

What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! #Chapter 61 : I Haven't Killed Him Yet, and He's Already Dead? - Read What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 61 : I Haven't Killed Him Yet, and He's Already Dead?

Chapter 61: I Haven't Killed Him Yet, and He's Already Dead?

Several days later, urgent bell tolls rang throughout the Inquisition.

Leon followed the others and quickly assembled on the Inquisition's training ground, lining up in formation.

Leon glanced around.

His colleagues were just as confused as he was, exchanging looks—clearly, no one knew the reason for this summons.

The frequency of the alarm that had just sounded was the full mobilization call.

In theory, it was only rung for collective missions requiring everyone's participation—such as storming a criminal organization of considerable scale, or firefighting.

But at the Hamel Inquisition, Caron had never ordered a full mobilization for any major case.

Since Leon joined, the assembly bell had only rung once during a drill when higher authorities conducted an inspection.

Once everyone had finished forming up on the training ground, the new Director, Aaron, soon appeared on the raised platform.

After inspecting the assembled personnel on duty, Aaron clasped his hands behind his back and spoke:

“Just moments ago, the Church received reliable intelligence from an important witness. We have identified Mr. Griffin's true identity—Henry Potter, representative of the Gold Ring Merchant Consortium, a wealthy magnate with numerous properties across South Harbor County, especially in Hamel Town. I believe most of you here have heard his name.”

Leon was startled. Mr. Griffin had operated underground trade in South Harbor County for over a decade without incident.

The reactions of the others were similar.

Mr. Griffin was a local underworld kingpin and a key investigative target of the Hamel Inquisition.

Yet Caron had never formally opened a focused investigation against this target.

And now, barely a month after the new Director took office, he had already secured solid evidence that Potter was Mr.

Griffin and was prepared to uproot this kingpin entirely?

“After further investigation, we have also successfully identified one of his criminal bases—a winery located to the northwest of the town. The suspect, Potter, is highly likely to be there today. We will now carry out an emergency operation against him. This operation will be led directly by me.

“According to our intelligence, there is a very high probability that the site contains armed forces. All personnel on duty are to complete combat mobilization preparations under the leadership of your respective team captains. Team Three will be under my direct command. We depart by carriage in ten minutes. Move!”

With a sweeping gesture from Aaron, the Inquisitors present immediately formed up in sequence and went to prepare.

Leon followed the other team members into the equipment room, put on his uniform and mask, received an extra gun and ammunition, a Church longsword, a waterskin, as well as a small pack of emergency rations and medical supplies.

Inquisitors rarely encountered real witches or heretics, but they frequently clashed with hunters smuggling magical beast materials and underworld members.

They were not lacking in combat experience.

Carriages filled with Inquisitors rolled out from the Inquisition.

Leon and the others were crammed into the swaying carriage compartment, thinking through their next moves.

Father Auden had once warned him that Potter had been insufficiently cautious in his dealings against the Earl, making trouble highly likely.

Leon had simply never expected that trouble would come so fast—so suddenly.

There had been no sign at all within the Inquisition.

Without deploying any Inquisitors beforehand, the new Director had suddenly grasped Mr. Griffin's identity and criminal base and immediately taken action, leaving Leon no opportunity whatsoever to prepare or deal with the situation.

Now it seemed that Director Aaron and Bishop Becket had already been able to uncover the crimes of the Deputy Director and Martin before taking office, which meant they possessed investigative forces outside the Inquisition—and with extremely high efficiency.

The winery they were heading to should be the same place where he had previously conducted business with Potter.

If Aaron's intelligence was accurate, Potter would likely be caught there.

If Potter could escape capture, or find a way to clear himself after being arrested, that would naturally be the best outcome.

But if Potter were captured and convicted, that would be troublesome.

The Inquisition would trace the high-purity Mana Potter had recently obtained and uncover who Fenrir, the supplier, was.

Leon clearly realized that, no matter what, he could not allow Potter to be captured.

The convoy stopped beside a hill.

Leon got out with the other Inquisitors.

All twenty-five Inquisitors on duty at the Hamel Inquisition were present today.

Strange—Director Aaron was personally commanding the operation.

Where was Bishop Becket?

Only then did Leon realize that whether on the training ground or during the carriage ride, he had not seen Bishop Becket at all.

He had only seen Aaron in uniform, wearing his sword, acting as commander.

Aaron personally led everyone up the hillside at speed.

At the top of the low slope, Aaron crouched down, glanced into the distance a few times, and said to those behind him, "From here, we can already see the winery's location."

Leon looked as well.

He could see a vast expanse of open fields, with an estate like a miniature model sitting in the middle, surrounded by plantations.

The straight-line distance to the buildings was probably around one to two kilometers.

This was exactly the winery he had visited before.

“Sir, the winery is too large. We don’t have enough manpower to surround it,” the captain of Team One advised Aaron.

“The location of the estate is also far too open. We can still hide here, but once we descend the hill, it will be difficult. If we launch a group assault from any direction, even with slightly more people, we’re very likely to alert them in advance. The estate may well have concealed escape routes.”

“In addition, the number of people inside is unknown, and we haven’t confirmed which building the suspect is in. Many areas are blind spots. Shouldn’t we tail them for a period and act when the suspect leaves the base?” the captain of Team Two added.

Aaron thought for a moment, then shook his head.

“If we wait until they leave the base to act, there’s a possibility that the criminal evidence on site will be destroyed in advance. We need to do our utmost to catch them with both people and evidence, to prevent the suspect from using methods to evade conviction after capture.”

Leon observed for a while, then spoke in a low voice, “Sir.”

Aaron turned to look at him.

“Inquisitor Set, do you have something to report?”

“Look there. The vegetation on that side of the slope is dense and extends directly into the plantations. If it’s just one or two people, it might be possible to approach the estate from there without being detected,” Leon said.

Aaron looked over and agreed.

“Indeed. So you’re suggesting... sending a scout to infiltrate the site?”

“Yes,” Leon replied.

Hearing this, the other team members cursed Leon inwardly.

Whoever this infiltration job fell to would be risking their life.

If, as the intelligence suggested, there were multiple armed gang members inside, discovery during infiltration would lead to being surrounded and attacked.

With the others waiting at such a distance, timely rescue would be nearly impossible—essentially a dead end!

“It sounds feasible, at least...” Aaron said, sweeping his gaze across the group.

For a moment, no one dared to meet his eyes directly.

Nowadays, within this Inquisition, there were almost no people willing to throw themselves into fire and water for the Church.

“Then I’ll carry out the infiltration myself. If I can return, all the better. If I sound the whistle or fire a shot, you’ll execute the assault immediately,” Aaron continued after scanning the crowd.

Everyone stared at Aaron in shock.

They had not expected the commander to lead by example to such an extent.

It was said that when Director Caron had first taken office, he also dared to engage in firefights with the underworld personally—but even he wouldn’t have gone so far as to infiltrate an unknown criminal base without backup.

But thinking carefully, Director Aaron was a Fully Appointed Third-Rank Knight.

His strength was far beyond ordinary people.

It wasn’t strange for him to have such confidence.

At that moment, Leon spoke up, “Sir, how could a commander put himself in danger? Let me go.”

The other team members were shocked once again, as if seeing Leon for the first time.

Leon wasn’t exactly a veteran, but he was certainly adept at lying low and coasting along.

Normally, he would have had no enthusiasm whatsoever for a mission that put his life at risk.

Was he really so desperate for promotion that he would throw his life away just to perform in front of the new Director?

Aaron also looked at Leon in surprise, momentarily unable to decide.

“If something happens to you, the operation will fail. Even if I’m discovered, you can still command the assault and capture. Defending the Church’s law with our lives is our duty. Please make a rational judgment,” Leon said, meeting Aaron’s eyes steadily.

“Please give the order.”

Aaron felt Leon’s resolve.

After a moment’s thought, he nodded.

“Be careful.”

...

Twenty minutes later, Leon quietly passed through the plantations and successfully infiltrated the estate.

He wasn’t particularly worried about being discovered.

He was Fenrir, who had done business with Potter here before and had shown his face.

Even if discovered, it wouldn’t necessarily be a problem.

What he needed to do now was to reach Potter before the Inquisition.

That was the real reason he had requested the infiltration mission.

If there were secret passages or escape routes, he could inform Potter in advance and let him slip away.

That would be the ideal outcome.

If Potter truly had no way to escape, then Leon would have to find a way to eliminate him.

Under no circumstances could he allow Potter to fall into the Inquisition’s hands.

In such a case, the bodyguards around Potter would be troublesome for him, but he also had opportunities to deceive them and launch a surprise attack.

He would have to adapt on the fly.

What puzzled him, however, was that after infiltrating the estate, he didn’t see a single person.

The villa he had entered before now had its front door tightly shut, with no one guarding it.

At a glance, the estate looked completely deserted.

Was Aaron's intelligence that Potter was here really accurate?

Leon tried circling to the other side of the building.

The back door was closed, but he noticed an open window.

If there was no one here, why would a window be open? Doubt arose in Leon's mind.

He looked around again and still saw no one.

After hesitating for a moment, he quietly climbed in through the window.

Inside was the hall where he had previously conducted business with Potter.

He saw no one there.

He entered the corridor, searched the first floor, then carefully went upstairs along the staircase.

As he passed through the second-floor corridor, he suddenly froze.

At last, he saw two people lying on the floor at the doorway of the room at the end of the hall—motionless, with a pool of blood on the ground.

Someone had been killed!!

A chill instantly wrapped around him.

He clenched the gun in his hand and went on full alert, guarding against threats from both front and back.

He sensed no other presence.

Looking more closely at the two bodies, their clothing seemed similar to the bodyguards he had seen at the estate last time.

They had been guarding outside the room at the end of the corridor.

Now the door was half open.

Leon realized something.

He drew his sword, raised his gun, and advanced toward the room as if walking on thin ice, stepping over the blood and corpses on the floor.

He peered inside through the crack in the door and saw splattered bloodstains on the ground.

He carefully pushed the door open, and the full view of the room finally unfolded before him.

At this moment, he finally saw the Mr. Griffin he had wanted to meet—the wealthy merchant Potter—and locked eyes with him.

Potter sat upright in a boss's chair behind a desk, staring at Leon with dull eyes, his mouth half open yet utterly silent.

He would never speak again, because his throat had been slit, and all the blood had long since drained away.

Leon stepped into the room, froze in place while keeping his gun aimed forward.

He hadn't even had the chance to kill Potter to silence him, and yet Potter had already been murdered!?

Who did it?

At that moment, a barely noticeable shadow silently flickered out from a dark corner of the room and moved toward Leon.

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

What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! #Chapter 62 : The Strength of the New Director - Read What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 62 : The Strength of the New Director

Chapter 62: The Strength of the New Director

Leon did not notice at first that someone else was moving inside the room.

That person was concealed within a mass of eerie black shadow.

Whenever someone attempted to observe that shadow, it would disperse like ink diffusing in water before it could be seen, vanishing without a trace.

Shadow Passage, a divine art and one form of power bestowed by the Blessing of the Star-Night Secret God.

Within the area covered by shadows, the sense of existence of things would sharply diminish.

A person hiding within it would be subconsciously ignored even if another's gaze swept over them, or even if they made a sound.

Only when the one in hiding interfered with surrounding objects would the concealed state be broken, allowing the observer to perceive something for only that instant.

For a professional assassin, this single advantage of striking first was enough to methodically eliminate every ordinary person within a base.

He had already completed the assassination mission, but while searching for important items and letters, someone had intruded.

The assassin did not rashly launch a sneak attack on Leon.

He was still considering.

This appeared to be an Inquisitor, likely with backup, yet there was no movement from anyone else nearby.

The other party had infiltrated alone; the backup probably could not arrive immediately.

