

# **What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! #Chapter 91 : You Really Are a Bastard Without an Asshole - Read What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 91 : You Really Are a Bastard Without an Asshole**

Chapter 91: You Really Are a Bastard Without an Asshole

Arend Island.

Waves crashed against the reefs as a ferry drew close to shore.

Fully armed men disembarked one after another, carefully climbing up onto the coast.

“Mr. Fenrir, it’s slippery here. Please be careful.” Simon, who had landed first, extended a hand toward Leon on the boat.

“It’s fine.” Leon waved him off and climbed up on his own.

“Hey, give me a hand!” Father Auden frowned and beckoned at Simon.

He was a little seasick.

Leon stood on the shore and swept his gaze around.

From here, one could simultaneously see River Valley County and South Harbor County, as well as the estuary between them.

There were several islands nearby.

Arend Island was the closest to the coastline, and geographically speaking, it actually had the potential to become a maritime transport hub.

There should originally have been a newly built dock here as well.

Half of a wooden pier remained submerged in the water, and several wrecked boats lay stranded and crooked on the pebble beach.

Debris was scattered everywhere, and seabirds circled overhead, crying loudly.

This dock had once been Arend Island’s most useful asset.

It had originally been built by the previous Viscount Arend for transporting ore, only to be accidentally destroyed by a tornado.

However, Arend Island could no longer produce ore anyway.

Due to labyrinthization in the mines, a large number of magical beasts had spawned inside, making extraction extremely difficult.

As a result, another important asset of Arend Island became completely worthless.

Worse still, the presence of the labyrinth made any other development projects difficult to carry out.

The priest had also told Leon that because of the labyrinthization of the mountain mines, the villages on this side of the island had already been completely abandoned.

The Viscount Arend's residence and the island's only two villages were on the other side of the island, and the population had dwindled to barely over a hundred people.

Although Arend Island covered a certain area and the labyrinthization disaster did not affect the entire island, having no industry meant no external income.

Life here was destined to be poor.

Those who could leave had basically already left, and most able-bodied young people had gone out to work elsewhere.

Only the elderly, the weak, and the sick remained, relying mainly on fishing and farming to survive, unable to pay much in taxes.

This led to the current Viscount Arend being destitute.

Potter had originally extracted a huge debt from this generation's Viscount Arend, but now there was no hope of it ever being repaid, making it a bad asset.

However, the debt itself had arisen because Viscount Arend was a compulsive gambler who had been set up by Potter's casino, so for Potter it came at no cost.

It was simply left there, and he could not even be bothered to send anyone to collect it.

The merchant consortium that inherited this debt also had no interest in it whatsoever.

The group set off from the abandoned dock and trekked into the mountains along the road originally built for transporting ore.

After two and a half hours, they finally caught sight of the mine entrance.

Along the way, there were roadblocks made of wooden stakes and warning signs about the labyrinth disaster.

Just as Leon was about to lead the group around the barricades, the priest stopped in place.

“I’ll stay here and wait for you.” As he spoke, the priest directly found a flat rock nearby and sat down, placing the lunch basket he had brought beside him.

Leon had come this time to conduct a preliminary survey of the labyrinth here.

He absolutely would not participate in work with this level of danger.

“You’re here for a picnic, aren’t you?” Leon joked, then turned to Simon and the others.

“You all know the task. This is just a reconnaissance mission—to understand the labyrinth’s structure and the types of magical beasts inside. If conditions allow, set up a supply point. You are not required to fight magical beasts. If you encounter a third-level magical beast, withdraw immediately. Understood?”

In the Church’s records, magical beasts were classified by danger level.

Level One was low-risk, essentially harmless or manageable by ordinary people—such as slimes, non-poisonous small fungal humanoids, labyrinth mandrake grass, living vines, bloodsucking mosquito bats, and the like.

Level Two posed a certain lethal threat to humans but could still be handled by armed personnel—for example, head-hunting rabbits, poisonous giant scorpions, giant spiders, poisonous slimes, cockatrices, man-eating plants, and so on.

From Level Three onward were magical beasts that even fully armed soldiers would find difficult to deal with, such as demonic wolves, griffins, manticore, gargoyles, three-headed hounds, treants—

Level Four magical beasts were terrifying creatures capable of wiping out an entire unit on their own.

Even a single one required elite Church knight orders to respond with full force.

They either possessed physiques and strength far beyond ordinary creatures, or had special abilities—for instance, drakes, wyverns, cyclopes, unicorns, hydras—

Level Five was the highest, the calamity class, with the most representative example being true dragons.

However, starting from Level Four, such creatures basically existed only in rumors for ordinary people.

Across the entire Empire, reports of Level Four magical beast sightings in a whole year were usually in the single digits, sometimes even zero.

As for Level Five magical beasts, they were rarer than phoenix feathers and qilin horns.

A single appearance would be enough to be recorded in history.

“Don’t worry, sir. I used to be a labyrinth hunter.” Simon nodded at Leon.

“Check your gear—maps, armor, weapons, lighting tools—.” Leon reminded them.

“Oh, and take this as well.”

As he spoke, Leon took out several small test tubes filled with red powder and distributed them to everyone.

“Sir, what is this?” Simon asked, holding a test tube.

“It contains bait mixed with mana,” Leon explained.

“Do not open it casually. These powders are extremely attractive to magical beasts. Once opened, magical beasts will swarm over. This is for saving your lives. If you encounter dangerous magical beasts, throw this and smash it to draw their attention, then take the opportunity to escape.”

The main ingredient of the red powder was mummy powder made from ground human dried corpses, mixed with a bit of Rena’s blood, and then infused with a small amount of mana.

Back when Rena used to raise magical beasts, she had discovered that her blood, once activated with even a tiny amount of mana, had an extremely strong attraction to magical beasts.

It could be mixed into feed and used as bait.

Magical beasts relied on the mana emitted by labyrinths to maintain their internal magical power levels, and refined mana had an innate attraction to them.

This was mentioned in records preserved by the Inquisition.

When the Church surveyed labyrinths, they sometimes used confiscated mana to lure magical beasts.

The Blessing of the Blood Pact also caused a witch’s blood itself to possess a certain degree of attraction.

When combined with mana, this attraction increased severalfold.

After feeding magical beasts with human corpses, Leon had experimented further.

Using corpses—especially those of the blessed—together with this bait resulted in an attraction strong enough to drive magical beasts mad.

Sprinkle a bit of this into a breeding pool, and all the magical beasts would surge forward in agitation, scrambling to feed.

“Remember not to spill it on yourselves, or every magical beast in the vicinity will lock onto you and tear you apart alive,” Leon said.

“Understood. Thank you, sir.” Simon and his subordinates thanked Leon while curiously examining the test tubes.

The priest listened silently to their conversation.

When Simon and the others began checking their equipment, he stood up and moved closer to Leon.

“Hey.”

Leon turned and saw the priest giving him a meaningful look, so he walked aside with him.

The priest lowered his voice and said, “That tube of yours mixed with mana—how much can it sell for?”

“It’s mixed with a bit of mana. Market price is around five or six thousand. You want one?” Leon asked.

“No, I mean, you’re spending five or six thousand to save their lives?” The priest raised an eyebrow.

“You should know they’re only getting an extra one thousand Fenni for this job. Simon gets three thousand. With something like this, they’ll just tell you they used it and secretly stash it away.”

“One thousand is just the reconnaissance pay. Spending five thousand to save a life isn’t inappropriate,” Leon said.

“Mana costs me basically nothing. Last time I hired them to rob a carriage, I spent over a hundred thousand.”

The mana used in these baits had been refined from the batch of magical beasts that died during transport earlier.

Because they had not been fed humans and had starved to death alive, the mana purity was only around seventy percent, failing to meet the Earl's requirements.

It was better used elsewhere.

"All their jobs are done at their own risk. This time they asked for so much—if they die, their lives are only worth that much," the priest shook his head.

"Also, from the last payment, Simon took twenty thousand, each of his men took ten thousand, and the rest was my referral fee."

"What!?" Leon's brows immediately knitted together.

"They risk their lives, and you take nearly half just by talking?"

"Brokerage fees are settled in one go. That's already quite conscientious. They're grateful to me for introducing you as an employer," Father Auden said indifferently.

"Do you think these thugs are that impressive? I can introduce enough people willing to risk their lives for money to fill my church! If they won't do it, plenty of others will. This is the only thing they can do! Working as dock laborers, they earn only three or four thousand a month. If they want to make a thousand or even ten thousand in a single run, how can they do it without risking their lives?"

