

What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! #Chapter 3 : The Saintess's Diagnosis - Read What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 3 : The Saintess's Diagnosis

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At this moment, Leon felt completely numb—truly, whatever he feared most would always come true!

He glanced around and saw no one else. This Saintess had actually appeared here alone. Forget escorting knights—she had not even brought along an Inquisitor to lead the way.

Why was she suddenly wandering around the Inquisition by herself? Did she want to use the restroom?

Although he had been frightened into breaking out in a cold sweat, Leon still reacted quickly.

Following Church etiquette, he placed a hand over his chest and bowed, saying, “Esteemed Bishop, is there anything I can assist you with?”

Please hurry up, ask where the restroom is, and then leave!

Leon prayed silently in his heart.

“What is in that bag you’re holding?” Weiss asked, pointing at the bag in Leon’s hand.

This Saintess was really deadly—she went straight for that the moment she opened her mouth?

Fortunately, Leon had rehearsed an answer to this question several times in his mind. He immediately gave the prepared response: “Some junk cleared out from the storage room. I was planning to sell it at the Old Junk Shop. It’s very dusty—Bishop, you’re wearing the Church’s sacred white robes, so you really shouldn’t let them get brushed by it.”

Important figures like her surely would not be interested in opening a bag of junk and getting a face full of dust.

Since it was just a bag of odds and ends, it was not strange to take it to an Old Junk Shop. Even if he were stopped midway and questioned, such an answer would be logically sound.

“I see.” Weiss seemed to have asked only casually. She soon shifted her attention away from the bag and looked at Leon’s face instead. “Actually, I noticed you just now.”

“Me?” Leon froze, not understanding what merit he could possibly have to draw the attention of someone of such status.

“Yes. There’s a scent on you that I’m very familiar with...” As Weiss spoke, she stepped closer to Leon by a few paces and sniffed carefully again.

This turn of events left Leon a bit dizzy.

All he could see before him was Weiss’s exquisitely doll-like face—fair skin, vivid lips.

It had to be said that the Creator Church’s aesthetic standards were indeed on point.

The Saintess chosen as their public face possessed both appearance and bearing. Even when she examined others with a blank expression, she gave off a holy, ice-cold beauty.

A Church Saintess—someone with such a story-laden identity—suddenly paying attention to him made Leon inevitably begin to wonder whether this transmigrator was finally about to get his lucky break and enter his own main storyline.

But the Saintess’s next sentence immediately dragged him back to reality:

“This medicinal scent—you’ve used Holy Water No. 7?”

Leon snapped back to his senses. Holy Water No. 7 was precisely the secret medicine he had to spend one-third of his monthly salary on, purchasing it from the Holy Healing Monastery to alleviate his condition.

“Yes, Bishop. I’m impressed that you could recognize it.” Leon instantly became fully alert.

There was no main storyline at all.

The Saintess had simply recognized the scent of the medicine on him and stopped him to ask a few questions. If not for her sudden whim, given the gap in their statuses, they would never have had a chance to exchange words in their entire lives.

“What kind of poison were you afflicted with?” Weiss continued.

“I’m sorry, but I’m not very clear on that either. At the time, I was injured while carrying out a mission—scratched by a crossbow bolt used by a smuggler. Only afterward did I discover that the arrow had been coated with Magical Beast poison,” Leon answered honestly.

“Was a scar left behind?” Weiss asked again.

“Yes. There’s a purple scar that’s still there to this day,” Leon replied.

“Where is it? Would it be convenient for me to take a look?” Weiss continued.

This woman—could she be serving in the Holy Healing Monastery?

Leon’s heart stirred.

The Church-affiliated Holy Healing Monastery served as the equivalent of hospitals in this country, and the Church’s healing clergy were essentially doctors.

Doctors naturally varied in skill. In a small place like Hamel Town, the level of the clergy was not something one could have high expectations for.

If Bishop Weiss came from the Holy Healing Monastery, then wouldn’t this be equivalent to getting an expert consultation on the spot?

Perhaps there was a chance to get his lingering aftereffects properly treated!

With this thought, Leon immediately rolled up his sleeve and showed Weiss the purple scar on his upper arm. “Here.”

Weiss reached out at once to touch it, feeling along it as she asked, “What symptoms do you usually experience?”

“When it flares up, it itches—extremely itchy. No amount of scratching helps. If I don’t apply holy water, after two days it becomes very painful, like being burned by fire,” Leon answered truthfully.