If he silently killed this Inquisitor, he could buy time to continue searching.

But the Inquisitor was not on the mission list.

He was unsure whether creating additional trouble would bring him unnecessary complications.

At this moment, the assassin did not take this Low-Ranking Inquisitor seriously.

He was a Transcendent, and assassinating ordinary people had never posed any difficulty for him.

Inevitably, he had grown somewhat lax.

What he did not know was that the other party had also received a certain kind of blessing.

His concealment ability was not nearly as effective before a Transcendent of the same rank.

When Leon began to cautiously look around, the assassin did not evade.

After all, the other party could not see him.

However, at that moment, Leon's gaze—meant to sweep past the assassin—suddenly stalled.

He did not see a person, but he noticed a faint, indistinct black shadow.

There was something there!

Leon sensed it.

The assassin noticed something strange in Leon's gaze, and alarm bells rang loudly in his mind.

There was no more time to hesitate.

He lunged forward, the dagger in his hand stabbing toward Leon's chest.

Leon had just seen the shadow when it abruptly turned into a person leaping straight at him.

There was no time to aim carefully.

He fired by reflex, but the opponent reacted in advance, tilting his head aside to dodge the shot while thrusting the dagger.

Leon retreated and evaded at the same time, raising his hand to block in front of himself.

The dagger stabbed into his arm.

The assassin pulled it out and was just about to press the attack with speed when the splattered blood instantly turned Purplish-Red, exploding between the two of them and transforming into Purple Smoke.

This sudden change startled the assassin.

The purple smoke smeared across his face.

He instinctively held his breath, but his eyes immediately felt a searing, burning pain.

“Ah!”

He screamed, clutching his eyes as he retreated.

Leon endured the intense pain from his stabbed arm, tossed away the gun in his hand, and drew a second one.

Yet before he could aim, the opponent executed a flying roll and took cover behind the long bench beside the tea table.

Leon could not be sure whether the opponent's eyes were still functional and dared not rush forward recklessly.

The opponent's close-combat skills were far more refined than the basic sword techniques Leon had trained in at the Inquisition.

However, the bench obstructed his line of fire, and the gun could only fire once.

Leon aimed the gun toward the bench, retreated near a pillar, and used it as cover as he cautiously faced off against the opponent.

Leon checked the wound on his forearm, which was still bleeding.

At this time, the assassin opposite him also forced open his tear-filled eyes.

He could still see, but his vision was already extremely blurred, a hazy white expanse.

In their first exchange, both were shaken.

Neither had expected to encounter another Transcendent here.

"Who exactly are you?" After a long, silent standoff, the assassin unexpectedly asked in a low voice.

Those with relatively high positions among the Inquisitors could also receive blessings, but an ability that turned blood into poisonous mist was clearly not a blessing of the Four Gods of Origin.

This was undoubtedly heretical power!

"And who are you? Why did you kill Potter?" Leon also tried asking.

He had activated his ability, yet the opponent could still move.

The poisonous mist formed from that small amount of blood had not yet reached a lethal dose.

Neither of them answered.

Another stretch of silent confrontation followed, when sudden noise came from outside.

The earlier gunshot had been heard clearly by Aaron and the others stationed farther away.

Realizing that Leon might be engaged in combat with someone inside the estate, Aaron ordered an assault.

While they were locked in their standoff, the Inquisitors rushed into the estate.

The assassin clicked his tongue and glanced behind him.

He knew there was a glass window there.

He made a desperate gamble and charged toward the window, leaping through it in one motion.

Leon had not anticipated his move.

As the other party shattered the window, Leon pulled the trigger and fired, the bullet grazing the assassin's body.

The assassin landed in the flowerbed outside, rolled, and used his divine art again.

Ignoring his injuries from the fall and his unrecovered vision, he staggered toward the corner of the building.

The mission ended here.

His top priority now was to escape Leon's line of sight.

Ordinary people could not see him.

Even if the Inquisitors surrounded the area, he still had a chance to get away!

"Stop."

A low voice sounded directly in front of him.

The assassin froze.

In his hazy, white-blurred vision, a human figure appeared.

He could not make out the figure clearly, and his body grew cold inch by inch.

The other party could directly see him even with the divine art active.

Without a doubt, the opponent was also a Transcendent—and of a higher rank than him!

“I am Aaron Dias, Director of the Hamel Inquisition and a Third-Rank Knight of the Church of the God of War. The person ahead—immediately dispel your divine art and state your identity!”

Blocking the assassin’s path, Aaron drew his sword with an expressionless face.

At this moment, the Inquisitors who arrived behind Aaron raised their guns in confusion.

None of them could see the assassin’s figure at first glance.

Leon came to the window and saw the scene of the assassin confronting Aaron.

He did not speak rashly.

He could faintly sense that the assassin was shrouded in an indistinct, hazy black shadow.

If his attention wavered even slightly, the figure would become unclear.

Judging by the reactions of the other Inquisitors, they could see almost nothing.

It seemed that only he and Aaron could capture the assassin’s outline—and Aaron saw far more clearly than he did.

“Immediately dispel your divine art and state your identity. This is your final warning.” Aaron said as he stepped toward the assassin.

The assassin hesitated for a moment, then suddenly turned and ran.

He could not be captured!!

Aaron did not give chase immediately.

Instead, he drew his sword across the ground.

Firelight burst forth.

A row of blazing flames surged up before the assassin, forming a wall that blocked his escape route.

The heat wave rushed toward him, searing his skin.

Forced to stop, the assassin found Aaron already closing in rapidly from behind.

In desperation, the assassin turned and threw his dagger at Aaron.

The dagger became a streak of afterimage, impossible for anyone to see clearly.

But Aaron merely swung his sword casually in front of himself.

With a clang, the dagger was knocked aside, leaving no opening at all.

The assassin drew another dagger, intending to make a final, desperate struggle.

At that moment, Aaron pointed his sword at him from a distance, and the assassin immediately felt as if his feet had been filled with lead.

The heaviness spread instantly through his entire body, as though the gravity pulling him toward the earth had doubled, forcing him down onto one knee.

As he struggled to hold his footing, the ground suddenly became unnaturally soft, like a swamp.

He could not move, only watch helplessly as his legs slowly sank into the earth.

He was completely trapped.

Leon watched in stunned disbelief.

The strength Aaron displayed was on an entirely different level from any Transcendent Leon had seen before—including himself!

There was no escape.

Realizing this with absolute clarity, the assassin made a decisive choice.

Gripping his dagger, he stabbed it into his own throat without hesitation, slicing through his windpipe completely, leaving no chance for rescue.

This was the last neck he would ever cut in his life.

Blood sprayed out.

Aaron stepped back to avoid the splattering blood.

Watching the assassin collapse to the ground, twitch a few times, and then go still, Aaron frowned deeply.

Possessing blessed power and choosing suicide without hesitation the moment capture was imminent—this was absolutely not an ordinary assassin!

Such a person was not someone Henry Potter could have hired as a bodyguard.

“Immediately search for Inquisitor Leon Set!” he commanded loudly.

“Sir,” Leon called out from the shattered window.

“I’m here!”

Seeing the assassin captured and committing suicide, Leon let out a slight sigh of relief.

After all, the other party had just witnessed his ability.

But with this outcome, tracing the assassin’s origins would be rather difficult.

“Inquisitor Set, are you all right?” Aaron looked up at Leon and asked.

“My arm was stabbed by him, but it’s nothing serious,” Leon replied.

“Thank the gods.” Seeing his subordinate alive and well, Aaron relaxed and revealed a relieved smile.

“I found the suspect Potter here. He is already dead. In addition, there are two more corpses, likely also killed by that person,” Leon reported.

“Stay there. I’ll be there shortly.”

Aaron turned and began issuing orders, first having someone check the assassin’s condition.

After confirming death, he assigned two people to guard the body, sent a group to search the area, and personally led the remaining men as they forced open the door and stormed into the villa to rendezvous with Leon.

Leon clutched his injured arm and turned to look at the chaotic room.

Potter’s corpse was still slumped where it had been.

At the very moment the Inquisition uncovered his dealings, his collaborator Potter had been killed by an assassin of unknown origin.

Although he still did not understand what was going on, Leon had already faintly sensed that danger was drawing close.

It seemed that his business would ultimately have to be suspended.

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

What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! #Chapter 63 : Rena Fell into Custody - Read What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 63 : Rena Fell into Custody

Chapter 63: Rena Fell into Custody

At the same time, inside the Labyrinth Workshop.

Rena stood before the workbench and dissected a laboratory mouse that had contracted Saltification Disease and had been administered the special medicine for a period of time.

A special medicine formulated with eighty-five percent purity Mana was already capable of reversing the crystallization appearing on the bodies of mice afflicted with Saltification Disease.

However, judging from the results of several dissections, the progression of the illness within the internal organs was actually still continuing, only at a much slower rate.

Rena let out a soft sigh.

The current special medicine still could not completely cure Saltification Disease.

But based on the present experimental results, the medicine was already able to reverse surface symptoms, allow patients to regain mobility, and significantly extend their lifespan.

If similar effects could be achieved in humans as in animals, then for cases like Mrs.

Hesh, who had originally been estimated to have only about one year left, continuous medication should be able to extend that to five years, or even a little longer.

Moreover, before the internal organs deteriorated, patients would still retain the ability to move their limbs and live with a bit more dignity.

The efficacy of this medicine was already far beyond anything Holy Water could compare to.

Overall, it could actually already be considered a fairly decent treatment plan—only that it was still far from her goal of making Saltification Disease disappear entirely.

Her research had reached a bottleneck at this point.

No matter what she did, the purity of Mana could not be raised any further.

All that remained was to work on the formula itself.

Yet according to the inherited materials left behind by her grandmother's lineage, research in this direction had also more or less been explored to its limit.

Without the addition of new knowledge, it would likely be very difficult to achieve any further breakthroughs.

Rena felt a trace of melancholy as she temporarily set aside her research and cleaned up the experimental table.

Next, she still had to handle the work of tending to the Magical Beasts.

As usual, she prepared water and feed, then pricked her finger with a needle and dripped her own blood into the water.

Finally, she placed the water and feed into containers and carefully lowered them into the Breeding Pool.

After winter arrived, the activity of the Magical Beasts slowed noticeably, and they would temporarily stop reproducing.

However, they did not go into hibernation.

They still needed regular feeding and care to ensure that there would be a sufficient scale to continue producing Mana in the coming year.

Furthermore, if she did not feed them a bit of her blood at intervals, the Blood Pact would lose its effect.

The Magical Beasts would become irritable and aggressive, and would even slaughter each other within the cramped Breeding Pool.

Out of concern for potential accidents, Leon had slaughtered all the adult Magical Beasts.

For the next half year, she would not need to refine Mana anymore.

With such careful tending and feeding them with plants collected from the Labyrinth, once the remaining Magical Beasts matured next year after accumulating through an entire winter in the Labyrinth, the Mana yield of the first harvest should be quite considerable.

This year, they had sold just over one million.

If they maintained the same scale of output next year, reaching a transaction volume of one and a half million should not be a problem.

That money-grubbing fellow would probably be ecstatic.

Thinking of this, Rena suddenly felt that her line of thought was a bit strange.

No—how much money they made, and whether he was happy or not, what did that have to do with her?

Her goal had clearly always been to develop a special medicine for Saltification Disease.

Making money had always been Leon's goal.

Although, strictly speaking, there were not many people who disliked money, and she was no exception.

By now, she possessed roughly five hundred thousand.

Having that much money meant she no longer needed to worry about finances in daily life or research, which was indeed a good thing.

She had never actually enjoyed living such a frugal life before.

Still, she remained worried that the money might attract trouble.