Leon frowned as he sized up the priest.

This world did not have the concept of "capitalists who deserve to be hanged from lampposts," so after some thought, he could only switch to the closest term: "You really are a bastard without an asshole!"

Father Auden merely shrugged at this.

After all, people often said such things about him.

"Buddy, I'm your advisor. I'm helping you save costs."

"How I use people is my own rule. Just sit here," Leon waved him off, unwilling to talk further.

He then turned to the fully prepared Simon and the others.

"Alright, let's go."

Simon suddenly froze.

“Sir, you’re going in as well?”

“Of course. This is an asset I intend to use. Naturally, I have to see it for myself.” As Leon spoke, he put on a protective mask, along with gloves and leather armor made from head-hunting rabbit hide.

Simon nodded and turned to one of his men.

“You’re responsible for protecting Mr. Fenrir.”

“No need. I’ll move alone. I’ll survey this route. You can distribute the remaining manpower yourselves.” After issuing the order, Leon picked up a lantern and walked toward the mine entrance.

He possessed a witch’s power and would not be actively attacked by magical beasts.

His cursed blood could deter the vast majority of magical beasts.

Moving alone was actually safer for him than moving together with these people.

Simon nodded, let out an admiring whistle, then waved to either side and led his men after him.

The priest watched Leon’s back with some incomprehension and shook his head.

He sat back down, picked up his lunch basket, took out a sandwich and a small flask of light beer to fill his stomach.

He was only responsible for bringing Leon to inspect the island.

While they conducted their survey, he could relax for a bit.

However, less than an hour later, the sound of approaching hooves shattered his leisurely moment.

Father Auden looked over in confusion and saw two people riding horses toward him.

Both were young women.

One wore the riding hunting attire commonly worn by noblewomen—a high-collared shirt paired with a lace cravat, topped with a front-buttoned dress.

Beneath the long skirt were fitted riding trousers, and long boots covered her legs.

Her clothes looked old, but the coordination was good.

The other woman was dressed as an attendant.

When he saw the exquisitely sculpted, art-like face of the young lady in noble hunting attire, Father Auden immediately felt a headache coming on.

“Oh, no—”

He put away the unfinished light beer, patted his backside, and stood up.

The two riders quickly reined in their horses in front of him.

“What a coincidence, Miss Adele. I didn’t expect to run into you here.” Father Auden bowed.

After all, she could at least be considered the daughter of a viscount.

“Father Auden, may I ask why you have suddenly come to our family’s territory?” Adele, the daughter of Viscount Arend, stared at Father Auden with a stern expression as she questioned him.

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

## **What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! #Chapter 92 : The Advantage Humans Had over Animals - Read What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 92 : The Advantage Humans Had over Animals**

Chapter 92: The Advantage Humans Had over Animals

Leon stepped into the middle section of the Labyrinth alone, one hand holding a lantern, the other swinging a scythe used to clear the way.

The space inside the Labyrinth was narrow, yet the vegetation was remarkably lush.

Moilai’s power had made the ecosystem inside the Labyrinth unusually abundant.

Among these plants, there might be plant-type Magical Beasts unique to the Labyrinth, so he had to be doubly cautious.

He peered deeper in.

It was very dark inside; only a few plants and mushrooms emitted a faint glow.

Yet his view was clearer than he had expected, as if invisible moonlight were helping him illuminate the night.

He glanced back again, thought for a moment, and tried covering the lantern first.

He found he could still see quite clearly—his night vision had obviously improved by a fair amount compared to usual.

“Could it be because of the Magical Potion?” he thought to himself.

After obtaining the formula Bishop Weiss had provided, Rena gathered materials and attempted to make the corresponding Magical Potion.

She had also tested it a little with Cockatrice Venom and a mouse.

The results confirmed that the formula Bishop Weiss had given could indeed neutralize the Cockatrice’s poison, and there were no severe side effects.

In fact, Leon had already taken a dose today.

He continued forward and suddenly heard a few curses coming from far away.

It seemed Simon and the others had run into something, but there was no obvious panic in their voices, so it did not appear to be any serious danger.

Leon kept walking.

He heard a rustling commotion from above, raised the lantern, and looked up to find the tunnel hung with dense clusters of bats.

These bats were different from ordinary ones.

Their bodies were blood-red, their membranous wings covered in black patterns like insect wings, their mouths like sharp needles, and their necks ringed with thick downy fur.

Bloodsucking Mosquito Bat— a small Magical Beast very common in tunnel-type Labyrinths.

It was said that during the process of Labyrinthization, native bat-like creatures had been soaked in Moilai’s magic and mutated into these.

True to their name, these small Magical Beasts mainly survived by sucking blood.

Sometimes they also drew sap from plants.

If the Labyrinth's magic was abundant, they could also go a very long time without feeding.

But if they encountered humans, they would swarm like an enraged hive.

They attacked in packs, clinging to a person's body and striking at weak points, tearing open wounds with hook-like limbs, then piercing the skin with needle-like mouths to suck blood.

They were tiny—one casual slap could kill them—but once there were too many, they became troublesome.

Those under attack often fell into a cycle of slapping a few dead only to have another flock immediately plaster itself onto them.

If someone failed to escape in time, they might even collapse from blood loss.

In fact, every year people died after running into massive swarms of Bloodsucking Mosquito Bats.

Dealing with them was actually simple.

Bloodsucking Mosquito Bats feared fire and bright light; waving a torch usually drove them away.

Simon and the others had gone in for reconnaissance carrying torches, so the earlier curses were probably from their encounter with Bloodsucking Mosquito Bats.

This level of trouble was still something they could handle.

Leon did not rush to switch his lantern to a torch, because these Bloodsucking Mosquito Bats did not seem to have any intention of attacking him.

Moilai's creations were extremely aggressive toward humans, but they usually did not rashly attack a Witch who had received Moilai's Blessing, and would even follow a Witch's instructions.

Long ago, back when the Church did not understand Witches well enough, it had once used whether Magical Beasts would attack a suspect to judge whether that person was a Witch.

But a real Witch could also control Magical Beasts to attack her to clear suspicion, and if a Witch lost consciousness or became extremely weak, there was likewise a chance she would be attacked.

That foolish method could not distinguish Witches at all.

Instead, innocent people would be injured for nothing, and it was soon abolished.

Leon had actually tried controlling Magical Beasts as well.

He could not, like Rena, use the Blood Pact to control a whole large group at once, but managing two or three Magical Beasts was still doable.

He focused his attention on a few Mosquito Bats, raised a hand in a beckoning gesture, and let out a gentle, low murmur: "Come here."

Three Mosquito Bats stirred restlessly, then flapped over and landed on Leon's arm, docilely clinging there.

Leon examined the three Mosquito Bats carefully, took out a cloth bag, and wrapped one of them up, preparing to bring it back as a sample.

This time, his main purpose was to understand what kinds of Magical Beasts this Labyrinth contained.

Then Leon thought for a moment, took out a test tube filled with his own blood, raised it, and tried to activate his ability.

In an instant, the blood turned purplish-red, with signs of boiling.

In that moment, it was as if a bolt of lightning had struck the tunnel ceiling.

All the Bloodsucking Mosquito Bats shrieked in terror, panicking as they flailed about in every direction.

They desperately fled from Leon, gathering into a swarm and escaping deeper down the tunnel, like a school of fish encountering a shark.

That effect made Leon smile in satisfaction.

He put the blood sample away.

It seemed his blood also possessed an intimidating deterrence against wild Magical Beasts.

He continued deeper into the tunnel and found writhing Slimes in the mine and Living Vines twisting in the grass.

He also ran into two Giant Rats about the size of dogs; the moment they saw him, they fled warily.

He walked another ten-plus minutes.

There was still space ahead, and it became more and more open.

Many thickets began to appear, and Leon faintly saw broken stone pillars—man-made structures that should not have existed in this mine pit.

Leon took out the map and scanned it a few times, confirming that the original mine map had no such space.

That was not strange.

Labyrinthized underground spaces often shifted and expanded, and sometimes even connected with ruins buried underground.

There was a folk saying that the Labyrinth itself was alive, and that Moilai's power had turned this place into a gigantic organism that devoured humans.

Leon put the map away and advanced cautiously.

From here onward was the place that truly required careful reconnaissance.