Having his arm touched repeatedly by such a beautiful woman did not stir even the slightest improper thoughts in Leon.

Weiss’s expression and tone were both serious—she was completely the image of a professional doctor.

“Do you experience joint stiffness?” Weiss asked again.

“Yes! When it’s cold and I get chilled, moving my shoulders and elbows becomes as difficult as if they were rusted.”

Leon felt a surge of delight upon hearing this.

Bishop Weiss’s level was truly different from that of the small-town clergy. When he had first sought treatment, the clergy had not mentioned this at all.

When symptoms appeared in winter and he brought it up again, they had simply brushed him off with a line about using more holy water.

“How do you usually take the medicine, and how effective is it?” Weiss continued to inquire.

“Two small bottles a month, applied about once every five days. The first three days after applying it are fine. Starting on the fourth day, it begins to itch, like being bitten by mosquitoes, but overall it’s manageable,” Leon answered.

“It should be a compound poison. In addition to some common toxins, it was mixed with Cockatrice venom. Fortunately, it wasn’t activated, so the toxicity isn’t strong...” Weiss arrived at a conclusion.

“Not strong? My arm has never healed no matter how much it’s treated,” Leon said casually.

“Cockatrice venom can cause full-body necrosis and petrification. If the extracted venom is activated with Mana, even a trace amount can cause necrosis in this arm of yours. A direct hit would be instantly fatal, with absolutely no chance of rescue,” Weiss replied calmly.

“So I was pretty lucky, then?” Leon said self-mockingly.

“The principles behind this poison are rather complex. Relying solely on Holy Water No. 7 isn’t sufficient. You should combine it with Holy Water No. 2, applying it once every three days at the recommended dosage,” Weiss said.

Hearing a more professional treatment plan from an expert, hope ignited in Leon’s heart. “In that case, when can I recover completely?”

Weiss fell silent for a brief moment before answering, “This will allow your symptoms to be better controlled. If your condition isn’t restrained, the joint stiffness will worsen year by year. In roughly ten to twenty years, your joints will completely harden. Your arm and fingers will become unable to bend. If necrosis occurs, amputation will be required. In addition, this location is relatively close to the heart. In such cases, there have been instances of induced angina, which can be fatal...”

Leon immediately felt as if a bucket of cold water had been poured over him. “There’s no way to cure it completely?”

He had always believed that even if this aftereffect followed him for life, it would be nothing more than spending some money on medicine to get by. He had never imagined it could become so severe.

“This is currently the best treatment plan. Continuous medication can at least ensure that you live a normal life,” Bishop Weiss said in an utterly unruffled tone.

Leon thought bitterly, You make it sound so easy. The holy water provided by the Holy Healing Monastery was never cheap.

Using two kinds together, and at the recommended dosage of once every three days—even if he didn’t eat or drink, his salary might not cover the cost of the medicine. How was he supposed to live normally like that?

“What about the future? As the Church continues its research, they should be able to find a cure, right?” Leon asked, unwilling to give up.

“Of course, that possibility cannot be ruled out, but…” Weiss paused here.

“But?” Leon sensed that this turn of phrase was not a good sign.

“It’s best not to hold too much hope. With the therapeutic effects that current holy water can achieve, the Church’s evaluation is that it is already acceptable. For a very long time, the Church likely won’t have research plans in this direction,” Weiss replied.

Leon’s heart sank. After a moment, he asked, “Bishop, forgive my boldness, but might you be serving in the Holy Healing Monastery?”

“No. I work as an apothecary at the Saint Rosalia Research Institute. Most of the holy water formulas used by the Holy Healing Monastery are our work,” Weiss said.

The Saint Rosalia Research Institute was the Church’s research and development organization. In addition to developing holy water for treating illness and injuries, it also designed various weapons and tools for the Church.

At the same time, beneath the institute was Saint Rosalia Prison, the largest Church prison within the Empire, used specifically to detain Witches who had been blessed by Primordial Witch Moira.

When Leon had frightened Lia Foster earlier that day, he had mentioned the widespread rumor that Saint Rosalia Prison conducted experiments on Witches. Whether it was true or not, Leon himself did not know. After all, he was just a low-ranking Inquisitor.

But regardless, if Weiss truly was an Apothecary who developed holy water, then her statements carried considerable authority.

“Thank you for telling me all this, Bishop,” Leon bowed to Weiss once more.

While diagnosing and explaining his condition, Weiss's expression and tone had been cold and detached, as though she was merely studying this case, with little interest in his personal plight.