She kept only a few tens of thousands of Fenni at home and placed the rest into a box, burying it in a concealed location—a place her grandmother had originally used to hide tools and books left behind from her days as a Witch.

She had even considered that, if necessary, she could redistribute the money she had earned back to Leon, allowing him to reach his financial goal sooner.

She also knew that Leon's fifty-fifty profit-sharing terms had already been a concession made with their cooperation in mind.

Leon had protected her more than once, and she did not mind giving back a bit more of the money.

And that way, she could free herself from that fellow sooner, no longer needing to engage in this kind of tightrope-walking dangerous business with him—wasn't that right?

Free herself...

At that thought, she unexpectedly hesitated.

Once enough money was earned, there seemed to be no reason for them to continue cooperating.

Although Leon had said he would continue providing her with protection, and she had agreed to develop medicines to treat injuries and illnesses for Leon—but after that?

If she developed the medicine Leon needed, and her research on Saltification Disease came to a temporary conclusion, would there really be any need for them... to have any further connection?

At this point, without even realizing it herself, Rena let out a soft sigh.

“Clang!”

The sound of a clay jar shattering rang out within the cave, crisp and loud, instantly interrupting Rena’s thoughts.

Rena jolted awake, her blood seeming to freeze throughout her body.

After Caron had broken in here before, in addition to digging out a new exit, Leon had also set up some simple mechanisms at this Labyrinth entrance.

Some inconspicuous threads were impossible to see in the darkness.

Without prior vigilance, they would inevitably be triggered.

Once triggered, jars hidden in the shadows would be knocked over and shattered, producing a sound that could be clearly heard throughout this underground space.

These were used purely as alarms.

To prevent himself and Rena from triggering them by accident, Leon had not set up any dangerous traps.

Of course, there was always the possibility that Leon himself might accidentally trigger them when entering, but that had never happened before.

“There’s someone inside, search quickly!”

A low shout shattered the last trace of hope in Rena’s heart.

The intruders had clearly realized this was an early-warning mechanism.

A burst of chaotic, hurried footsteps followed, and another mechanism was triggered.

The sound of shattering jars rang out once more.

Someone had broken into the Labyrinth! And it had to be when Leon was not here!!

Rena was momentarily terrified out of her wits, but her rationality quickly pulled her scattered soul back.

She had to run!

Rena immediately dashed toward the exit.

As she passed by the table, she hesitated slightly.

In the end, she did not take the Mana on the table, but instead grabbed the alcohol used for ignition and heating and splashed it onto the oil lamp.

Flames immediately spread across the table.

Then she rushed out of the Workshop and fled deeper into the Labyrinth, disappearing into the darkness.

This amount of fire was impossible to destroy evidence, but when the intruders reached this area, the firelight would draw their attention, forcing them to divert manpower to put out the fire and protect the scene.

That would at least buy her some time to escape.

She had learned this trick from Leon.

Back then, Leon had used this very method to lure her out of the house to put out a fire.

After escaping the Workshop, Rena could still hear the chaotic shouts behind her.

The faintly glowing plants and mushrooms provided her with barely adequate illumination.

She had practiced escaping with Leon several times, but when it truly came time to do so, she could not calm down at all.

Her head buzzed, and only one thought repeated over and over in her mind: "Get out—no matter what, get out of here first!"

Leon had taught her that the top priority in such situations was to escape the Labyrinth and avoid being caught red-handed.

She finally reached the end of the left-side fork and felt around until she found the passage Leon had dug.

It was low and narrow, well concealed, and only allowed one person to crawl through.

Rena crawled into the passage, inching forward in pitch-black darkness.

The dozens of meters felt endlessly long.

At last, she touched a pile of withered grass.

She pushed it aside, and a sliver of faint light shone through the gaps.

The withered grass had been used by Leon to conceal the entrance and exit.

The exit was offset by more than ten meters from the original one, and was further obscured by dense shrubs.

Rena clambered awkwardly out from the thick grass, brushed the dust from her cloak, and after confirming there was no one nearby, immediately moved down the slope toward the foot of the mountain.

She had finally escaped the Labyrinth.

Next, all she needed to do was leave this mountain!

The Hamel Inquisition had fewer than thirty people.

That number was more than enough to search the Labyrinth, but completely insufficient to search an entire mountain.

The slope here was not very steep, but without a mountain path, it was still dangerous to traverse.

She twisted her ankle several times.

Eventually, she passed through the trees on the hillside and approached the foot of the mountain.

This was another direction of the mountain, far from Estuary Village.

But just as she stepped out from between the trees, several figures abruptly entered her field of vision.

Rena froze in place.

What she saw was a squad of people wearing light armor, with the Church's Four-Pointed Star Emblem on their breastplates.

These were... Church personnel!

The other side seemed to have already noticed movement coming down the mountain and was closing in to surround her.

Rena glanced around and discovered that there were many more people gathered in the distance.

From her vantage point alone, she could see at least thirty or more.

This was a mountain-sealing search.

What had been mobilized was an entire Knight Order of two hundred apprentice knights.

From the moment the search began, Rena—once she entered the Labyrinth—had no chance of escaping at all!

“Hello, miss. We are apprentice knights under the Church of the God of War, acting under orders to seal off and search this mountain,” a female knight stepped forward and said in a businesslike tone.

“May we ask for your cooperation in an investigation?”

Rena stood there blankly, unable to give any response.

The female knight did not wait for her reply, but instead turned to someone beside her and said quietly, “Notify Bishop Becket immediately.”

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

What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! #Chapter 64 : Decisive Evidence - Read What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 64 : Decisive Evidence

Chapter 64: Decisive Evidence

In the infirmary of the Inquisition, the healing officer finished bandaging Leon's wounds, explained the situation to Aaron Dias at the side, gave a salute, and then withdrew.

“The injuries were nothing serious. A few days of rest would be enough. Fortunately, there was nothing troublesome smeared on that dagger,” Aaron said.

“Thank you, Director,” Leon nodded in response.

“Regarding that assassin, has any clue been found?”

“Not yet.” Aaron shook his head.

“All we know for now is that he possessed transcendent blessed power, and used it to kill Henry Potter at the winery along with eight other gang members. All of them had their throats slit cleanly with a single strike of a dagger. As for the others, their bodies were hidden throughout various locations inside the winery after the assassinations.”

“Could he have been a client of Henry Potter, or perhaps a partner who learned that Potter had been targeted by the Inquisition and sent someone to silence him?” Leon asked.

“I have kept that possibility in mind as well, but the likelihood is not very high.

Beneath the winery, we discovered a compounding room that Potter had set up, with two apothecaries responsible for brewing magical potions inside.

“The assassin also found that compounding room and killed both the guards and the apothecaries there. We even found mana that he had taken with him on his body. However, he did not destroy the compounding room. If he were someone connected to Potter’s criminal chain, it would be unlikely for him to leave behind so much evidence after killing everyone.

Based on everything we uncovered at the winery, together with witness testimony, we can essentially convict Potter already,” Aaron replied.

Although the one who should have stood trial was now nothing more than a corpse, unable to appear before a tribunal.

“That assassin—why did he possess that kind of invisibility ability? That power shouldn’t have anything to do with the Church, right?” Leon probed cautiously.

The assassin’s invisibility ability was known not only to Leon, but also to at least two Inquisitors who had witnessed Aaron capturing the assassin.

The fact that Leon himself had not been killed did not arouse much suspicion.

He had slightly altered the account of his confrontation with the assassin, claiming that the assassin could have easily killed him but never delivered a fatal blow, seemingly wary of the trouble that killing an Inquisitor might bring to his employer.

Aaron’s gaze dimmed slightly as he lowered his voice.

“Unfortunately, there’s no doubt about it. That was the blessing of a Secret God. That assassin was a blessed transcendent.”

“Could he be... someone from the Church?” Leon asked, feigning surprise.

Within the Church, only those with the status of Fully Appointed Knights, bishops, or other ranked Delegate Officers had the opportunity to receive blessings.

Among the Inquisitors, only directors of local Inquisitions or above possessed Church rank.

In common understanding, aside from witches, only the Four Great Churches monopolized the methods of cultivating transcendent beings.

Transcendent miracles were the grace of the gods, and the Church acted as the gods’ will in the mortal world.

“There have always been apostates within the Church, for various reasons,” Aaron said, pausing briefly.

“Some openly oppose doctrine, some violate Church laws and flee out of fear of punishment, some were spies from the very beginning, and some deserted during missions or on the battlefield... Where there is light, there are shadows. The Church is no exception.”

He deliberately did not mention another existing possibility.

That was the existence of certain powerful figures who had obtained the methods of cultivating transcendent beings from the Church, yet ignored Church law and privately raised transcendent servants for their own use.

“Being able to employ such an assassin, that person behind him couldn’t be an ordinary individual, right?” Leon continued.

The assassin’s suicide when escape became impossible had been decisive and resolute, clearly intended to prevent the Inquisition from investigating further through him.

Someone was undoubtedly pulling the strings behind the scenes.

“We still need further investigation on that,” Aaron said as he patted Leon on the shoulder.

“Go back and rest first. You did very well today—without a doubt a great contribution. I’ll record it for you.”

“No, I didn’t really do anything,” Leon said as he stood up.

“You undertook the most dangerous task. There’s no need to be modest,” Aaron said as he walked toward the door.

“Do you want to rest here for a while, or go home first? Shall I have someone see you off?”

“It’s fine. I can go back on my own,” Leon replied.

Although Potter had not been arrested, he had been killed by someone unknown.

Leon was unsure who had been watching the local trade, but regardless, the transaction could no longer continue.

He needed to leave as soon as possible to deal with the breeding farm in the labyrinth.

“All right then—”

Aaron was just about to say something more when sudden commotion erupted outside.

Immediately afterward, Bishop Beckett’s voice rang out in the corridor.

“Sir, we finally found you!”

“Bishop Beckett, did your operation yield results?” Aaron turned around.

“Yes. Acting on the recommendation, we searched the labyrinth that had been sealed thirty years ago in this area. Inside, we discovered a magical beast breeding farm, confirming that the mana was not smuggled in from outside, but produced locally.”

Bishop Beckett’s words plunged Leon, who was still in the infirmary, into an icy abyss.

The labyrinth had been searched by Bishop Beckett? All Inquisitors had been mobilized to raid Potter’s estate—where had they drawn the manpower to search the labyrinth?

Potter’s estate and the breeding farm in the labyrinth were searched at the same time.

So they had already discovered clues long ago, and had never intended to give him any chance to react!

If the labyrinth had been searched, what about Rena?

“Then, was the producer of the mana also caught?” Aaron continued.

“There was someone in the labyrinth during the search, but we didn’t capture them on the spot. They had privately dug a passage to escape from the labyrinth. However, during the mountain lockdown, our people found three individuals: a local hunter, a nearby woodcutter, and a woman who claimed she was gathering herbs in the mountains. To be safe, I brought them all back. I’ll take you to have a look.”

As Bishop Beckett spoke, he led Aaron toward the main hall.

Leon snapped back to his senses and hurriedly followed from behind.

When Leon entered the hall, he saw several lightly armored knights escorting suspects into the Inquisition, handing them over to the Inquisitors.

The Inquisitors respectfully saluted the knights before taking the suspects toward the interrogation rooms.

These knights bore no Fully Appointed insignia of their respective Churches.

Only a unified Four-Pointed Star Emblem was stamped at the center of their breastplates.

They belonged to the Knight Orders’ apprentice knights who had yet to obtain rank.

In terms of duties, they were not much different from Church Delegate Officers, accepting various task deployments.

Their status, however, was still slightly higher than that of Low-Ranking Inquisitors.

After all, apprentice knights had the opportunity to advance to Fully Appointed Knights, and not just anyone had the means to become a knight.