Their goal was the Cleansing (of the Labyrinth), then to station personnel to control it and turn this place into a new Breeding Grounds.

To do that, they had to kill off all threatening creatures inside the Labyrinth, and the more dangerous creatures were often concentrated in the deeper layers.

The surrounding space had already become quite open, and remnants of ruined walls began to appear.

It looked like this place really did connect to an underground ruin.

Leon looked around, at a loss for which way to go.

Then, suddenly, a low growl snapped him to full alert.

He took out a test tube containing Cursed Blood and scanned his surroundings warily.

Up ahead, many ghostfire-like points of eerie green light suddenly appeared.

Leon narrowed his eyes.

With his strengthened night vision, he vaguely made out the outline of beasts.

Those eerie green points were the beasts' eyes.

Judging by their silhouettes, they resembled wolves, but were larger—comparable to a leopard.

From the number of eyes, there were at least five of them in front of Leon.

Demonic Wolf— a common mid-to-upper-tier creature in the Labyrinth's food chain.

It had an abnormally tough body and powerful self-healing ability, and it was immune to most poisons.

It was said that someone had once locked a captured Demonic Wolf together with a hungry adult black bear, provoking a vicious fight.

In the end, the smaller Demonic Wolf had bitten the bear to death while it was still alive.

And in the Labyrinth, Demonic Wolves usually operated in packs.

That was also why their danger level could be ranked alongside large monsters like the Griffin and the Manticore.

He had only been seeing First-Rank low-danger Magical Beasts earlier, yet here he had suddenly run into a third-tier Magical Beast!

Leon had originally prayed this Labyrinth would not be so troublesome.

Now it looked like taking it down would require some effort.

Leon swallowed nervously and began backing away a few slow steps.

The Demonic Wolves watched him warily and did not rashly approach.

At the same time, they showed no friendliness whatsoever.

Leon could feel hostility emanating from them.

But that hostility was not the aggressive hatred Magical Beasts showed toward humans.

It was more like the vigilance a wolf pack had upon discovering a lone wolf.

Leon tried focusing his attention on one Demonic Wolf and issued it a command: "Back off."

That Demonic Wolf seemed to sense something and looked quite confused, but after hesitating for a long time, it shook its head, quickly returned to normal, and did not obey Leon's command.

Leon's expression grew grave.

A Witch's Blessing could control Magical Beasts, but it seemed to have limits.

Against a Magical Beast of the Demonic Wolf's level, he still could not directly control it.

But from what he had just seen, if the controlling force were strengthened a bit—such as by using Rena's Blood Pact Blessing—perhaps Rena could control Demonic Wolves.

And it was not that a Witch could never be attacked by Magical Beasts.

The effect of Witches not being attacked was more like Magical Beasts identifying them as other Magical Beasts, no longer treating them as humans.

But relationships of food chains also existed among Magical Beasts.

Weaker ones would regard a Witch as a stronger existence and feel wary, but powerful Magical Beasts might not.

From how Leon felt right now, in the eyes of these Magical Beasts, his level seemed roughly comparable to that of a single Demonic Wolf.

Leon continued backing away.

These Demonic Wolves showed no sign of moving closer; it seemed they had no intention of rashly starting a fight with him.

But just as Leon retreated more than ten steps, a Demonic Wolf that was clearly a full size larger appeared behind the five, shoved them aside, and began edging toward Leon with intense vigilance.

Leon's heart sank.

This Demonic Wolf seemed to be the pack leader.

It likely sensed that this outsider posed a threat to its territory.

Its hostility toward Leon was markedly stronger, and it did not seem inclined to let him go easily.

Leon gripped the test tube holding his blood sample, tense.

He was not sure whether a poison-immune Demonic Wolf would fear his Cursed Blood.

Maybe it would be more appropriate to use the Bait Agent to draw its attention and then slip away?

As he weighed it back and forth, Leon suddenly had a new idea: perhaps he could combine both methods.

If they were going to conquer this Labyrinth later, they would definitely have to find a way to deal with this pack of Demonic Wolves.

After all, the greatest advantage humans had over animals was the mind— and that held true for Magical Beasts as well.

He set the lantern down, took out his blood sample and the Bait Agent, opened both caps at the same time, and then quickly mixed the two together.

Before he activated his ability, his blood held no deterrent effect toward Magical Beasts.

But once the Bait Agent was opened, the scent it released immediately stirred the Demonic Wolves.

All the Demonic Wolves jerked their heads up, their eyes shining.

Leon hurriedly threw the test tube away.

Every Demonic Wolf's gaze snapped after it.

The moment the test tube shattered on the ground in the distance, that scent spread outward, and all the Demonic Wolves charged that way like mad.

The Demonic Wolf leader reached it first, greedily licking the blood stains off the ground.

The other Demonic Wolves crowded in, only to be savagely torn and bitten by it.

But the Bait Agent's lure was simply too strong.

The others refused to give up.

Some tried to sneak licks, some bared their fangs at the leader and attempted to resist, but after being attacked twice, they finally settled down, drooping their heads as they backed off to the side, able only to watch with longing.

Leon quietly retreated farther away, watching the Demonic Wolf leader lick the blood off the ground until it was clean.

At this distance, he could have escaped completely, and he still had several more vials of Bait Agent.

But this time he did not choose to run.

Instead, he focused on the Demonic Wolf leader that had finished licking up his blood, and silently activated his ability.

The Demonic Wolf leader suddenly sprang up, gagging as retching sounds came from its throat.

Purple smoke overflowed from its mouth, and then it collapsed onto the ground, struggling violently.

It worked—Leon thought.

His Cursed Blood was different from other Magical Beast poisons.

Even a poison-immune Demonic Wolf could not withstand the curse brought by his blood!

Very soon, the Demonic Wolf leader's body stiffened, showing signs of petrification, and it no longer moved.

The other Demonic Wolves were frightened too.

They circled their leader but did not dare approach rashly, only hopping around in panicked agitation.

Seeing that his blood worked on Demonic Wolves, Leon removed his gloves this time, cut his hand with a dagger to draw blood, and then strode over.

He activated his ability.

The blood on his hand turned purplish-red, and his entire hand was wrapped in purple smoke.

He advanced toward the pack experimentally.

The Demonic Wolves sensed it and let out low, threatening growls mixed with fearful screeches.

Leon kept moving closer.

The Demonic Wolves held a tense standoff for a moment, but finally could not endure it.

One after another, they turned and fled, disappearing into the depths of the Labyrinth.

Leon let out a breath.

He walked over to inspect the petrified Demonic Wolf leader.

After a brief consideration, he took out a rope, looped it around the Demonic Wolf, and began dragging it back.

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

## **What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! #Chapter 93 : Are You Doing Something Illegal - Read What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 93 : Are You Doing Something Illegal**

Chapter 93: Are You Doing Something Illegal

It took nearly twice as long as it had taken to go in before Leon finally dragged the stiff Demonic Wolf all the way to a spot from which the mine entrance was visible.

By this time, Simon and his men had already finished surveying the other routes.

They were all gathered at the entrance, having lit a campfire and waiting.

When Leon's heavy footsteps sounded, Simon and the others all stood up from beside the fire.

"Mr. Fenrir, it's great that you're all right! You absolutely wouldn't believe what I ran into inside!" Simon personally walked over to greet Leon and said excitedly, "We ran into three Demonic Wolves! I swear, this was the closest I've ever come to death in all my years exploring Labyrinths.

If it weren't for the lifesaving charm you gave us, we wou—"

Simon's nonstop chatter halted the instant he noticed what Leon was dragging behind him.

When they realized Leon was hauling an enormous Demonic Wolf whose size was utterly astonishing, everyone present fell silent.

"What are you standing around for? Get over here and help!" Leon tossed the rope aside the moment he saw them and walked toward the cave entrance on his own.

He was already exhausted from dragging it.

"Yes, sir!"

Simon led his men forward.

At first, they were still somewhat wary of the Demonic Wolf.

Only after confirming that the monster was completely motionless did they grab the rope and drag it closer to the cave entrance.

Leon sat down beside the campfire to rest and took a long gulp from his waterskin.

Simon walked over and handed him a towel, asking cautiously, “Mr. Fenrir, how did you deal with that Demonic Wolf?”

Based on his past experience as a Labyrinth Hunter, a single adult Demonic Wolf was more troublesome than a bear.

Even two or three soldiers working together would find it difficult to take one down.