Yet her professional diagnosis undeniably allowed him to understand his condition far more clearly.

The help she had given was immeasurable—otherwise, if his condition worsened in the future, he might die without ever understanding why.

Weiss nodded silently. Watching Leon's dejected figure turn to leave, she suddenly, on an inexplicable impulse, added, "If you truly want to be cured at all costs..."

Leon turned his head back, his face full of surprise.

He had just been pronounced "incurable" by Weiss, yet her words now seemed to suggest that it wasn't entirely without hope.

"In the future, if you ever have the chance to capture a real Witch, perhaps you could try interrogating her," Weiss said.

"Do you mean that those Witches... have an antidote?" Leon asked cautiously.

"I'm only saying that there's such a possibility. The powers of Magical Beasts and Witches share the same origin. When it comes to countering Magical Beast toxins, some Witches do indeed possess secret formulas that the Church does not," Weiss replied.

"But using potions prepared by Witches isn't..." Leon began instinctively.

According to Church regulations, even purchasing and using Magical Beast materials was a crime, let alone knowingly using potions prepared by Witches. Even if the amount was small, it would still count as a minor offense.

However, Leon quickly thought it through. If it could truly cure a condition that might plague him for his entire life, then even being discovered by the Church, losing his job, and being imprisoned for ten days or half a month would be worth it. There was nothing to weigh at all.

After all, if magical potions really could cure illness, what justification did the Church truly have for banning them?

"I can only say this much. As for what I just said, treat it as if you never heard it. Understood?" Weiss said. After finishing this sentence, she said nothing more.

Leon looked at Weiss and bowed deeply once again. “I understand, Bishop. I truly have no words to express my gratitude!”

In the end, Bishop Weiss had shown him an extra measure of kindness. Those hints just now—if overheard by someone with ulterior motives—could have brought her trouble.

Weiss nodded and turned to leave.

“There are Inquisitors here who are reselling confiscated goods,” Weiss thought to herself.

In truth, she had already vaguely sensed the presence of Mana in the bag held by that low-ranking Inquisitor. She had simply chosen not to expose it on the spot.

She was only interested in research. Whatever small schemes the local Inquisition engaged in were none of her concern.

As for that low-ranking Inquisitor she had met by chance, she instead felt a faint sense of guilt.

Regarding Cockatrice venom, she actually had the ability to prepare an antidote—but she could not say so, nor could she provide it.

After all, whether it was sensing Mana or preparing antidotes using Magical Beast materials, those were things only Witches could do.

She soon cast the matter aside.

Given the disparity in status between her and that nameless low-ranking Inquisitor, they would probably never have any further intersection in their lives.

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Meanwhile, after leaving the Inquisition, Leon was also pondering over Weiss’s words.

In his personal judgment, the credibility of what the Saintess had told him was quite high.

Selling holy water was one of the Church’s major sources of income.

Compared to directly curing illnesses with medicine, having people continuously rely on medication to alleviate symptoms was far more profitable.

Without major figures demanding otherwise and with no competitors, the Church indeed had no need to continue investing in research to cure such conditions.

The powers of Magical Beasts and Witches both originated from Primordial Witch Moira.

There were rumors that Witches could tame Magical Beasts and even transform into them.

Their understanding of Magical Beasts far surpassed that of the Church, and Weiss, working at the Saint Rosalia Research Institute, should also have had contact with the Witches in the prison.

Perhaps... there really were Witches who possessed an antidote that could cure him.

However, this suggestion was not particularly useful in practice.

In a small place like Hamel Town, it was extremely unlikely to encounter a real Witch.

The local Inquisition's last arrest on suspicion of heresy had been more than thirty years ago, and the person had ultimately been released due to lack of evidence.

Given his status, it was even more impossible for him to gain access to Saint Rosalia Prison, one of the Church's most confidential institutions.

Simply encountering a Witch was already so difficult, let alone confirming whether the Witch he met possessed an antidote.

Obtaining an antidote from a Witch could only be described as something that depended entirely on chance.

By comparison, finding a way to earn more money and ensuring that he could receive the best possible treatment seemed far more realistic.

With that thought, Leon's gaze unconsciously fell upon the black bag in his hand. Images of crates of gold and silver coins he had once seized from underworld smuggling gangs suddenly flashed through his mind.

If not for the mandatory body searches after every case, he would definitely have been unable to resist pocketing some.

The Church prohibited the trade of Mana and other Magical Beast materials, but the enormous profits involved still drove countless people toward it.

These confiscated goods... just how much could they be sold for?

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