Leon saw two men escorted in first.

When the third person was brought in, the world seemed to lose all color for a brief instant, leaving only the faded pale red on the other’s shawl glaringly vivid.

He saw clearly that Rena was being escorted in, shackled.

Rena’s face was deathly pale, her eyes filled with terror, like a deer surrounded by wolves.

Her gaze swept over the neatly uniformed Inquisitors present.

Every Inquisitor wore a mask, except for three people.

Aaron and Bishop Beckett stood at the rear of the formation, examining the suspects being brought in.

There was also another person, standing far behind the two of them.

At last, she saw Leon.

The moment their eyes met, both of them were momentarily at a loss.

Then Leon saw Rena's eyes flicker slightly, as if she were conveying some message to him.

Before he could respond in any way, Rena had already looked away.

After the three suspects were taken inside, Leon heard Bishop Beckett begin reporting to Aaron.

"We conducted a preliminary interrogation.

The woodcutter and the hunter have basically confessed.

The only problem is the last girl—she's the most suspicious.

She claims she went up the mountain to gather herbs, but when asked about her name and address, she kept evading the questions."

"Do you think she's the witch producing the mana?" Aaron asked.

"The possibility is quite high. However, we didn't find Moilai's Altar in the labyrinth. The location for mana extraction shouldn't be outside Hamel Town. I've already sent people to nearby villages to ask around. We should have results soon. Once we know where she's from, we'll immediately conduct a search.

As long as we find decisive evidence at a location connected to her, her lack of cooperation won't matter," Bishop Beckett replied.

Hearing this, Leon suddenly understood the meaning behind Rena's earlier glance.

Rena had not yet revealed the crucial information.

The Inquisition would only have a chance to search the cellar hiding the altar after they found out her address through inquiries.

He still had time.

“Sir, how is the situation on your side?” Bishop Beckett and Aaron continued discussing the case.

“Henry Potter is dead. An assassin blessed by a Secret God slaughtered everyone in the estate, then committed suicide when captured. Fortunately, we still found evidence of Potter manufacturing magical potions,” Aaron said.

“A blessed assassin?” Bishop Beckett’s brows immediately knitted together.

In a corner unnoticed by the two men, Leon silently retreated, quickly disappearing into the corridor as he headed for the side entrance of the Inquisition.

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

What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! #Chapter 65 : A Stalled Investigation - Read What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 65 : A Stalled Investigation

Chapter 65: A Stalled Investigation

The morgue of the Inquisition.

Aaron and Bishop Becket stood side by side before the killer’s corpse, both wearing bird-beak masks designed for protection against toxic fumes.

“Do you recognize this face?” Aaron asked Bishop Becket for confirmation.

“As far as I know, there is no such person within the Church, including among those apostates officially registered,” Bishop Becket shook his head.

“I fear this was an assassin privately cultivated by someone.”

“Starting from Henry Potter’s enemies or competitors, are there any suspects who fit?” Aaron continued.

The likelihood that Potter’s clients or collaborators would send an assassin to eliminate him without destroying the evidence was low.

If it were Potter’s enemies, however, it would be far more plausible.

After a moment of contemplation, Bishop Becket replied, “Your Highness, perhaps we can also consider a different angle. This assassin may not necessarily have been targeting him.”

“You mean...” Aaron turned his head and found Bishop Becket staring straight at him.

He immediately understood the implication.

“Me? You think this was an assassin sent after me by my imperial elder sister or her faction?”

“We cannot rule out that concern.”

“Then why kill Potter? And if the goal was to kill me, they should have sent someone more capable,” Aaron raised his doubts.

“Killing others could also be done to muddy the waters and interfere with the investigation, especially when targeting someone as important as yourself. And even if they fail to kill you, they can still obstruct your ability to earn merit within the Church,” Bishop Becket said.

Because of this assassin, they had been unable to bring Potter before the tribunal.

Although Potter’s guilt could still be established, the assassin had become a major point of doubt in the case, making the conclusion somewhat unsightly.

Bishop Becket’s suggestion was extremely pragmatic.

If the assassin were inferred to be part of an attempt on His Highness the Prince’s life, it would instead highlight Aaron’s hardships in handling the case, allowing those within the Church willing to support the prince to further affirm his achievements.

“Furthermore, it is good that you have confidence in your own strength, but you must never be careless. Even you could be in danger if attacked from the shadows. I also heard that you initially intended to personally carry out the infiltration mission? You should not have risked yourself so recklessly,” Bishop Becket continued.

“I merely felt that I was the most suitable,” Aaron said.

“But Inquisitor Set insisted on taking the mission. He was injured as a result, though fortunately the injuries were not serious.”

“May the heavens bless the brave. Then I truly must thank him. We should pay him a visit afterward,” Bishop Becket said, subtly shifting the topic.

“There is something that concerns me,” Aaron suddenly pointed at the killer’s eyes.

“The autopsy report says there were ulcers on the eyes, along with severe congestion, as if lime had been sprinkled on them.”

“Perhaps he was accidentally splashed by some chemical while committing the murder in the apothecary room. No wonder he failed to kill Inquisitor Set. Enough, Your

Highness—let the coroner examine this more carefully. Why don't I take you to have a look at the labyrinth instead?"

Bishop Becket proposed, clearly trying to divert Aaron's attention away from the assassin.

"Alright, let's go now," Aaron agreed, turning and leaving the morgue.

Before leaving, Bishop Becket pulled the white cloth back over the assassin's body.

As he caught one final glimpse of the killer's face, the brows beneath his mask furrowed slightly, and a trace of barely perceptible irritation flashed through his eyes.

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Not long after, Aaron and Bishop Becket appeared inside the labyrinth, where several apprentice knights were moving back and forth, collecting evidence in the labyrinth workshop.

"So they really were breeding Magical Beasts inside the labyrinth and extracting Mana.

No wonder we could never track down the smuggling route for this batch of goods," Aaron looked around and sighed.

"Only the Earl Foyle could have thought of this."

The Earl Foyle, the most powerful newly risen lord in the eastern Empire, was on good terms with the family of Prince Aaron's mother and was also Aaron's strongest supporter as a contender for the throne.

When Bishop Becket was younger and studying within the Church, he had once received the Earl Foyle's patronage.

On the surface, he was the earl's close friend, and at the earl's request, he assisted the prince in entering the Church to secure support.

This time, Aaron's temporary appointment to take charge of the investigation at the Hamel Town Inquisition in South Harbor County had been suggested by the Earl Foyle.

The earl was deeply concerned with the progress of the case and frequently kept in contact with Bishop Becket.

It was also he who proposed the hypothesis that the high-purity Mana might have been produced locally and was connected to the labyrinth from thirty years ago.

He had even specifically leveraged his connections to temporarily deploy a knight order from the Church under Bishop Becket's command, coordinating with Aaron to raid Potter's estate while simultaneously searching the sealed labyrinths near Hamel Town.

Aaron knew that without the Earl Foyle, they would surely still be running in circles, fruitlessly investigating smuggling routes.

Within the Empire, Mana was basically all smuggled in from abroad.

Domestic production generally involved hunting Magical Beasts in unsealed labyrinths, or small-scale breeding near labyrinths for refinement.

Cases like this—secretly breeding Magical Beasts deep inside a sealed labyrinth—were exceedingly rare.

“Because not many people have the conditions to do so,” Bishop Becket echoed.

Active labyrinths were extremely dangerous.

Magical Beasts naturally multiplied within them, forming clans and entire ecosystems.

Wild Magical Beasts could appear anywhere, and there were predatory relationships among them.

Even Witches found them difficult to control, let alone carving out space for breeding.

Moreover, the Church could execute a sealing operation and intrude at any time.

A sealed labyrinth, however, would no longer generate Magical Beasts, yet residual magical power remained, making it extremely suitable for breeding.

But after sealing a labyrinth, the Church would destroy its passages, leaving only a single concealed entrance for Inquisition patrols.

Only the Inquisition possessed knowledge of that entrance's location.

If one did not have access to Inquisition intelligence, then it would require someone who happened to discover the entrance—and who also had the means and the audacity to carry out such a scheme.

“I remember that a long time ago there seemed to have been a similar case in Foyle, wasn't there?” Aaron asked casually, his back turned to Bishop Becket.

A fleetingly strange expression crossed Bishop Becket's face before returning to normal.

“Yes. Twenty years ago, a Witch was once found breeding Magical Beasts in a labyrinth in Foyle. After being captured, she committed suicide by poison in prison.”

“Then this time, how did the person breeding the Magical Beasts learn the location of the labyrinth entrance?” Aaron pondered.

“Personally, I believe the likelihood of an internal intelligence leak is very high,” Bishop Becket said.

“You mean Caron Eso was involved?” Aaron asked.

Before assuming their posts, they had already investigated Caron and quickly obtained evidence of his involvement in illegal transactions for profit in Hamel Town.

Seen this way, the establishment of this labyrinth breeding site might very well have had a direct connection to Caron.

“That possibility cannot be ruled out. If it is true, then it would constitute an extremely serious crime of apostasy,” Bishop Becket said.

“Then the possibility that Caron fled in fear of punishment also can’t be ruled out, can it?” Aaron said.

“That is not necessarily the case,” Bishop Becket shook his head, recalling the Earl Foyle’s speculation regarding increased Mana purity.

At that moment, an apprentice knight called out to them, “Two sirs, we found this at the scene!”

The two turned around to see two knights carrying over several wooden barrels.

At first glance, the barrels appeared to be filled with piles of crushed stone.

“These are...?” Aaron failed to recognize them at once.

Bishop Becket sniffed lightly, catching a peculiar, meaty stench.

He bent down to examine them carefully, then spoke.

“These are fragments of corpses petrified by Magical Beast venom. I believe we have found Caron Eso’s body.”

Petrified corpses could be preserved for a long time.

By feeding them to Magical Beasts in batches, one could maximize the production of high-purity Mana.

The Earl Foyle's conjecture was once again confirmed.

"Take them away for detailed identification," Aaron immediately ordered, then turned to Bishop Becket.

"If this place was established by Eso, and he also died here, then was he betrayed? Internal conflict?"

"At present, the clues are still insufficient. Both Eso and Potter are dead, and we can't ask anything of them. What we need most now is to find the Witch's evidence of guilt. With decisive evidence, we will have the authority to employ all interrogation methods, and then we may have a chance to extract the full truth from her mouth," Bishop Becket said.

"A girl who looks to be only sixteen—could she really be that Fenrir? Supplying Henry Potter and killing Caron Eso?" Aaron recalled the petite figure who looked inexperienced in the world, finding the doubts hard to dispel.

In the end, whether she was even a Witch at all remained unknown.

"Sir, when facing heresy, you cannot judge by appearances. Even the most innocent-looking Witch is extremely dangerous. Caron was poisoned—so long as one chooses the right moment to administer poison, it can be done. Nearly all the key figures in this case are already dead. We must find the Witch who produced the Mana in order to close the case!" Bishop Becket emphasized.

Only by successfully closing the case could Aaron obtain merits fully recognized by the Church.

"I know," Aaron exhaled deeply.

At this moment, an apprentice knight rushed in hurriedly and saluted the two.

"Reporting to both sirs! We have identified the suspect. She is a villager from River Mouth Village at the southern foothills. Her name is Rena Lothark, sixteen years old, living alone in a house in the forest at the foot of the mountain."

"Get to the point. You searched the place, right? Did you find anything?" Bishop Becket urged, his eyes gleaming with anticipation for evidence.

"We conducted a thorough search of the suspect's residence..." The apprentice knight hesitated briefly, then continued his report.

"But so far, no clues have been found."