Without equipment on the level of full plate armor and long-handled weapons, it was basically impossible to kill a Demonic Wolf without taking injuries—and Demonic Wolves usually didn’t appear alone.

More often than not, when Labyrinth Hunters encountered a monster of this caliber, whether they lived or died depended entirely on whether they could run faster than their companions.

And this Demonic Wolf was even larger than an ordinary one, clearly resembling the leader of a pack, capable of taking on lions or brown bears one-on-one.

Simon truly couldn’t imagine how Mr.

Fenrir, acting alone, had managed to bring it down.

“I used a bit of a trick and got it to drink a Magical Potion,” Leon replied casually.

“Aren’t Demonic Wolves immune to poison?” Simon asked, puzzled.

If Demonic Wolves could be poisoned to death, Labyrinth Hunters wouldn’t need to fear them at all.

They could just toss poisoned meat into the Labyrinth and wipe out large numbers of them.

Unfortunately, Demonic Wolves possessed a constitution that rendered them immune to all poisons.

“What I used wasn’t an ordinary Magical Potion,” Leon responded briefly.

Then he gestured for everyone to gather around the campfire, took out the map, and began asking, “How did your surveys go?”

Simon and the others began reporting their findings one by one.

The terrain in the front and middle sections of the mine was generally consistent with what the mining map indicated.

The Magical Beasts encountered were mostly Bloodsucking Mosquito Bats, Slimes, and Giant Rats.

Someone had also seen a few wild goats in the tunnels—after all, the rich ecosystem of a Labyrinth sometimes attracted wild creatures from the outside.

The most noteworthy discovery was that two routes marked on the map as dead ends, only excavated halfway, actually connected to a spacious underground area within the mountain.

There were traces of man-made structures in that space.

The area Leon and Simon had reached seemed to be the same region, just from different directions.

And within that space, Demonic Wolves were active, apparently treating the ruins as their territory.

Leon drew a circle on the map at the depths of those two routes.

The space wasn’t particularly large—no matter how exaggerated, it wouldn’t exceed the volume of this mountain.

To take control of this Labyrinth, they would have to deal with the pack of Demonic Wolves entrenched in the ruins.

Fortunately, after this trial, he already had a rough plan in mind.

After a moment of thought, he asked Simon, “Simon, would you be willing to accept long-term employment? From now on, you’d work exclusively for me, like you used to under Mr. Griffin.”

Simon’s face lit up with delight.

He exchanged glances with his men and responded without hesitation, “Of course, sir! We’d be more than happy to!”

“Then let’s head back and plan things out. My business requires clearing this Labyrinth, and I’ll need more manpower.”

As he spoke, Leon stood up.

Managing an Active Labyrinth in the future would require people to be stationed there long-term for maintenance and Cleansing.

Simon and his handful of men wouldn’t be enough.

He needed more manpower—enough to form an armed gang!

“Mr. Fenrir, should we help you dismember this Demonic Wolf?” Simon asked, pointing at the half-stiff corpse on the ground.

Leon studied the Demonic Wolf for a moment, then shook his head.

“No. I have other uses for it. Transport it back intact. No damage, and don’t let anyone see it.”

“Yes, sir.” After responding, Simon began directing his men to take out black cloth from their packs and completely wrap up the Demonic Wolf’s corpse.

Once the survey work was finished, Leon strode out of the cave entrance and looked toward Father Auden’s position—only to suddenly frown.

He saw Father Auden standing where he was, facing two women.

One of them, a young woman dressed in hunting gear, was arguing heatedly with the priest.

“Set aside whatever you’re doing—something’s happening!” Leon called out to Simon and the others.

At the same time, Adele, daughter of Viscount Arend, was holding a contract and arguing firmly with Father Auden.

“I’ll say it again, Father Auden. While it’s true my father owes you a massive sum, before the compulsory deadline arrives, this island is still territory under Viscount Arend’s name. If you’re landing on the island for the purpose of asset disposal, then legally speaking, you are still required to notify us in advance. You suddenly landing here gives me the right to ask what your purpose is.”

“Miss Adele, the creditor rights now belong to the Watcher Merchant Consortium, and I am the consortium’s agent,” Father Auden replied calmly.

“I have the right, as the creditor’s representative, to come to the island at any time to confirm the status of the assets, without notifying the debtor. Otherwise, transferring assets in advance would be far too easy.”

“Then may I ask what assets on this island could possibly make you suspect they could be transferred?” Adele demanded.

“Villagers said they saw the ship you arrived on—it had at least five or six people aboard. Where are those people now? What exactly are you doing on this territory? Aside from assets that cannot be mortgaged without permission, the operating rights here are still ours. You are not allowed to touch them arbitrarily. I have the right to demand a clear explanation for your landing here.” She glared at Father Auden as she spoke.

Father Auden sighed inwardly.

The current Viscount Arend was a useless waste who could be manipulated at will, but Viscount Arend’s daughter, Adele, was far more troublesome.

The previous Viscount Arend had once personally raised this granddaughter at his side and even sent her to the highest academic institution in the Imperial Capital to study law.

Adele had originally been staying in the Imperial Capital.

When she rushed back upon hearing of her grandfather’s death, she was greeted by the wreckage of a domain whose assets had become worthless due to natural disasters—and a father who had racked up tens of millions in gambling debts.

Unlike her father, who had completely given up, Adele was desperately trying to salvage everything her grandfather had accumulated.

From a creditor’s perspective, this was at least a good thing—if she wanted to save Arend Island, she would have to actively repay the debts.

But for an agent running around on behalf of creditors, Father Auden truly disliked dealing with Adele.

She was just as well-versed in the law as he was, and any disagreement during negotiations would inevitably devolve into a grueling debate.

This time, however, he really couldn’t afford to get entangled with her for too long.

Fenrir was exploring the Labyrinth, and when he came out, he definitely wouldn’t want any witnesses present.

So this time, he directly played his trump card.

“Miss Adele, I must remind you for the hundredth time: you are not Viscount Arend himself. You are not the debtor, nor are you the owner of the assets. If you wish to raise any questions on Viscount Arend’s behalf, please present a letter of authorization.”

“You privately reached an agreement with my father, allowing him access to those damned nightclubs of your consortium, just to prevent him from appointing me as his representative. Do you really think I wouldn’t be able to investigate that?” Adele glared at Father Auden, enunciating every word.

The group behind the priest had already pushed her family into a pit of fire.

Of course she had to remain vigilant against them continuing to prey on her family—especially when her father was a hopeless piece of trash who couldn’t be relied upon.

Now, she was the last line of defense for the Arend family.

“First, if you’re making a claim, then the burden of proof is on you. Second, even if that were true, we haven’t done anything illegal. Your father has the right to appoint an agent. If he doesn’t allow you to handle matters, that’s something you should discuss with him, not with me,” Father Auden said, spreading his hands.

Adele was so furious her brows shot upward.

Just as she was about to say something, the corner of her eye caught sight of several figures walking over from the direction of the mine.

The priest noticed it as well, and the two of them turned to look at the same time.

Leon, wearing a mask, was walking over with Simon and the others.

As the one in front, Leon first cast a questioning look toward the priest.

“It’s nothing, sir. Just a minor issue. I’ll have it resolved shortly,” Father Auden immediately replied to Leon.

“This is Miss Adele Lovelace, daughter of Viscount Arend. She has a few questions regarding our landing on the island.”

“Didn’t you say Viscount Arend wouldn’t interfere in matters here?” Leon frowned slightly behind the mask.

If someone came every day to interfere with his Labyrinth business, that would be a serious problem.

“He won’t, but his daughter is... a bit unfamiliar with the rules,” Father Auden explained.

“I assure you, I’ll make things clear to her very soon.”

At this point, Adele looked at Father Auden, then at the masked Leon, and quickly understood that Leon was the real decision-maker here.

Father Auden’s landing this time had merely been to lead the way for this man.

“Sir, may I have a word with you?” Adele immediately stepped around the priest, trying to speak directly with Leon.

She realized that persuading Leon would be more effective than persuading the priest.

“You can’t speak with this gentleman. If there’s anything, you must speak to me!” Father Auden hurried to block her.

“What’s so inconvenient about me speaking a few words with this gentleman?” Adele asked sharply, her instincts flaring.

Her voice rose at once.

“Are you hiding something? Could it be that you intend to do something illegal on our family’s territory?”

“Listen carefully, Miss Adele—”

Father Auden had just raised a finger, preparing to launch into yet another round of debate, when Leon’s hand suddenly came down on his shoulder, pushing him aside.

