toxic properties. Maybe I can find clues to an antidote in the existing materials. If you're no longer troubled by this injury, you wouldn't need to spend so much money, right?”

Leon looked at Rena in surprise.

She had suddenly proposed helping him research an antidote—was this in return for his initiative in giving up profit during the Mana distribution?

If one were overly suspicious, it could also be that Rena was completely fed up with their current dealings and wanted to break free from him, or even wanted to poison him.

After all, Rena had only recently crossed the line into killing for the first time, and after Hannah's death, he was the only one who knew the secret that Rena was a Witch.

However, thinking about it carefully, based on Leon's understanding of Rena, that possibility was extremely, extremely small.

Seeing Leon fall silent, Rena immediately understood what he was thinking.

She waved her hand and explained, "I'm just bringing it up. Of course, I understand that you'd definitely have your concerns. It's fine—everything's up to you."

Leon shifted his gaze aside and thought seriously for a short while before quickly giving his answer.

"Alright. Then I'll leave it to you."

"You're serious?" Rena looked at Leon in surprise.

"I thought you'd definitely say something like, 'You think I'd give you the chance to poison me?'"

Given the level of caution Leon had shown in the past, Rena had actually felt that her proposal would most likely be rejected.

"If I'm afraid you'll poison me, or that you might accidentally mix the wrong medicine, I can just test it on a mouse before using it, can't I?" Leon said, letting out a long breath.

"If you think about it carefully, what we're doing is already so dangerous. One wrong step and it's total annihilation. If we still go out of our way to scheme against each other, wouldn't that be incredibly foolish?"

Rena heard the implication in Leon's words.

She neither echoed nor refuted him, only nodded gently.

Hannah Weislan's incident had made them fully realize that they were now accomplices—ants tied to the same rope.

If one person were exposed and caught, the other would also be in danger.

There were crises lurking all around them.

If they still considered betraying and undermining each other, it would eventually devolve into the same life-and-death situation they had had with Mrs. Weislan.

Mrs. Weislan's fate was a clear cautionary example.

"Alright, let's pack things up. I'll head over early to sell this batch and ask around to see if I can buy what we need," Leon said as he began tidying up the scene.

“Okay.” Rena also quickly portioned out the Mana.

As she handed the goods to Leon, she suddenly thought of something.

“Oh right, Leon—do you think we should move the things in the cellar?”

“You mean moving the altar and everything that could become evidence into the Labyrinth?” Leon swept his gaze around the cellar.

“Yes. After all, last time it was...” Rena hesitated here, but still finished her sentence.

“...the trouble caused when Granny Hannah snuck into the cellar.”

“Mm...” Leon thought carefully for a moment, then shook his head.

“She’s already dead, and the lock has been changed. This place isn’t that dangerous anymore. There’s only one altar—unless absolutely necessary, don’t destroy it. It’s very difficult to move it out quickly inside the Labyrinth. In the end, it’s still more suitable to keep it here. If you’re worried, you can actually give me a copy of your cellar key. That way, if anything happens, even if you’re not around, I can rush over in advance and help you clean up the evidence.”

“Alright then. There just happens to be two keys. I’ll give you mine first,” Rena said as she took out a key and handed it to Leon.

Leon did not take it immediately.

He looked at Rena with some surprise.

“I thought you’d hesitate a bit. Aren’t you afraid I might come in and do something strange?”

“It’s not like it’s the key to my front door. What do I have to be afraid of? Take it.” Rena directly tossed the key to Leon.

“Then I’m heading out.” Leon smiled, put the key away, and set off for town to sell this batch of goods.

“Mm. Be careful on the road,” Rena replied softly.

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

**What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! #Chapter 30 : Fenrir  
- Read What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 30 :  
Fenrir**

## Chapter 30: Fenrir

Bourbon Street, Snake Mouth Alley, Owl Old Junk Shop.

The old shop owner held a shard of Mana crystal with tweezers toward the firelight, moving a special lens back and forth over it. He squinted as he examined it closely, his gaze looking almost bewitched.

“About seventy-eight percent purity. We already tested it ourselves,” Leon said from the side with his arms crossed.

After quite a while, the shop owner set down the lens and tweezers and said with a sigh of amazement, “You brought ten grams, just as agreed, but you didn’t say it would be this pure. I really can’t believe it—where on earth did you get this from?”

“You know you shouldn’t ask that,” Leon said.

“Other than the Earl’s goods, I’ve never seen anything with purity close to eighty percent. At the very least, you didn’t source this from him, right?” the shop owner confirmed with Leon.