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

What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! #Chapter 66 : The Only Means of Identifying a Witch - Read What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 66 : The Only Means of Identifying a Witch

Chapter 66: The Only Means of Identifying a Witch

Rena's wooden cottage—Apprentice Knights moved in and out of the house, turning the place upside down from the inside to the courtyard, and then to the cellar.

Some even held shovels as they patrolled the courtyard and the outer perimeter, checking whether there were any suspicious spots that needed digging.

Aaron and Bishop Beckett stood side by side in the cellar, each holding a lantern.

“Are you sure you haven't found anything suspicious?” Bishop Beckett asked the Apprentice Knight behind him.

“So far... no, except we found a bit of backfilling traces under the table.” The Apprentice Knight chose his words carefully.

“You dug it up and took a look?” Bishop Beckett glanced beneath the table and saw there really was a pit there.

“We did. There was nothing inside—only a very deep crack at the bottom.” the Apprentice Knight said.

“A crack?” Bishop Beckett fell into thought.

He looked at the wooden workbench placed in the cellar and ran a finger across the tabletop.

His finger stayed clean, not picking up any dust at all.

“You wiped this place down?” He turned his head to confirm with the Apprentice Knight.

“Other than searching for evidence, we didn't do anything unnecessary.” the Apprentice Knight denied.

“It really looks like there's nothing here.” Aaron also didn't see any clues at a glance.

“Having nothing is suspicious in itself, sir. Look—both tables here are very clean. They were likely used often. So in a cellar with poor lighting, what could she have been doing

on these tables? Carpentry? Sewing? Or... brewing potions?" Bishop Beckett raised the question.

"But there aren't any tools here. Maybe it was simply cleaned." Aaron thought for a moment and said.

"Yes. Nothing at all—like it was... deliberately cleared out."

Bishop Beckett ran his fingertips doubtfully over the tabletop, then suddenly frowned.

"You found something?" Aaron asked.

Bishop Beckett lifted the lantern to shine on the surface and found a circular indentation—a mark left by a heavy object pressing on the table over many years.

Inside the circular indentation, there were faintly a few straight line marks, but it was hard to tell what pattern they formed.

"Sir, please look at this."

He beckoned Aaron over to see, then used his finger to trace a pentagram within the circular indentation.

Those line-like dents seemed to match several strokes of the pentagram exactly.

Aaron looked twice and understood what he meant.

"You mean there used to be an altar here?"

The Moilai Altars confiscated by the Church were usually cylindrical, like an enormous chopping block—both sides planed flat.

One side would be carved with magic arrays and runes, while the reverse would be carved in the shape of a pentagram.

"If this workbench had still been in use recently, then I'm thinking—when that Witch was captured, the altar was sitting right here! And all the potion-brewing tools were here too!" Bishop Beckett speculated.

"But you already caught her. How could she move the evidence?" Aaron met Bishop Beckett's gaze.

As they looked at each other, both their expressions grew heavy.

When the Knight Order sealed the mountain and searched, this cottage had been outside the blockade perimeter.

While the Witch had been surrounded in the mountains, she hadn't had time to return home to move evidence—and then she had been taken under their control.

That meant someone had gotten ahead of them and helped the Witch move the evidence.

From the moment they captured Rena Lothark to the moment they found her address and began the search, only three to four hours had passed.

If the other party had been able to use those three to four hours to move evidence, it meant he could sense the direction of their investigation.

Of course, this was only one possibility.

In reality, the other party might have noticed the Knight Order's sealing operation nearby, realized that Rena had likely been arrested, and moved the evidence for her.

But no matter what, the inference pointed to one possibility—this Witch had accomplices!

That also explained why, after Rena's arrest, she had refused to reveal her personal information the entire time: she had been buying time for her partner to move the evidence.

"But it's all just conjecture. It won't be of any use in the tribunal." Aaron shook his head.

A single indentation on a tabletop hardly counted as any key evidence.

They couldn't even apply to the tribunal for the right to use judicial torture on the grounds of major suspicion.

Bishop Beckett took out his pocket watch to check the time.

Five hours had passed since Rena Lothark's arrest.

They had found out her identity and address, and they had even found the Workshop where Magical Beasts were being raised—yet they still hadn't found Decisive Evidence that could close the case.

He instinctively sensed that the hope of finding physical evidence was growing slimmer and slimmer.

"Sir, it seems we can only try starting from testimony. Let's go meet that girl." Bishop Beckett put away his pocket watch.

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In Rena's past imagination, the Interrogation Room had been a dark, damp, cold room, with only a single oil lamp illuminating the Inquisitor's frigid Bird-Beak Mask.

But it wasn't until Leon described it to her that she learned the Interrogation Room was actually very bright—ablaze with light.

Several fire pits lit the room wide and clear, and mirrors reflected the firelight onto her as she was shackled to a chair.

Every movement of a suspect could be seen clearly.

And the strong light made it hard for a suspect to sleep; the oppressive heat made time crawl.

Even if there were no questions at all and one was merely left there, the psychological pressure would keep rising.

Not every suspect would be treated like this.

This kind of pressure meant that, in the Inquisition's judgment, her suspicion was very high—an ominous sign.

But at the same time, it also meant they still hadn't found even a shred of corroborating evidence, couldn't obtain approval to use judicial torture on her, and could only resort to non-violent means like this.

She didn't know how many hours had passed since she had been sent to the Interrogation Room.

Finally, someone came in to question her.

Aaron and Bishop Beckett entered the room and looked Rena over from a short distance away as she was shackled to the chair.

Rena raised her face, but she couldn't see their faces clearly because of the glare from the mirrors.

Aaron casually adjusted the mirror's angle so the light no longer shone directly into her face.

If they couldn't see the other party's expression, it was also disadvantageous to the interrogation.

"Suspect Rena Lothark—are you still refusing to honestly confess your crimes?" Bishop Beckett spoke harshly.

“What crimes? I don’t know what you’re talking about...” Rena spoke in a voice choked with sobs.

“I was only gathering herbs in the mountains—why did you arrest me...”

The sob in her voice wasn’t acting.

She was truly terrified to the extreme.

But she still remembered the technique Leon had taught her: whatever her emotions were didn’t matter, but she absolutely must not admit anything.

“When you were caught, you didn’t even have a basket. What herbs were you gathering? And besides, the place you were heading down the mountain from was in the opposite direction from your village.” Bishop Beckett pressed.

“I accidentally fell down a slope. I lost the basket then. I couldn’t climb back up, so I could only follow the slope down...”

Rena gave the explanation she had rehearsed countless times in her mind.

“Then why, even now, are you refusing to give your name and where you live? That doesn’t look like the reaction of an innocent person.” Bishop Beckett said.

“I was just... too afraid...” Rena replied softly.

“We are the Church. Only heretics fear us. So you admit you’re a Witch?” Bishop Beckett said.

“I said I’m not a Witch! I heard that once the Inquisition finds someone’s address, they can stuff incriminating evidence into that person’s home, then arrest them and beat a confession out of them... Are you planning to do that to me now?” Rena asked back in a trembling voice.

“No one will do such a thing, Miss Lothark. I swear on my honor—the Church guarantees your lawful rights, on the condition that you are truly innocent and willing to cooperate.” Aaron said.

“We’ve already found your name, so naturally we’ve also found your residence and every location connected to you. You’d better hurry and recall what you did in your home’s cellar—otherwise we’ll have no choice but to use judicial torture on you.” Bishop Beckett sneered.

At that instant, Rena’s heart lurched upward.

Her altar had been hidden in the cellar.

But she immediately remembered what Leon had taught her: the stronger the Inquisitor's pressure during an interrogation, the more it proved they had no decisive physical evidence and had to obtain her testimony.

She could only trust that Leon had already dealt with the physical evidence before they got there.

"I don't know what you're talking about... Even if you put something in my home to frame me, I won't admit it!" She mustered her courage and glared at the two of them.

Aaron and Bishop Beckett quietly exchanged a glance, both vaguely realizing that this interrogation might not yield progress easily.

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After quite some time, once they left the Interrogation Room, Bishop Beckett—who had kept a cold, rigid face the whole time—let out a weary sigh.

They had run back and forth all day: they had raided Potter's estate, found the breeding ground within the labyrinth, and captured the key suspect—only to hit a wall at the final step of evidence collection.

They hadn't been able to seize the critical physical evidence, and suspect Rena Lothark showed no sign of budging.

"Personally, I still think she has problems." Bishop Beckett said.

"Her answers didn't have any obvious flaws." Aaron said.

"The suspect's counter-interrogation awareness seemed very strong—like she had experience being interrogated—but the Church's case files have no record of her."

"We also can't completely rule out that she isn't the person we're looking for." Aaron pondered.

"Send her back to the Holding Cells. Let Carolyn watch her for now."

"Your Highness, there are more than enough suspicious points about her." Bishop Beckett said.

"But those are useless in the tribunal. We can't use judicial torture on her. She's only a suspect—we must guarantee her rights." Aaron said solemnly.

"Your Highness, detention has a time limit. Once it expires, we must release her. If we can't find the Witch, closing the case like that is unacceptable to us!" Bishop Beckett emphasized.

If, in the end, the report they submitted only proved Potter's crimes, and also found that the Mana came from the local area, but failed to seize the Witch who extracted the Mana—and might not even be able to prove the suspect's guilt—and couldn't determine the true culprit who killed Caron Eso...

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#Chapter 67 : Visiting the Sick - Read What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 67 : Visiting the Sick

Chapter 67: Visiting the Sick

"Leon, big brother? Leon, big brother!"

Leon jolted awake amid Melissa's light pushing and calling, his face drenched in cold sweat.

For a brief moment after opening his eyes, he could not even remember what time it was, nor where he was.

"Leon, big brother?" Melissa stood by the bedside and called again worriedly.

Leon turned his head and saw Melissa.

Only then did he remember that he was sleeping in his own room, as yesterday's memories slowly surfaced.

Yesterday, after changing clothes, he had left the Inquisition, gone to the relay station to rent a carriage, and rushed straight to River Mouth Village.

Fortunately, when he found Rena's residence, the Church's people had not yet arrived.

Using the key Rena had given him, he opened the cellar door and cleared out everything that could possibly become evidence, including the altar and experimental tools, as well as the remaining magical potions used to treat Saltification Disease.

When he struggled to hoist the heavy altar onto the carriage, the wound on his arm even split open because of it.

Fearing that the Church's people might arrive at any moment, he hastily wrapped it up and drove off.

As he passed through the village, he happened to see apprentice knights everywhere in the village, asking around for information.

He covered his face with a dust veil and drove the carriage past them.

Fortunately, their attention was focused on asking about Rena, and they did not notice him.

After returning to the city, he avoided attention and found a place to hide those deadly pieces of evidence.

By then, it was already deep into the night, and he was so exhausted that he was on the verge of collapse.

Although he was still very worried about Rena's situation, at that time he ultimately had no legitimate reason to return to the Inquisition, and the toll from his injuries and prolonged high pressure had completely drained his strength.

The rest of his memories were even somewhat blurred.

He seemed to have returned home, treated the bleeding wound once more, and then collapsed into unconscious sleep.

Though exhausted to the extreme, his sleep had been very restless.

Bizarre, chaotic dreams kept tormenting his mind.

After waking up, he could not remember a single detail, only that his clothes were soaked through with cold sweat.

"Melissa?" Leon came back to his senses and realized that Melissa standing in his room was highly unusual.

That meant that when he staggered back to his room yesterday, he had not locked the door at all... no, he had probably not even closed it properly.

Melissa must have heard some noise downstairs and come over to take a look.

"Leon, big brother, you were breathing heavily the whole time while you slept, and your face was covered in sweat, so I came in to wake you..." Melissa said worriedly, her gaze shifting to Leon's bandaged arm.

"You're injured again?"