“Hey!” Father Auden protested.

“Are you willing to speak with me now, sir?” Adele, though nervous, still mustered her courage and lifted her head to meet the gaze behind Leon’s mask.

“—.”

Leon fell silent for a brief moment.

Then he suddenly drew his gun and aimed it directly at the center of Adele’s forehead.

In that instant, the air froze—and so did Adele.

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

## **What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! #Chapter 94 : The Nemesis of the Viscount's Daughter - Read What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 94 : The Nemesis of the Viscount's Daughter**

Chapter 94: The Nemesis of the Viscount's Daughter

"Sister!" The attendant who had come along with Adele cried out in alarm, instinctively reaching to draw her sidearm.

In order to salvage her family, Adele had been running around everywhere lately, negotiating deals and courting investors.

To maintain the necessary appearances, she had used what little savings she still had to hire this attendant, whose primary duty was to serve as her bodyguard.

As a weak woman traveling about on her own, this was a necessary expense.

A female guard with some basic training could reduce many risks for her—ordinary hooligans would not dare set their sights on her.

But this time, the people she was facing were not ordinary street thugs.

The underworld enforcers behind Leon were all veterans of multiple gunfights, their experience far surpassing that of her guard.

The moment the female attendant's hand touched the grip of her gun, Simon and the others had already drawn their weapons in unison and taken aim.

"Don't move, ma'am. Pointing a gun at this gentleman will cost you your life!" Simon warned the female attendant.

They had only just managed to secure a long-term employer—there was no way they were going to let this livelihood slip away.

Letting Mr. Fenrir be held at gunpoint while under their protection would be a serious dereliction of duty.

The female attendant froze, the color draining rapidly from her face.

Adele did not have the money to hire an experienced bodyguard; she herself was also green and inexperienced.

Where would she ever have seen a scene like this?

“Hey, hey, hey!” Father Auden was no longer calm.

He waved frantically at Leon, trying to dissuade him.

It was not out of pity for Adele nor a sudden awakening of conscience.

Shooting the daughter of Viscount Arend here was absolutely not a good idea.

No matter how impoverished she was, she was still a noble—this was no ordinary murder.

Moreover, the only assets of Viscount Arend that were still worth anything were his title and this beautiful daughter, and the value of that title was essentially bound to her.

According to imperial law, as long as certain conditions were met, nobles were allowed to pass their titles to sons-in-law through proper procedures.

Without Adele, anyone who wanted to buy Viscount Arend’s title would have to become his adopted son or a “long-lost son.” The approval rate for inheriting a title through such means was extremely low, and no one would spend money to buy a worthless title only to become someone else’s son.

As long as Adele, who was determined to revive her family, stayed alive, there was still a chance to squeeze the last bit of value out of Viscount Arend.

If Leon shot Adele dead right now, Father Auden would have no way to explain it to the Watcher Merchant Consortium.

In fact, given the current situation, he did not even know how to clean this up!

Adele’s face was deathly pale.

The hollow muzzle of the gun was like an abyss, making her knees feel weak.

“You—you can’t—” Although she was so terrified she was on the verge of fainting, she still forced out a trembling voice from her throat.

“I am—the daughter of a viscount. Killing me will bring you trouble—”

“Oh? Are you counting on the law to protect you right now? If I were doing something illegal, do you think the law could intimidate me?” Leon asked calmly, holding his gun steady.

“All I have to do now is pull the trigger and throw your corpse into the labyrinth to destroy the evidence. Tell me, how is the law supposed to protect you then, noble young lady?”

This time Adele could not speak at all.

She only trembled all over.

Seeing the icy look in Leon's eyes, she truly felt death closing in, and tears immediately welled up.

At that moment, Leon suddenly shifted the gun away.

"So, don't do something this stupid again, Miss Adele Lovelace."

Adele stood there dumbly with tears in her eyes, not reacting for a moment.

Then Leon abruptly took out a Church badge.

"I'm a Inquisitor! I was ordered to conduct reconnaissance on the labyrinth on Arend Island."

"Inquisitor?" Adele stared blankly at the Four-Pointed Star Emblem.

"That's right. I was ordered to survey the labyrinth and assess its danger level. Due to a shortage of manpower, I hired several labyrinth hunters to help. Father Auden from the Prophet Church happens to be familiar with the situation here, so we asked him to guide us. Isn't that right, Father?" Leon lowered his gun and turned to Father Auden.

"That's right." Father Auden nodded without changing expression, immediately cooperating with Leon.

"All right, everyone, put your guns away," Leon instructed Simon and the others behind him.

Simon complied and holstered his weapon.

Although they did not quite understand what Leon was up to, they all knew that right now, keeping quiet was the best course of action.

"The Church does not necessarily need approval from the local lord to conduct reconnaissance and sealing operations on a labyrinth, especially when it determines that the local lord is incapable of managing the situation.

"Although it may sound impolite, from what I heard from Father Auden, Viscount Arend is already bankrupt and completely unable to deal with the labyrinth that has appeared on the island. Therefore, we did not contact the viscount. Please forgive the oversight," Leon said in an official, businesslike tone.

Adele blinked in place, trying to process Leon's explanation.

After the intense intimidation earlier, her mind was still filled with terror.

She had yet to recover, and did not even have time to feel relieved at having escaped death.

All she could do was say blankly, “We—we once reported the labyrinth to the Church, but the Church never responded...”

“In South Harbor County, the Church is preparing to reassess the danger levels of the labyrinths within its territory. The Arend Island labyrinth is also on the list,” Leon said.

After thinking for a moment, Adele asked tentatively, “Does the Church—intend to seal the Arend Island labyrinth?”

“Whether it will be sealed depends on further instructions from above. But no matter what, since Viscount Arend cannot provide any support for the Church’s operations, please do not interfere with them. Especially you, Miss Lovelace—you had best not appear here again. If we happen to engage magical beasts, a stray bullet could take your life!” Leon replied.

Adele was too frightened to respond.

Even if she temporarily believed that the other party were Church personnel, she was still deeply afraid of the man in front of her.

Father Auden saw through the situation and finally let out a small sigh of relief.

The peril Leon had manufactured had stripped Adele of most of her ability to think.

Now, whenever Leon said something, she needed a moment longer to understand it, and she was completely led by the nose.

When dealing with a well-educated noble young lady like this, arguing was indeed far less effective than pointing a gun at her head.

The current Adele was far more foolish than when she had been debating him.

Even if Leon’s story had loopholes, she would not be able to spot them for a while.

Now that Leon had disguised himself as Church personnel sent to conduct a survey, and hinted that the Church might consider sealing the labyrinth, once Adele stopped doubting him, she would be placed in a passive position.

Under normal procedures, it was not entirely free for the Church to send Inquisitors or knight orders to seal a labyrinth.

Whoever owned the territory had to pay a portion as a donation to the Church.

If it belonged to the kingdom, funds would be allocated from the treasury; if there was a lord, the lord had to pay.

Viscount Arend, of course, could not afford a single coin.

If the Church judged the Arend Island labyrinth to be too dangerous and proceeded to seal it first, allowing Viscount Arend to owe the donation, that would naturally be a good thing for Adele.

Without the labyrinth, the island's mines and other lands would regain development value.

She would be the one indebted to and begging the Church—no matter how forceful Leon acted, she would not dare say much.

Moreover, the reconnaissance and evaluation phase could last a long time—one or two years, even three or four years were possible.

As long as Leon obtained the opportunity to use the labyrinth, he could generate enormous profits in a short period.

Of course, once Adele calmed down, she would likely sense that something was amiss.

But even if she suspected that Leon was engaged in illegal activities and wanted to interfere again, she would have to consider whether Leon might once more point a gun at her head without putting it away.

The Arend family had been reduced to the point of being driven into a corner by Potter.

Aside from their nominal noble status, they no longer had any real power.

Leon, who was now gradually inheriting Potter's position with the earl's backing, actually had plenty of ways to deal with them.

If things came to a falling-out, there was no need to reason with a viscount's family at all.

On Father Auden's side, he could also apply further pressure on Viscount Arend through debt claims.

Viscount Arend would very cooperatively allow the "Church personnel" to investigate the labyrinth and forbid his daughter from taking any further unnecessary actions.

Adele would have no way to oppose this, since Viscount Arend was still the legal owner of the land.