“The Earl?” Leon subconsciously repeated the title.

“You’re in this line of work, how could you not know ‘the Earl’? What’s more, you’re an Inquisitor,” the shop owner said with a smile.

“I’ve heard a little,” Leon nodded. “But this doesn’t seem to be his territory.”

“The Earl” was a title used in the underworld, a major smuggling magnate.

It was said that seventy percent of the Mana flowing into the Empire from outside passed through his hands, and that most of the Magical Potions and Mana circulating in the Underworld were connected to him in some way.

His goods circulated throughout the eastern part of the Empire, and his influence was vast.

Leon had even heard that the higher levels of the Inquisition actually had a clear grasp of the Earl’s true identity, yet were unable to touch him.

He was a powerful figure with immense authority, someone who also had his own network within the Church. The Inquisition could only turn a deaf ear to him.

Of course, this was merely hearsay. Leon had never come into direct contact with any firsthand intelligence on the matter.

After all, in Hamel Town, there had never appeared anyone or any goods rumored to belong to the Earl.

According to what the Inquisition knew, Hamel Town and the surrounding areas had other local tyrants controlling this line of trade.

Although their overall strength was far inferior to that of the Earl, their local influence was still enough to resist outside powerhouses.

However, the shop owner suddenly gave a bitter smile and said, "That's how it is now, but it may not stay that way."

"What do you mean?" Leon asked.

"The Earl's influence is expanding toward the entire South Harbor County. It's only a matter of time before it reaches here. The conflicts in the shadows started long ago. It seems the Inquisition hasn't noticed yet, but that's not surprising—news from the underworld always reaches insiders' ears faster."

The shop owner smiled faintly at Leon, put away the Mana, and began counting the remaining Magical Beast materials.

"The Earl's people are clashing with whom? Mr. Griffin?" Leon confirmed with the old shop owner. "So your upstream is Mr. Griffin?"

"Mr. Griffin" was also a title used in the underworld.

He was the local boss who controlled the underground trade of Hamel Town and even South Harbor County, and he was the Inquisition's primary target of investigation where Leon worked.

That said, Director Caron Eso was far more interested in skimming some profit from the situation than in cracking down on Mana trading crimes in Hamel Town.

Naturally, he had no interest in spending great effort to pursue Mr. Griffin, at most catching a few low-level lackeys.

There was a hierarchy within underworld forces.

For the old shop owner to know firsthand that the Earl's influence was encroaching on Mr. Griffin's territory suggested that there were not many layers between him and Mr. Griffin.

It was even possible that he was a direct subordinate of Mr. Griffin.

“Heh, young man, you know you shouldn’t be asking me questions like that, right?” the shop owner said.

He raised an eyebrow at Leon. “I think you understand that in this business, inquiring about someone’s upstream is taboo—especially since you’re an Inquisitor. I advise you not to try to bypass me to look for my superior. He doesn’t accept goods from strangers, and if your identity as an Inquisitor were exposed, you’d be riddled with bullets on the spot as a spy.”

“Just asking casually,” Leon shrugged.

“So you didn’t source your goods from our competitors, right? This point is very important. If we’re mistaken for moles from the Earl’s side, we’ll all be in trouble,” the shop owner continued to confirm.

“This is my own goods. Recently... I slightly changed the process, so the purity went up a bit,” Leon replied.

“With raw materials of this purity, the products you make should be enough to compete with the Earl. You’d better start moving more goods as soon as possible. However much you have, I’ll take it all. By the way, this exact ten grams of yours—don’t tell me you’re still holding onto some leftovers?” the shop owner said with a grin, shaking the test tube of Mana.

“There aren’t many leftovers. I’m keeping them for my own use,” Leon replied. “So, by what you just said, will I be targeted?”

If the shop owner’s upstream was indeed Mr. Griffin, then with Mr. Griffin currently facing competition from the Earl’s forces, he would naturally have an even greater demand for high-purity Mana.

After all, if product quality fell behind, customers would be stolen away.

In such circumstances, Leon’s Mana would become even more scarce, but correspondingly, if the Earl’s side discovered that Mr. Griffin had a new source of goods, they might set their sights on Leon.

Being dragged into this level of underworld power struggle was undoubtedly extremely dangerous.

“I’m only reminding you out of consideration for these goods of yours. You’ll need to be careful yourself,” the shop owner said.

He did not consider that Leon would back out because of such information.