"I was stabbed during a mission. It's nothing serious," Leon replied casually.

He glanced at the morning light streaming in through the window.

"What time is it now?"

“The eight o’clock bell just rang. Mom is still lying down. I was just about to make breakfast. Leon, big brother, what would you like to eat?” Melissa asked.

“I don’t really have an appetite right now,” Leon said softly, getting up to change clothes.

“I need to go to work.”

Recalling Rena being caught yesterday, that nauseating pressure returned to Leon once again.

Having finally recovered a bit of strength, all he wanted now was to hurry to the Inquisition to see what the situation was.

“You’re injured and you still want to go to work? You should rest! At least eat a little. You need to recover!” Melissa urged anxiously.

“I’m fine, Melissa...” Leon forced a smile at her.

At that moment, a knock on the door suddenly rang out.

Leon and Melissa both froze for a moment.

Then Melissa reacted and walked toward the door.

“Coming!”

She was a little confused.

After her mother fell ill and the family incurred debts, there were rarely any visitors—aside from debt collectors.

But debt collectors usually did not knock so gently; they were far more aggressive.

She opened the door to find a well-dressed, handsome young man standing outside, wearing a refined, courteous smile and holding a gift box in his hands.

“Hello, little sister. May I ask if this is the home of Inquisitor Leon Set?”

Aaron, standing outside, asked Melissa in a warm tone.

“Y-Yes. Leon, big brother!” Melissa replied nervously.

Just as she was about to turn and call Leon, she realized Leon was already standing behind her.

“Director, what brings you here?” Leon looked surprised, and also somewhat tense.

After all, he had just transferred a batch of crucial evidence.

Being visited by his direct superior at such a time made it easy to imagine that something had been exposed.

“I’m here to visit the sick. Showing concern for an injured subordinate is proper etiquette for a superior—especially since you were injured on my behalf. By both reason and sentiment, I should come see you,” Aaron said.

Hearing this, Leon finally relaxed inwardly and returned a polite smile.

“You’re too kind. I’m really flattered. Please, come in.”

Melissa quickly stepped aside to let Aaron enter the house.

Aaron glanced at Melissa and asked Leon, “Is this your younger sister?”

“She’s my landlady’s daughter, Melissa,” Leon introduced her, then said to Melissa, “Melissa, this is Director Dias of the Inquisition—my direct superior.”

“Ah—H-Hello!” Learning his identity, Melissa grew even more nervous and subconsciously lowered her head.

“Hello, Melissa,” Aaron replied with a smile.

“I—I’ll go pour some water!” Melissa suddenly realized and hurried into the kitchen.

“Sorry for visiting so abruptly. I checked your address at the Inquisition and came straight over. This is Holy Water for healing. I hope you recover soon,” Aaron said, lifting the gift box toward Leon.

“You’re far too polite... Please, come in and sit for a while,” Leon replied courteously.

“Will it disturb your landlady?” Aaron asked.

“It’s fine. Please, come inside,” Leon said as he led Aaron to the dining table.

Seeing that the house had no living room and that guests could only be seated by the dining table, Aaron blinked, then sat down without comment.

“Please have some water,” Melissa said as she set the glasses before them.

Seeing that it was not tea but simply boiled water, Aaron still smiled and nodded.

“Thank you, Melissa.”

He keenly noticed the calluses on Melissa's hands.

He had never seen a child of her age with such hands.

The worn furniture that was used until it was falling apart, unwilling to be replaced, as well as Melissa's clothing, all made him clearly feel the family's hardship.

"Melissa, go upstairs and take care of your mother. I'll entertain the Director here," Leon said, giving her a meaningful look.

"Ah! Okay..." Melissa suddenly understood.

After her mother contracted Saltification Disease, it was only thanks to the Holy Water privately provided by Bishop Leona that her condition had improved.

Such a matter could not conveniently be known to the Church.

Just in case, she should go upstairs to remind her mother.

After Melissa went upstairs, Aaron looked at Leon.

"Is your landlady ill?"

"...Saltification Disease," Leon answered after a moment of silence.

Aaron was taken aback for a moment, then immediately understood why this family was so impoverished.

"That child must have it very hard, doesn't she?" Aaron recalled the calluses on Melissa's hands.

"Yes. Their family has some debts..."

Leon briefly explained Melissa's family situation, and Aaron's brows gradually knit together as he listened.

There were many such impoverished families in this country, yet given his status, he rarely had the chance to come into contact with them.

At present, he needed to conceal his identity and could not directly provide help that would change this family's circumstances.

At most, after he left Hamel Town, he could arrange for someone to anonymously send some things to help them out.

Moreover, Saltification Disease was incurable.

Even with his resources, there was nothing he could do.

“Melissa seems quite close to you. You often help them out, don’t you?” Aaron said.

“I only do what I can,” Leon replied softly.

The look in Aaron’s eyes as he gazed at Leon grew increasingly appreciative.

After a moment, he spoke in a formal tone.

“Inquisitor Set, I’ve been thinking since yesterday. I intend to promote you to Captain of Team Three. Are you willing to accept?”

“Th-This...” Leon was greatly surprised.

“With my seniority, is it appropriate?”

“The captain position of Team Three is still vacant. Your performance yesterday was better than those captains’. I believe you are fully capable and qualified for it,” Aaron said seriously.

“After we return, I’ll write the letter of appointment. Once you’ve recovered and returned, you’ll be the captain.”

“Thank you, sir...” Leon forced a smile.

To be honest, even with a promotion at a time like this, he really could not feel happy.

Rena was still being detained.

“By the way, sir, how did yesterday’s case turn out? When I left, I heard that the Witch had already been caught?” Leon smoothly steered the conversation.

“Well, about that—we ran into a bit of trouble...” Aaron sighed softly.

He briefly explained the situation of yesterday’s investigation to Leon.

As an Inquisitor involved in the case, Leon was qualified to know the details.

“If there’s no evidence, then if the suspect never confesses, after thirty days wouldn’t we only be able to...” Leon probed cautiously.

“Procedurally speaking, yes,” Aaron nodded.

Hearing this, Leon finally relaxed inwardly.

Lowering his eyes, he said, “I see...”

Aaron seemed like a by-the-book superior who valued reputation more than profit, completely different from Caron.

It seemed he would not violate procedure and privately use torture on Rena.

All the evidence had already been hidden by him.

As long as Rena did not confess and held out until the end of the Detention Period, she could escape conviction!

Aaron took Leon’s reaction as regret.

After all, Leon had risked his life and been injured to solve the case.

In the end, they had caught a highly suspicious suspect, yet lacked evidence to send her to the tribunal.

After thinking for a moment, he lowered his voice and said to Leon, “However, you don’t need to worry. Bishop Becket has already applied for the highest investigative order from the Prophet Church. As long as we obtain a guilty determination from the Cardinal, we’ll confirm the suspect as a Witch.”

Leon felt as if he had been struck on the head.

“What did you say? Isn’t it that the Church has no way to determine a Witch?”

“No, there actually is a method—just that very few people know about it. I can’t go into the details... In any case, don’t worry about the case. Focus on recovering,” Aaron said.

Aaron reached out and lightly patted Leon’s shoulder.

But to Leon, each pat felt as if a mountain of weight had come crashing down.

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

What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! #Chapter 68 : You Had Already Won - Read What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 68 : You Had Already Won

Chapter 68: You Had Already Won

Sally Hesh woke up on the bed, propping herself up tiredly as she struggled to sit.

She saw Melissa Hesh crouching beside the attic staircase, carefully paying attention to the movements downstairs.

“What’s wrong, Melissa?” Sally said as she got up, only to suddenly feel dizzy and sit back down onto the bed.

“Ah!”

“Mom!” Melissa turned back in alarm and hurried to her mother’s side.

“What’s wrong?”

“I’m fine. I just felt a bit dizzy when I got up,” Sally said with a soft smile.

“You’re dizzy again?” Melissa worriedly reached out to check Sally’s forehead.

Fortunately, it didn’t feel hot this time.

After using the special medicine given by Bishop Leona, Sally’s condition had clearly improved.

Her legs had become more nimble, strength had returned to her upper body, and the effects of the medication over the recent period had even caused the crystallized portions on the surface of her body to peel away, growing tender, smooth new skin.

However, until the last consultation, Bishop Leona had always told them very seriously that the current medicine was still incapable of curing the illness.

It could only alleviate symptoms and prolong life.

The progression of the disease inside the body was still slowly advancing.

In fact, once it reached a certain stage, Sally’s improvement had reached its limit.

Although her body had regained mobility, it remained extremely weak.

She would occasionally experience abdominal pain and dizziness, sometimes accompanied by fever.

Moreover, over the past few months, the symptoms had shown a tendency to become more frequent.

As Bishop Leona had said, the disease process was still slowly eroding Sally’s body.

Even so, for Sally, the past half year had been far better than lying bedridden before, clinging to life without dignity.

"It's fine. I'm not dizzy anymore. Sitting for a bit will do. Pour me a glass of water," Sally forced a smile.

Melissa picked up the kettle and cup from the cabinet and poured her a glass of water.

Just as Sally took the cup, she suddenly heard some movement downstairs.

"Is Mr. Leon still here at this hour today?"

Sally was a little surprised.

At this time, Leon was usually already at work, or he simply hadn't come back overnight.

"Brother Leon has a guest today. It's his superior, so we need to be careful and not let him know about Bishop Leona," Melissa gestured with a shushing motion.

"Oh, I see." Sally immediately understood.

At that moment, the sound of a door closing came from downstairs.

"Seems like he's gone..." Melissa glanced over.

"I'll go take a look."

Melissa walked down the hallway and saw Leon standing with his back to her in the entryway.

The door was closed, and it looked like Leon had just seen his superior off.

"Brother Leon, has that gentleman left?" Melissa asked.

"Yes," Leon replied in a low voice.

For some reason, Melissa felt that Leon's tone and the aura radiating from his back were a little different from usual.

She still walked down, retied her apron around herself, and suggested, "Then you probably don't need to go to work, right? I'll make breakfast for you."

Melissa went into the kitchen and began taking out ingredients to prepare.

At that moment, Leon, who was standing in the entryway, spoke up, "No need, Melissa. I suddenly remembered there's something I need to take care of right away. I have to head out."

Immediately after, the sound of the door opening was heard.

“Huh?” Melissa froze and turned back out of the kitchen, but she only heard the door closing.

Leon’s figure had already disappeared from the entryway.

.....

At the East District Church of Hamel Town, Leon looked up at the emblem on the church, formed by hourglass-shaped lines intertwined with a Four-Pointed Star Emblem.

This was a Prophet Church that primarily worshipped the Supreme God.

The Four Gods of Origin worshipped by the Church—the Supreme God, the God of War, the Creator, and the Secret God—appeared in myths and church works as the Prophet, the Warrior, the Craftsman, and the Traveler respectively.

Among them, the Supreme God, who manifested as the Prophet, held a higher status than the other three gods.

He was the apex of the Four-Pointed Star.

The authority he governed was time—the origin and the end of all things.

He was omniscient, knowing the past, present, and future.

He was history itself, the embodiment of knowledge, and the patron god of all who wielded the pen: scholars, writers, bards, teachers, and the like.

Although the Supreme God held the highest status, the Prophet Church and its clergy were the fewest among the Four Great Churches, because the standards for evaluating its exclusive clergy were the most stringent.

Across all districts and villages of Hamel Town, there were actually ten churches in total.

Only this one was a Prophet Church, and the one presiding here was Father Raymond Auden.

Leon strode into the church courtyard.

At this time, there were no townsfolk visiting.

The doors of the main hall were closed, and only a young menial could be seen sweeping in front of them.

“Excuse me, is Father Auden here?” Leon asked.