“Miss over there, could you escort Miss Lovelace back?” Seeing that Adele had no rebuttal left, Leon turned to the female attendant and instructed her.

Then he seemed to recall something and continued, “Oh, right. If the two of you can share one horse on the way back, could you lend us one first? I’ll have someone return it later.”

Transporting the items obtained from the labyrinth—including that demonic wolf—to the shore would take considerable effort.

He already regretted not bringing a horse when they came by boat.

The female attendant cautiously looked to Adele for confirmation.

Adele remained silent for a moment, then finally nodded.

“Thank you for your generosity, Miss Lovelace. Please be careful on your way back,” Leon said with a nod.

Hearing this, Adele could not help but feel her heart tighten.

It was an ordinary farewell, but coming from Leon’s mouth, it sounded to her like a meaningful warning.

Whether he was truly an Inquisitor or not, she had already developed a psychological shadow toward this man.

This man was terrifying—

The female attendant helped the trembling Adele onto the horse, then mounted it herself, riding away along the mountain path.

“Drag everything out of the labyrinth. We’re leaving,” Leon ordered Simon and the others as he watched Adele disappear.

“This noble young lady has finally met her nemesis!”

Watching Adele, who had always been such a headache for him, suffer a setback, Father Auden could not help feeling a bit schadenfreude.

“But the only problem is if she reports our suspicious actions to the Church—although that possibility is low, we still need to consider how to respond.”

“Just file a proper investigation procedure afterward. Even if she reports it, it won’t matter,” Leon replied casually.

With Bishop Becket’s standing, this level of trouble was easily handled.

Geographically speaking, all Inquisitions in South Harbor County could submit investigation requests for the labyrinth on Arend Island.

That was the foundation of his confidence in lying.

Father Auden glanced at Leon, realizing that the support Leon now received from the earl might be even greater than he had imagined.

“It’s a good thing you didn’t actually kill and bury that young lady. If you really intend to use this labyrinth, you need to think long-term. She will be useful sooner or later,” Father Auden suddenly said.

“Useful for what?” Leon asked.

“No one knows how many years the Church investigation excuse will hold. The best solution is to buy this land once you’ve made enough money. And the best way to buy the land is to buy the title. And the best way to buy the title—” The priest looked at Leon meaningfully.

“Marry that woman?” Leon frowned.

“That way, you become the next Viscount Arend, fully owning this land, completely legitimate,” Father Auden snapped his fingers.

“Forget it, Father. Are you trying to dump a collapsing bad asset on me to digest?” Leon laughed.

Father Auden’s calculations were practically hitting him in the face.

“To others it’s a bad asset, but to you it’s an absolutely premium asset!” the priest emphasized.

“Whether it’s a premium asset or not depends on successfully taking control of this labyrinth first. Don’t get ahead of yourself—let’s deal with the problem at hand,” Leon said, waving the topic away.

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

**What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! #Chapter 95 : You Still Dare to Bare Your Fangs? - Read What Witch? A**

## **Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 95 : You Still Dare to Bare Your Fangs?**

Chapter 95: You Still Dare to Bare Your Fangs?

Hamel Town's Labyrinth.

Leon and Rena stood side by side before the breeding pool, carefully observing the magical beasts inside.

"About half of them aren't moving anymore," Leon said.

"They're still alive, just in hibernation. With sufficient food supply, they won't die for the time being. But when Mana is lacking, magical beasts gradually weaken and frequently enter hibernation. The Mana in this labyrinth really is about to be exhausted—the Mana concentration simply can't sustain this many magical beasts," Rena said.

"If I gather plants from other labyrinths and feed them, would that improve things?" Leon asked.

"It'd only be a drop in the bucket." Rena shook her head.

"If we slaughter about half of them now, we should at least be able to ensure the remaining magical beasts return to a normal state."

"We still need this scale. Let's keep the magical beasts for now and prioritize clearing a new labyrinth as soon as possible," Leon said, turning his gaze toward the wall on the other side of the workshop.

Several chains were fixed into the wall, their other ends tightly binding a petrified Demonic Wolf.

After capturing this Demonic Wolf Pack Leader from the labyrinth on Arend Island and dragging it back, Leon had transported it all the way into Hamel Town's Labyrinth.

He intended to use this Demonic Wolf for an experiment.

"I'll say this upfront—I really haven't tried controlling a large magical beast like this before—" Rena said, sounding somewhat lacking in confidence.

"It's fine. We won't know unless we try," Leon said as he picked up a gun, carefully keeping some distance from the Demonic Wolf.

He focused his attention on it and attempted to lift the curse.

Along with a faint sizzling sound, wisps of white mist began to rise from the petrified Demonic Wolf's body.

Soon after, its rigid body softened once more.

Vitality returned to the body.

The Demonic Wolf's chest began to rise and fall, and with a spasm, it jolted awake from unconsciousness.

Leon had already tested his curse ability several times.

As long as he slightly controlled the intensity, he could keep a cursed creature alive for over ten hours without killing it.

If he lifted the curse again within that time limit, the target would revive, albeit much weaker.

The awakened Demonic Wolf sprang up abruptly, letting out an angry roar from its throat, startling Rena into instinctively taking a step back.

The Demonic Wolf's body was far tougher than that of ordinary creatures.

After several hours of petrification, it was still brimming with vigor.

"It's fine." Leon patted Rena on the shoulder to reassure her.

The moment the Demonic Wolf saw Leon, it became violently agitated and immediately charged toward him, only to be yanked back hard by the chain bound tightly around its neck.

Its mouth was also tightly wrapped in chains, leaving it unable to open at all.

Sensing the restraints, the Demonic Wolf began to struggle frantically, but the chains Leon had prepared were simply too sturdy.

"Give it a try," Leon said to Rena.

Rena calmed her nerves, focused her attention on the Demonic Wolf, and began circulating her Mana.

Just as she did when controlling other magical beasts, she attempted to manipulate this Demonic Wolf and make it calm down.

Leon had previously fed this Demonic Wolf a bait agent mixed with her blood sample.

This allowed Rena to exert control over it through her “Blood Pact” blessing.

This kind of control was far stronger than directly manipulating a magical beast through will alone.

The Demonic Wolf suddenly felt an overwhelming drowsiness.

Its gaze quickly changed as it slipped into a hazy, half-awake state.

An invisible hypnotic force slowly guided its consciousness into synchrony with Rena’s will, rendering it completely obedient to her control.

Suddenly, the Demonic Wolf jolted awake, and thoughts of resistance surged forth.

It bared its fangs at Rena with all its might, letting out a threatening roar.

As a third-level magical beast, its Mana level made it far harder to hypnotize.

Moreover, it was the leader of a wolf pack—how could it willingly submit to the control of another existence?

“Seems like it’s not working,” Rena sighed softly.

“Not necessarily. Let’s try again,” Leon said, fixing his gaze on the Demonic Wolf as he attempted to activate the power of his Cursed Blood.

The curse that had just been lifted flared up once more.

The Demonic Wolf’s body convulsed violently, as if struck by lightning.

Once again, it felt that instinctive, near-death intimidation, along with the intense discomfort of its body being eroded.

It couldn’t help but let out a shrill howl.

Leon shot Rena another look.

She immediately understood and tried once again to assert control over the Demonic Wolf.

The Demonic Wolf’s body trembled incessantly, seemingly still struggling against the drowsiness brought on by Rena’s hypnotic power.

After a while, it forced itself to bare its fangs at Rena again, letting out another low growl.

Still daring to bare your fangs? Seeing this, Leon showed it no mercy and once again activated the power of his Cursed Blood.

The Demonic Wolf's low growl turned into another sharp cry.

After another bout of convulsions, it nearly collapsed.

Leon deactivated his ability and looked at Rena.

Rena cooperated and tried once more.

The Demonic Wolf again sensed the intent of domination coming from Rena.

This time, it didn't dare bare its fangs or growl, but a trace of resistance still lingered.

It raised its eyes to look at Rena, clear unwillingness visible within them.

Leon let it "experience" the Cursed Blood again.

This time, the Demonic Wolf let out a miserable howl.

The last remnants of its resistance finally crumbled.

Realizing that every emergence of defiant thought would bring torment, its head drooped, and its taut body relaxed.

"Try again," Leon said, feeling that they were close.

Rena continued to use the power of the Blood Pact.

This time, she clearly felt her Mana finally flow through unobstructed.

All emotion vanished from the Demonic Wolf's eyes, replaced by a hollow emptiness.