After all, Leon dared to commit the Crime of Apostasy in this line of work while holding a clerical identity; he would not be frightened by mere underworld conflict.

The shop owner simply did not want a stable supply source that had just connected with him to run into trouble too early.

“Now then, let’s talk about money. If you can keep bringing in goods like this, let me think... twenty-three thousand is a good price,” the shop owner took the initiative to quote.

Leon considered for a moment, then replied, “Twenty-five thousand.”

Considering the risks the shop owner might be taking on by purchasing this higher-purity batch, Leon felt it was reasonable to raise the price a bit more.

“Oh, my friend, you should know that the purchase price I’m giving you is already as favorable as what Caron Eso gets. There isn’t that much room for profit,” the shop owner shook his head. “Twenty-three thousand five hundred. Not a bit more.”

“Twenty-five thousand. This batch will raise your standing with your superior. It’s worth that price,” Leon did not budge.

“It seems I really talked too much,” the shop owner said with a helpless expression. “Fine. Twenty-five thousand Fenni per gram. Be sure to bring more in four months.”

“Agreed,” Leon responded.

There was still another batch of Magical Beasts that had eaten Hannah Weisland’s corpse.

If Mana purity was indeed related to that, those Magical Beasts should at least guarantee the purity of the next shipment. As for after that, he would continue selling goods of the original purity.

He only needed to make money; he had no intention of pursuing higher purity.

Higher-purity Mana was indeed easier to sell, but he did not want to be forced into continuously feeding corpses to Magical Beasts.

“Can you get Mana with even higher purity than this? I think it might be useful for researching the process,” Leon asked the shop owner.

“If it helps you, I’d be happy to get some for you, but unfortunately, I don’t have such channels for now,” the shop owner said, shaking his head while counting money behind the counter.

“Then can you get Cockatrice Venom?” Leon asked again.

The shop owner’s counting paused. He looked up at Leon in confusion. “What do you want that for?”

“It’s useful. Just tell me whether you have it,” Leon said.

“As a raw material, I can sell it to you for five thousand per gram. But honestly, if you’re planning to kill someone, I recommend cheaper ordinary poisons, like arsenic. Magical Beast venom is deadly, but the symptoms are too distinctive, and the supply is limited—it’s easy to trace back...” the shop owner advised.

“I’m not killing anyone. Just get me one test tube,” Leon raised a hand to interrupt him.

“All right. Come back here with the money in two weeks to pick it up,” the shop owner said, then placed five notes and a pouch of coins on the counter and pushed them toward Leon. “This is your payment.”

Leon took the five notes.

They were gold vouchers issued by the Church, each with a face value of fifty thousand Fenni, redeemable for that amount of cash at Church facilities.

In the Empire, the Church, the imperial family, and some great lords and large merchant groups could issue such gold vouchers as long as they had the qualifications.

Vouchers issued by lords and merchant groups could only circulate within their spheres of influence, whereas Church and royal vouchers could circulate nationwide, functioning as paper currency.

Large transactions were basically settled using standard-weight gold or silver ingots, or gold vouchers.

After carefully verifying the authenticity of the vouchers, Leon put them away.

Just as he was about to count the money in the pouch, the shop owner suddenly asked, “By the way, how should I introduce you in the future?”

“Introduce me?” Leon frowned.

“Just give me a title. When someone asks where this batch of goods came from, I can’t exactly say I made it myself, or that it was supplied by some young Inquisitor guilty of apostasy, right?” the shop owner spread his hands.

Leon understood.

This was asking him to provide an underworld alias, like the Earl or Mr. Griffin—something that would let people know which goods came from him, even if they didn't know who he really was.

He lowered his head and thought for a moment. His gaze inadvertently fell on a Thaler Silver Coin peeking out from the money pouch, engraved with a wolf's head.

The imperial royal family used a wolf totem as part of their coat of arms, supposedly because wolves were pack animals and represented collective order in imperial culture.

A nation needed order.

But at this moment, what surfaced in Leon's mind was something else entirely.

He recalled a myth he had heard in his previous life: the demonic wolf feared by the gods themselves.

The gods sought to bind it, and the God of War pledged one of his arms as a guarantee to make it wear the chains forged by dwarves.

When the gods broke their promise and refused to release it, the wolf bit off the God of War's arm.

When Ragnarok came, it still broke free of its chains, charged into the realm of the gods, and devoured the king of the gods.

Leon raised his eyes to the shop owner and, for the first time in this world, spoke that name:

"Fenrir. Tell them my name is Fenrir."

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