“Ah, sorry, the Father just went out—” The menial spoke as he raised his head, then suddenly stopped when he saw Leon.

He carefully examined Leon’s face, and his gaze instantly became sharp and alert.

Leon sensed something and tentatively asked, “Is the Father waiting for me?”

“Yes.” The menial suddenly straightened his expression, glanced outside, set down his broom, and lowered his voice.

“Please follow me!”

Leon followed the menial around the main hall of the church, along a side corridor into the monastery area restricted to internal personnel, and finally arrived at a single-story building in the corner that looked like a warehouse.

The menial knocked on the door in a specific rhythm and called inside, “Father, the guest you mentioned earlier has arrived.”

After a moment, the door opened.

Father Auden’s aged face appeared behind it.

Seeing Leon, he instructed the menial, “You may go. If anyone comes later, tell them I’ve gone out.”

“Yes,” the menial replied and immediately left the monastery.

At Father Auden’s gesture, Leon entered the building and discovered that it wasn’t a warehouse at all, but a fairly tidy study.

A desk surrounded by bookshelves was piled high with documents.

“I was wondering when you’d come to see me. Potter died, and you didn’t even tell me in time,” Father Auden said as he locked the door and walked past Leon.

“You already knew he was dead?” Leon was somewhat surprised.

Potter had only been killed yesterday, yet Father Auden had already received the news.

“I have my own sources. I knew his estate was searched and that he died, but I don’t know how he died. You had no reason to shoot him dead, did you?” Father Auden asked.

“No. It was an assassin—a killer with the Blessing of the Star-Night Secret God. When we arrived, he had already killed everyone. Then when Aaron Dias captured him, he committed suicide,” Leon replied.

“A blessed assassin?” Father Auden frowned deeply.

“You have a lead?”

“The only one I can think of is the Earl. Among Potter’s enemies, only the Earl had that capability, which is why I warned Potter early on,” Father Auden shrugged.

“That doesn’t seem right. The Earl had the ability to directly apply pressure on the Inquisition. Back then, the Inquisition was just one step away from finishing Potter off. Sending an assassin at that point would only complicate things,” Leon questioned.

“That is indeed strange, but we have no way of knowing what their actual situation is, or what other plans they might have. Potter dying before being formally apprehended actually saves us trouble. The key now is that we need to handle the aftermath properly.”

Father Auden spread his hands toward Leon.

“To be honest, I’m very busy right now. A pile of Potter’s assets urgently needs to be dealt with and transferred to avoid being seized by the Church. So keep it brief. Do you have new information to tell me, or do you want me to launder money for you?”

They were all people connected to Potter, and there were links among them.

In a sense, they were now all in the same boat.

“My person was arrested,” Leon said bluntly.

“Your person? Is it important?” Father Auden immediately became alert.

If Leon’s subordinate had been arrested and implicated Leon himself, then Father Auden would need to make additional safeguards for his own sake.

“It was the witch who refined Mana for me. My apothecary room was also raided at the same time yesterday,” Leon said gravely.

“They even tracked down your place? And that witch who could refine people into poison was actually caught?” Father Auden’s expression turned solemn.

“Since you’re still standing here, that means she didn’t give you up, right?”

“Not for now. I taught her beforehand. And before the Church searched, I moved all the evidence,” Leon said.

“You plan to drag it out for thirty days until she’s released? Can she hold on? If Caron Eso were still around, he wouldn’t care about so many rules,” Father Auden reminded him.

Judicial torture required approval, but not all Inquisitions strictly followed procedures.

There were always those who tried every means to force a confession, fabricate evidence afterward, and then send it to the tribunal for conviction.

“But Aaron Dias won’t do that,” Leon said firmly.

“That’s possible. If his status is special and the merits he’s pursuing have to be perfectly clean, then unauthorized torture would indeed be problematic. But at the same time, they won’t accept an unsolved case being dragged on indefinitely either. You’d better not be too optimistic,” Father Auden cautioned.

“No. They went through another process. Aaron Dias told me they applied for a Supreme Investigation Warrant, saying it’s the only method the Church has to identify a witch...”

Before Leon could finish, Father Auden’s eyes widened.

“A Supreme Investigation Warrant!? Are you sure that’s what they said?”

“You know what that is?” Leon looked at the priest seriously.

He had come specifically to Father Auden to find out what the Supreme Investigation Warrant was.

Father Auden sank into thought.

After quite a while, he finally spoke.

“At present, within the Prophet Church, including the Pope, there are three people who possess miracles recognized by the Church as ‘omniscience.’ Through divination-based divine arts, they can uncover the key past information of a person and restore the full truth of the cases that person experienced with one hundred percent accuracy.

“It’s said that using such a miracle requires several months of recuperation. That’s extremely troublesome for Cardinals who are swamped with affairs, so very few cases can move them. But on the other hand, as long as any one of them gives approval, the Prophet Church can activate a Supreme Investigation Warrant. Once the suspect is sent to the Imperial Capital, their judgment can serve as decisive evidence!”

Leon felt as if he'd been struck by lightning.

"Using divination to judge a case? Something that absurd can be acknowledged?"

"There's no doubt that their miracles are real. Every handled case can be retroactively verified through key evidence. If the Church's upper echelons wanted to frame someone, there would be no need to put on such a farce. The most critical point is that your person truly has problems. Once the procedure starts, she will definitely be convicted, and you will be uncovered as well. Don't cling to false hope," the priest said.

"Would a case of this scale really warrant issuing that kind of order?" Leon still found it hard to believe.

"I'm also surprised. The only explanation is that the one surnamed Dias truly has some serious backing—enough for a Cardinal to openly stand on his side," the priest actually laughed at this point.

"You should feel honored, Fenrir. A Supreme Investigation Warrant, and that Earl... The highest powers of both the underworld and the establishment are dealing with you at the same time."

"What's so funny about that?" Leon frowned.

"You're the one who should be laughing," Father Auden said with a grin.

"Because they exhausted every effort and still couldn't touch you at all. You've already won! Let me tell you—procedures involving Cardinals like the Supreme Investigation Warrant, starting from here and going up layer by layer, will take at least five days to be approved, even if expedited. And you're an Inquisitor. You have the conditions to access the detained witch. Five days is more than enough for you to eliminate all future troubles!"

"Eliminate what?"

Sensing the priest's meaning, Leon's expression turned incredulous.

"That witch," Father Auden replied, looking back at Leon in confusion.

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

What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! #Chapter 69 : Only One Can Live - Read What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 69 : Only One Can Live

Chapter 69: Only One Can Live

Father Auden was deeply puzzled by Leon's reaction.

When an important witness was captured, wasn't choosing to kill the witness to silence them common practice in their line of work?

Especially for a man who killed without blinking, a man who, once driven mad, could even put his own life on the gambling table—wasn't this nothing out of the ordinary? He had previously even killed the Director of the Inquisition just to silence someone!

Countless people were tormented by the inability to kill witnesses imprisoned in jail, yet Leon now possessed uniquely favorable conditions.

Father Auden could not understand why Leon looked as though the thought had only just occurred to him.

Now, as long as the Witch died in prison, the matter would be resolved.

Even a miracle of omniscience had to take a living person as its subject to function; the Church had no way to trace him through a corpse.

No one knew how many Witches had committed suicide by poison while imprisoned.

They could refine all kinds of bizarre magical beast poisons, and some even personally possessed special abilities related to poison.

Many times, the Church simply could not guard against it.

Leon's silence and contemplation lasted only two seconds before he shook his head at Father Auden.

"No. It's not time yet!"

"What do you mean it's not time? She's about to receive the highest level of investigation the Church can offer. Are you planning to wait until the Pope personally comes to investigate before you think it's time?" Father Auden was utterly unable to understand.

"She's still useful to me. I can't just give her up like this." Leon stared seriously at the priest as he spoke.

"Potter is already dead. This place will belong to the Earl from now on. You won't be able to do business here anymore—what do you need her for? Her only use now is letting the Church trace you through her! Even if she obeys you completely and can help you refine eighty-five percent purity Mana, what does that matter? What exactly are you hesitating over?" Father Auden frowned as he scrutinized Leon.

“.....” Leon did not reply, but there was no sign of concession in his gaze.

Leon actually understood the logic the priest was presenting.

Finding a way to poison Rena to death in prison would prevent the Inquisition from tracing him through her.

It was the simplest and most straightforward solution.

But deep down, he resisted this approach.

Forget considering it—he could not even bring himself to imagine it.

“Oh no.” Father Auden suddenly seemed to realize something, shaking his head as if he could not bear it.

“You’d better not tell me that woman has actually become the weak point of someone like you!”

To Father Auden, letting the trail end with the Witch was far preferable to Leon being captured.

He himself was still working hard to eliminate evidence connecting him to Potter.

If Leon took any risks and got caught, it would only increase the likelihood of drawing further investigation onto him, adding a great deal more work.

In the priest’s eyes, the option that maximized benefits—for both himself and Leon—was for Leon to eliminate the Witch, withdraw unscathed, then entrust the one million in dirty money to him to be laundered clean and go enjoy life.

Leon instinctively wanted to retort, but realized that anything he said now would sound hollow and powerless.

That was right.

At the end of the day, he simply did not want to kill Rena.

He did not want Rena to die!

Only at this point did he clearly feel that Rena was special to him.

In truth, he himself was not that afraid of death.

This second life he lived in this world was already rotten enough; he had no real desire to cherish it.

And when the crushing reality of this world left him gasping for breath, Rena became the key through which he personally changed fate!

They had lived and died together, committed crimes together.

They had always been accomplices bound by fate.

That feeling was as though, even if one fell into hell, there would still be someone accompanying them—never alone!

It was he who had led Rena down this path.

It was he who had reduced her to her current predicament.

His pride would not allow him to let Rena bear the consequences of his own actions.

He had even promised Rena that when things came to this point, he would rather bear all responsibility himself!

“Feign death.” Leon suddenly spoke.

“What did you say?” Father Auden did not react at once.

“If I have a way to make her temporarily enter a state of feigned death...” Leon muttered while thinking through a countermeasure.

“Oh, what a brilliant idea. The moment the Inquisition discovers the suspect is dead, they’ll surely carelessly let you take her out alone, bury her like a stray dog in the wilderness, and then you can conveniently revive her in some unseen corner!”

Father Auden retorted with a face full of sarcasm.

“Don’t forget that even if she dies in prison, the body is still an important piece of evidence! Leaving aside whether you can fool the medical examiner, how do you plan to take her out of the morgue? Do you think so many Witches haven’t tried feigned-death drugs before? Any corpse suspected of heresy is eventually burned. Guess how many Witches in the case files pretended to be dead, ‘revived’ in the flames, and were then burned alive?”

Leon also understood that removing a strictly guarded corpse from the Inquisition was no easier than secretly releasing Rena and then sneaking out.

Without controlling the entire Inquisition, both were impossible.

“What if I make the ‘corpse’ become impossible to examine, difficult to handle? For example, using some trick so she looks like she’s constantly emitting poisonous gas?” Leon continued searching for a solution.

“In that case, how would you reasonably come into contact with the body? And besides, there will always be someone in the Church capable of dealing with it.” Father Auden cut him off mercilessly.

“Don’t think about it. This direction is impossible. The Church will keep people alive if possible, and keep corpses if they die. Feigned death will never be better than real death! If you have a way to make her feign death and transport her out, you might as well directly jailbreak her!”

“Jailbreak...” Leon pondered.

The idea of creating chaos with fire and poison flashed through his mind, but he quickly rejected it.

The Inquisition conducted drills every year against arson and poisoning.

Alone, he could not plunge the entire Inquisition into enough chaos to extract a prisoner.

“You’re actually starting to consider it?” The priest stared at Leon, unsure whether to call the man mad or foolish.