"Sit," Rena tried issuing a command while transmitting her intent.

The Demonic Wolf sat down as ordered, like a tamed hunting dog.

"It worked—" Rena let out a sigh of relief.

"Good. Now we have a way to deal with that pack of Demonic Wolves," Leon said, very satisfied with the result.

If even this Demonic Wolf Pack Leader could be tamed, then the remaining Demonic Wolves should be manageable with the same method.

They had already found a way to clear this labyrinth.

Moreover, the experiment had proven that his Cursed Blood and Rena's Blood Pact could be used in tandem.

A curse that intimidated creatures on an instinctive level, combined with a hypnotic ability that compelled magical beasts to obey—one hand holding the whip, the other the sugar.

Even third-level magical beasts that were originally untamable could be brought under their control.

"If this could be used on humans, that'd be terrifying," Leon suddenly blurted out as a whim crossed his mind.

Rena looked at him in surprise.

Then Leon thought of something else and turned to ask her, "Does your ability work on humans? Have you ever tried it?"

"How could I possibly have tried that!" Rena shot him an exasperated look.

"So that means it's not necessarily ineffective?" Leon said thoughtfully.

Controlling magical beasts was a witch's basic ability.

On top of that, each witch possessed an additional blessing that varied from person to person.

His Cursed Blood was effective on all living beings.

By that logic, an ability like Blood Pact might not be limited to magical beasts alone.

In many legends, witches were said to possess the power to bewitch humans as well.

"It feels like you're thinking about something really scary—" Rena said, eyeing Leon uneasily.

Leon shrugged and set the thought aside for the time being.

What mattered now was acquiring a new labyrinth.

Since they had confirmed that his blood and Rena's could control Demonic Wolves, all that remained was to gather manpower, make preparations, and begin clearing the labyrinth.

That night, Leon went to a tavern in the eastern district of Hamel Town.

This tavern had once been Potter's property.

When Leon had previously supplied goods to Potter, he had met with Father Auden here once.

Father Auden had arranged to meet him here today.

When Leon arrived at the entrance, he saw a sign hanging on the door that read "Reserved Today."

He pushed the door open and walked straight in.

Over twenty people were seated in the tavern hall.

The moment Leon entered, the previously noisy hall fell silent, all eyes focusing on him—including the bartender wiping glasses behind the counter.

Leon walked into the tavern under everyone's gaze, his expressionless eyes sweeping across all those present.

He spotted Father Auden and Simon among them.

Father Auden was the first to stand and walk toward Leon.

Then Simon, along with the subordinates seated at his table, also stood up and cast respectful looks toward Leon.

Seeing this, the others rose as well, all turning their attention toward him.

"From today onward, all of these people will work for you, Fenrir. This is the contract—same as when they were under Potter," Father Auden said, handing Leon two parchment scrolls.

Leon took the contracts and skimmed through them.

Potter had hired these thugs under the guise of employing them as merchant caravan guards.

Their base pay was actually not high—only around four thousand Fenni each.

With twenty people here, the monthly wage expense alone came to about eighty thousand Fenni.

For each additional security assignment, he would need to provide bonuses.

This labyrinth-clearing operation followed the same standards as the previous carriage robbery operation: three captains, including Simon, would each receive twenty thousand, while the rest would receive ten thousand.

That meant Leon would need to pay a total of two hundred and thirty thousand Fenni to deploy this private armed force for the labyrinth operation.

This was an amount Leon could still afford.

Aside from the two million provided by the Earl, after obtaining Potter's client list from the priest, he had already begun producing and selling magical potions.

His contract with the Earl only covered Mana of sufficient purity.

Any Mana or magical beast materials that didn't meet the requirements, he had found ways to sell off to supplement his funds.

Leon glanced at the priest.

This time, the priest hadn't specified a brokerage fee in the contract.

"The brokerage fee won't be necessary. If you're hiring them long-term, you can't keep using dirty money. You'll need me to handle the accounts. I'll just charge the processing fees for that," the priest explained, understanding Leon's meaning.

Leon smiled somewhat helplessly.

Father Auden truly never came out at a loss.

He continued reviewing the contract and lowered his voice to ask the priest, "So it looks like all I need to do is pay them? I don't need to provide any additional guarantees?"

"Doing this kind of work means life and death are on them. The compensation you're paying is already sufficient," the priest replied matter-of-factly.

Leon thought for a moment, then said in a low voice, "I want to add a clause to the contract."

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

**What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! #Chapter 96 : The Necessity of Work Injury Compensation - Read What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 96 : The Necessity of Work Injury Compensation**

## Chapter 96: The Necessity of Work Injury Compensation

Hearing Leon's request, Father Auden's reaction appeared very calm: "You can add conditions, but don't go too far."

"I want to give them a basic work injury protection system," Leon said.

"What kind of protection?" Father Auden did not understand.

"It means that if they are injured while working for me, all medical and nursing expenses will be borne by me. During the recovery period while the contract remains in force, wages will continue to be paid as usual. If there is permanent disability, I will pay a disability compensation," Leon said.

Father Auden looked Leon over in confusion after hearing this.

"If you want to do charity, I can recommend better targets."

In this era, there was simply no such thing as a sound work injury protection system.

Whether an injured hired worker received a sum of compensation to be dismissed with depended entirely on the employer's conscience.

The farms and factories all required hired workers to sign contracts that assumed personal risk.

The contracts drafted by Father Auden naturally did not omit exemption clauses set up for the employer.

Even soldiers who sacrificed themselves for the nation or were injured were, in theory, supposed to receive compensation by law, but the actual execution was far from ideal.

For example, in the war ten years ago, due to financial strain, casualty subsidies for soldiers were quickly suspended.

Fewer than five percent of people actually received compensation.

Ironically, the greatest benefit the wounded or fallen soldiers received was a national medal.

With the medal, they and their families were entitled to privileges such as delayed tax payments and being allowed to beg within city districts without being arrested.

In fact, lower-level delegate officers like Leon, who worked for the Church without any rank, received little in the way of additional compensation apart from free emergency treatment if injured during missions, and even that money was often embezzled.

Of course, it was not that no one could enjoy such compensation.

For example, noble ministers and officers serving the nation, as well as knights and bishops with rank within the Church—if these prominent figures fell ill, were injured, or died while on duty, they would all receive generous compensation.

Father Auden simply could not understand what merit these underworld thugs had to deserve such treatment.

These mercenaries were engaged in a line of work that involved licking blood off the blade.

If Leon wanted to show kindness, this town was not lacking in pitiful people like the Hesh mother and daughter.

In fact, there were many cases where hired workers obtained compensation by presenting evidence to the courts to establish an employer's additional liability after being injured or killed.

One of Father Auden's regular jobs was to represent merchant consortia and wealthy employers to settle such matters.

With him as Leon's advisor, Leon basically did not need to worry about anyone coming to demand compensation.

Yet Leon was instead jumping into this pit himself, and Father Auden could not make sense of it.

Leon ignored his opposition and continued speaking on his own.

"Also, have them register contact persons and beneficiaries for handling their affairs if necessary. If they are killed while working for me, I will pay funeral expenses, as well as a death compensation."

Father Auden froze for a moment after hearing this, then suddenly showed a look of realization, followed by a meaningful smile.

Lowering his voice, he said, "Oh, I understand. I understand what you mean now—"

"What do you understand?" Leon was somewhat puzzled by Father Auden's reaction.

"You want to dig up their weaknesses! Through their beneficiaries, you can uncover their families behind them, see which ones can be controlled, and manage the risk of betrayal. Heh, this move is really something," Father Auden said with some admiration.

Fenrir—truly a terrifying man.

Father Auden evaluated him inwardly.

Of course, in this line of work, that counted as praise.

Leon looked at Father Auden with a strange expression.

Had this priest gone through some kind of tragic experience before? Otherwise, why did he always imagine people in such a dark way?

“Father, what do you think was the original reason I entered this line of work?” Leon suddenly asked.

“What was it?” Father Auden was momentarily confused.

Leon could not be bothered to explain further.

Based on the money he currently had on hand, he briefly considered compensation amounts for different degrees of disability, then had the priest add them to the contract clauses.

The underworld mercenaries present all watched Leon and the priest whispering to each other with some unease.

They worried that Leon was dissatisfied with the contract and might further push down the price.

Being unemployed at present, they did have some room to compromise, but after all, this was life-risking work, and they could not give in too much.