“What if we intercept the convoy transporting her to the Imperial Capital?” Leon suddenly said.

“That’s a Supreme Investigation Warrant. Do you think the Church will allow anything to go wrong in that process? The prisoners will be escorted by a team of Fully Appointed Knights. Trying to slaughter your way through the Inquisition right now would be more realistic.” Father Auden said coldly.

“Then...” Leon continued wracking his brain.

“They went to such lengths to obtain that warrant—they can’t afford the risk of making fools of themselves. If the ‘real culprit’ turns himself in, the warrant would definitely be revoked, right?”

“What are you planning now?” Father Auden frowned.

“Aren’t you always finding ways to get people acquitted? Find someone to take her place and go to prison. All the key evidence is in my hands right now!” Leon suddenly fixed his gaze on Father Auden.

“That wouldn’t be taking her place—it would be taking her place in death!” Father Auden corrected him.

“At a time like this, the one who takes the blame must die in prison promptly!”

“Through your channels, can’t you buy a life?” Leon asked.

“It’s not enough for someone to be willing to die! The people who just took office managed to investigate Potter and your people together—do you still think they’re fools? You think they’ll believe it if some random person confesses? This person must be believable as a Witch, have motive, have means, and be willing to die! Five days—where do you expect me to find such a person?” Father Auden shot back.

“Then...” Leon was still thinking of solutions.

“You want to save that Witch? I’ll tell you the only way.” Father Auden interrupted impatiently.

“You turn yourself in. Tell them that everything the Witch did was under your coercion, and you take her place in death. That Witch might have a chance to live, but she’ll only be able to live under Church supervision for the rest of her life. Do you think that’s worth it? Listen to my advice—kill that Witch! Showing mercy at a time like this will be the end of you, Fenrir! You and her—only one can live!!”

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

What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! #Chapter 70 : The Sacrifice That Must Be Made - Read What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 70 : The Sacrifice That Must Be Made

Chapter 70: The Sacrifice That Must Be Made

Leon was left speechless.

This situation was not something he had never imagined.

He had even discussed it with Rena before.

“Next, I’ll use my connections to help you confirm whether there truly is a Supreme Investigation Warrant application sent to the central authority. If there really is one, then you need to face reality. In the end, you’re just a mana dealer from some backwater place. What you’re facing is the Church’s top-tier power and the largest giant of the underworld. No matter how mad you go, what kind of waves can you possibly stir up?”

The fact that you can still walk away unscathed now is already incredibly lucky. What more do you want?"

Father Auden continued his efforts to persuade Leon.

"You're doing a business that costs heads. You've been fishing for gold in a sea of blood from the very beginning. That Witch is already destined to die. Kill her now, end everything, take your one million, and enjoy your victory. Oh, right—aren't you quite taken with that mother and daughter? I'm still handling their debts. You still have a chance to buy them."

At those last words, Leon, who had been standing there in a daze, finally reacted.

"The Potter family is already dead. Do the Hesh family's debts still exist?"

"If debts disappeared just because someone died, then the line of people wanting him dead would stretch all the way to his winery. A man like him naturally has to make arrangements for after his death early on. After he dies, someone will inherit the assets, and groups will take over the business. Those debts actually left his name a long time ago and were legally transferred under other interest groups. His death doesn't affect anyone coming to collect." Father Auden replied.

"So the money you're handling won't have any problems, right?" Leon asked.

"If there were problems, after Potter's death I'd either be arrested or on the run. I definitely wouldn't be standing here properly like this. You can doubt me as a person, but there's no need to question my ability in this regard." Father Auden answered with great confidence.

"Is that so..." Leon shifted his gaze elsewhere, his expression inexplicably calming down.

Father Auden frowned and scrutinized him for a long while, yet still couldn't tell what Leon was thinking.

Without any warning, Leon turned around and walked toward the door.

"You're getting ready to make a move?" Father Auden confirmed from behind him.

"I need to think about it." Leon replied softly, his back to Father Auden.

"Think about it?" Father Auden's brow furrowed even tighter.

"You only have five days!"

"Yes. There are still five days." After saying that, Leon opened the door and left.

After leaving the East District Church, Leon went all the way back to near the Hesh family's house, but he didn't open the door and go inside right away.

After checking the alley and confirming there was no one else around, he took out another key and opened the door to the neighboring row house.

He stepped inside.

The interior was still covered in dust, and the ceiling was filled with spiderwebs.

Leon walked deeper into the house, found the lantern he had placed nearby, lit it, and opened the cellar entrance to go down.

In the darkness, the lamplight illuminated the Moilai Altar that had been transported here, the experimental tools Rena had used, and the bottled magical potions—this was the only remaining batch of special medicine for treating Saltification Disease.

Judging by appearances, it would probably only last for about three months.

It was only when Father Auden mentioned the Hesh mother and daughter that Leon remembered this matter.

Whether Rena died in prison or he turned himself in, there would no longer be Bishop Leona to prepare medicine for them.

He himself actually knew the formula as well.

Rena had never hidden it from him.

But without mana and cultivated Magical Beasts, it was no longer realistic to make more medicine.

Once these were used up, Sally would only be able to rely on holy water to cling to life.

As for Bishop Leona being investigated and recalled to the Church—no matter the reason or excuse—this matter, cruel as it might be, at least allowed him to give that mother and daughter an explanation.

Leon stood there for a long time.

In the end, he swept his gaze across the cellar once more, picked up all the medicine from the ground and bundled it together, then left the house.

He changed keys and opened the door to the Hesh family's home.

Sally, who was by the kitchen table, heard the sound and stood up to come out.

“Mr. Leon, you’re back.”

“Mrs. Hesh.” Leon nodded.

“Is Melissa out?”

“Yes, she went to work.” Sally replied.

At this time, Melissa should have gone to Mrs.

Kate’s place at the end of the alley to work as a helper.

“Oh, right, that child still left breakfast for you. Would you like to eat a bit?” Sally asked.

“Alright.”

Leon answered absentmindedly and walked over to the table.

Bread and fried eggs were laid out on it.

“I’ll go get you some soup.” Sally slowly walked into the kitchen and carefully poured the last bit of soup from the pot into a bowl.

Leon put the cloth bag on the table, sat down, and casually forked a piece of fried egg into his mouth.

The egg was already cold, but the doneness was just right for him.

He liked his eggs fried until both sides were crispy.

Melissa had always remembered his taste.

“I’ll reheat it for you.” Sally brought the soup over and said.

“It’s fine.” Leon replied dully.

Mrs. Hesh noticed the items on the table and sat down beside it.

“You went to Bishop Leona to get the medicine? This time there’s so much?”

“Yes.” Leon responded, staring at the stains on the wall opposite him, thinking for a long time.

Sally looked at Leon in confusion.

She could sense that today, Leon seemed to have something on his mind.

“Mr. Leon, did something happen?” Sally asked with concern.

Leon finally made up his mind.

He slowly turned his head to look at Sally.

“Mrs. Hesh, there’s something I must tell you.”

.....

That night, the Inquisition.

Rena hugged herself and curled up on the hard wooden bed in the detention room, unable to sit still.

The less than two days since her arrest had felt like years to her.

During yesterday’s interrogation, no matter how the bishop and the young man who looked like a knight tried to coax and question her, she never gave in.

Leon had once told her that before finding evidence, the Inquisition would subject her to high-intensity interrogations every day, and that they might even ignore regulations and use torture.

However, after yesterday’s interrogation ended, she was sent to this detention room set alone at the end of the corridor, and she hadn’t gone out for an entire day.

She couldn’t see the outside world here.

The only light came from a lantern hanging in the corridor.

She could only judge the approximate time by when food was delivered.

There was no interrogation and no punishment, but being alone in such a stifling, enclosed space still caused unease to continuously swell.

She suddenly remembered the time when her grandmother passed away.

Since it was an incurable illness, she had been mentally prepared.

Whether it was staying by the bedside watching the other slowly breathe her last while unconscious, or watching her grandmother be buried, she had actually been unexpectedly calm.

However, when she returned home and saw the empty room, realizing that the only family member who had accompanied her until then would never appear again, that tide-like loneliness suddenly seized her.

Tears wet her eyes without warning.

She was thirteen that year.

Almost four years had passed, and she had finally gradually adapted to being alone.

But now, sitting in this cell, that feeling from years ago caught up to her once again.

“Why hasn’t he come yet...”

Rena hugged her legs and curled into a ball, burying her face in her arms as she thought sadly.

The Inquisition apparently hadn’t found the altar that could serve as decisive evidence in her home, which meant Leon had already taken care of those things for her.

But after that, Leon had never appeared before her.

She figured Leon must be running around for her, or that he simply didn’t have an opportunity to contact her yet.

Sooner or later, he would come see her, tell her what to do next, and encourage her to hold on.

At times like this, aside from Leon, she had no one else to rely on.

At that moment, a series of indistinct whispers came from outside the detention room door, as if the guards stationed outside were changing shifts.

Then footsteps approached from far to near.

During shift changes, the incoming guard would always peer inside through the small window in the detention room door to check on her condition.

Rena slowly lifted her face.

Every time the guards patrolled here, they would order her to raise her face, make eye contact, and respond, to ensure that her condition was fine.

However, this time, the face that appeared in the window was Leon’s.

Rena jolted up in shock, instinctively about to call out his name, but Leon promptly stopped her with his eyes.

Rena immediately reacted, suppressing the excitement of finally seeing him deep in her heart, and silently nodded at Leon.

Leon glanced around again, confirmed there was no one else nearby, and Rena slowly walked over and pressed herself against the door, standing on tiptoe to bring her face close to the small window sealed with iron mesh.

They had to be close to each other to whisper.

“I didn’t say anything.” Rena whispered as she looked into Leon’s eyes.

“I know.” Leon replied softly.

“As long as I hold out, it’ll be fine, right?” Rena looked at Leon with hope.

These thirty days would undoubtedly be extremely hard for her.

Right now, she needed Leon’s assurance—just one sentence of encouragement, telling her that as long as she endured it, both of them would be fine.

She felt that she could keep going.

“.....”

However, Leon didn’t respond immediately.

For a brief moment, he even lowered his eyes, avoiding her expectant gaze.

“What’s wrong?” Rena faintly sensed that something was wrong.

“They’re preparing to use other procedures to send you to the Imperial Capital, using a miracle controlled by a Cardinal to directly determine your Witch identity. I never knew there were such methods.” Leon softly told Rena the truth.

In the end, he still obtained confirmation from Father Auden.

The application for the investigation warrant had already been sent to the central authority.

At the fastest, within five days, Rena would be transferred to the capital under the escort of Church knights.

Upon hearing this, Rena’s heart plunged straight down.

“I’m sorry, Rena. I really can’t think of any other way now...” Leon said softly as he looked into Rena’s eyes.

“This time, someone has to make a sacrifice.”

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

sion like that couldn’t be called merit.

Instead, it might lead to doubts about His Highness the Prince’s capabilities.

“But we can’t violate procedure. We are the guardians of the law—we absolutely must not commit any act that tramples the law.” Aaron stared at Bishop Beckett.

“I won’t allow you to force a confession in private!”

“No, Your Highness. What I mean is precisely to follow procedure. By identifying the Magical Beasts’ magical power levels, we can basically infer that the petrified, fragmented corpse is Eso’s body. That barely meets the standard for a major case.” Bishop Beckett took a deep breath, as if making a decision.

“In your name, and with your relationship with the Earl Foyle, perhaps we can contact Cardinal Stuart of the Prophet Church.”

“You mean...” Aaron’s brows knit slightly.

“We can apply for the Prophet Church’s Supreme Investigation Warrant...” Bishop Beckett said seriously.

“The Church’s only means of fully identifying a Witch!”

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