Afterward, Father Auden turned to the mercenaries and announced Leon’s new terms: “From Mr. Fenrir’s generosity, all who sign the contract will receive a special form of protection—.”

Leon silently watched from behind as the mercenaries reacted after hearing the work injury protection provisions.

Not many of them showed gratitude.

More appeared confused; some found it novel, while others showed suspicion on their faces.

Leon did not mind this at all.

He simply felt that this measure was necessary.

He himself had been trapped on this path precisely because of the Church's lack of protection.

This might not be enough to buy people's loyalty to the point of completely eliminating betrayal, but at the very least, it could greatly reduce the risk of subordinates selling him out over such a small issue.

He did not want the organization he built to be as riddled with holes as the Church.

Two days later, a cargo ship slowly approached the shore.

Fully armed mercenaries began disembarking along the gangplank, and they also led down a freight carriage, its cargo covered with black cloth.

"Careful." Leon extended a hand backward before disembarking.

Behind him, the masked Rena grasped his hand, cautiously watching her footing as she followed Leon ashore.

The last to come down from the ship was Father Auden, wearing a bitter expression.

He was seasick again.

"Are you sure you want to bring your precious witch lady into the labyrinth?" Father Auden spoke softly to Leon.

He knew about Leon sending Sally Hesh to prison in place of this witch, and naturally understood that the relationship between the two was far from ordinary.

Therefore, seeing Leon bring this witch along while tackling such a dangerous labyrinth surprised him somewhat.

"To deal with this labyrinth, her power is indispensable," Leon explained.

"Oh, I've seen her power. I just hope she won't affect other people. Don't forget, you promised those mercenaries one hundred thousand for each death," Father Auden reminded him.

He still believed that the witch beside Leon had the ability to turn people into poisonous bombs and wipe out large numbers with toxins.

". "

Rena remained silent at the side.

Leon had told her that she did not need to interact with anyone else present, just to stay close to him.

She was still somewhat nervous, after all, there were so many fully armed mercenaries around her.

However, along the way, these mercenaries appeared to follow Leon's orders quite obediently.

"What did Viscount Arend say?" Leon confirmed with the priest.

The ship they used to land on the island this time was not the small boat from before, but a commercial cargo ship capable of carrying a freight carriage and over twenty people.

It was very difficult to avoid being seen when landing.

"Don't worry. I have already fully informed Viscount Arend. I guarantee that his daughter will not appear here," the priest said confidently.

"Take one person and stand guard on the mountain path. If anyone comes that way, stop them. I don't want to see any unnecessary people appearing near the labyrinth," Leon instructed Father Auden.

"If I don't have to go into the mountains, that's even better," Father Auden had no objections to this arrangement.

Leon, Rena, and the remaining manpower entered the mountains, making their way to the mine that served as the labyrinth entrance.

"Assign personnel according to plan. Other than Bloodsucking Mosquito Bats and Giant Rats, capture any magical beasts that can be captured alive if possible. Clear out all magical beasts along your assigned routes," Leon began issuing orders.

"Simon, unload the things from the carriage."

Bloodsucking Mosquito Bats were difficult to raise, and Giant Rats had very low Mana content.

Not all magical beasts had breeding value.

"Mr. Fenrir, are you sure that thing can be used?" Simon asked with some concern.

"Just watch," Leon replied.

Simon let out a long breath and turned to direct his men to act according to orders.

They first led the horses away from the carriage to prevent them from being frightened by what was on it.

Then they pulled off the black cloth covering the flatbed.

Inside was a massive square iron cage, with a demonic wolf larger than a leopard lying in the center.

Although they already knew what was being transported on the carriage, upon seeing the demonic wolf, all the mercenaries still involuntarily sucked in a breath of cold air.

“Open the cage,” Leon ordered.

“Sir, this—” Simon hesitated.

“You all step back,” Leon understood their hesitation and stepped forward personally.

All the mercenaries distanced themselves from the cage, some even placing their hands on their weapons.

A demonic wolf of this size possessed strength and speed no less than a lion or brown bear, and had an extremely tough body capable of enduring several shots without collapsing.

If it went berserk the moment the cage was opened, casualties were almost guaranteed.

Leon did not open the cage immediately, but instead looked at Rena.

“Get up,” Rena called toward the cage.

The demonic wolf opened its hollow eyes and slowly rose as instructed.

Rena walked closer to the cage and extended her hand toward it.

“Hey, hey!”

A mercenary cried out in alarm, as if already seeing the scene of the demonic wolf biting the girl’s hand to pieces.

However, the demonic wolf merely rubbed against Rena’s hand through the gaps in the cage, appearing unusually docile.

The mercenaries present looked at one another.

Leon then reached out and opened the cage.

Rena pointed outside, and the demonic wolf stepped out.

The mercenaries retreated nervously, but the demonic wolf seemed to pay them no attention at all, even lazily yawning.

Rena reached out and stroked the demonic wolf's head as it cooperatively lowered it.

At this moment, the mercenaries finally believed the fact that the witch before them could control the demonic wolf.

"Simon, your squad moves with us. We're going to deal with the demonic wolf pack," Leon called out to the dumbfounded mercenary captain.

"Yes—sir," Simon took a long moment before coming back to his senses.

"Then, let's go." Leon waved his hand broadly, announcing the start of the operation.

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

## **What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! #Chapter 97 : The Great Terror Within the Labyrinth - Read What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 97 : The Great Terror Within the Labyrinth**

Chapter 97: The Great Terror Within the Labyrinth

"Over there—drive them that way and deal with them!"

The mercenaries ran back and forth through the labyrinth's tunnels, using torches to herd the Bloodsucking Mosquito Bats toward narrow passages where net traps had been set up.

Others wielded hunting forks, lunging to kill Giant Rats that scurried about wildly.

Slimes only needed to be sprinkled with salt to be temporarily incapacitated, after which they could be scooped into clay jars.

The Living Vines growing in the soil had to be bound with ropes to restrain their incessantly writhing tendrils, then dug out roots and all—

The vast majority of Magical Beasts present in this mine labyrinth were essentially harmless First-Level Magical Beasts.

As long as manpower and equipment were sufficient, dealing with them posed little difficulty.

Leon listened to the surrounding commotion as he led Rena, Simon, and the others, along with the Demonic Wolf that Rena controlled, straight toward the deepest part of the labyrinth.

Upon reaching the end marked on the mining map, that open space once again appeared before them.

Simon stood at the front with his subordinates, spreading out slightly so that the torches in their hands could illuminate more of the area.

Leon swept his gaze across the surroundings.

This time, the visible range was far greater.

Weeds grew wildly across the ground, yet the terrain was unusually flat.

Many shattered stone bricks were embedded in the soil.

There was no doubt that this had once been an area constructed by human hands.

Leon nodded to Rena, and the two each took out a flask from their clothes.

Inside the flasks were dark-red liquids—blood samples they had each drawn from themselves in advance.

Leon first poured his blood into a prepared basin.

Rena then added a small amount of anticoagulant extracted from a Head-Hunting Rabbit, thoroughly mixed it, poured in her own blood, and finally added Mummy Powder made from Dried Corpses.

By this point, the Demonic Wolf Pack Alpha following beside them had already begun to grow restless.

When Rena opened a test tube containing Mana, a look of yearning burst forth once more from the hollows of the wolf's eyes.

“Sit,” Rena commanded the Pack Alpha.

The wolf obeyed and sat down, though saliva still streamed uncontrollably from the corner of its mouth.

Rena poured the Mana into the basin.

Leon then placed a Lantern nearby and immediately ordered, "Alright—retreat into the tunnel at once!!"

Everyone withdrew in the direction they had come from, following Leon.

Only the Demonic Wolf Pack Alpha remained seated where it was, staring longingly at the basin filled with mixed blood and Bait Agent.

"Come back!" Rena commanded again.

Only then did the Pack Alpha reluctantly follow the others, moving away from the basin.

They retreated only fifty to sixty meters when faint rustling sounds arose from the deep space of the labyrinth.

Soon after, dots of ghostly green light appeared in the darkness beyond.

The remaining labyrinth space within the mountain was extremely limited.

Once the Bait Agent was placed, the scent of blood and the high concentration of Mana quickly attracted the wolf pack that had made this place its nest.

The Lantern Leon had left behind cast a pool of light.

As those will-o'-the-wisp-like eyes drew closer, the silhouettes of Demonic Wolves emerged one after another along the edge of the light—large and small, a total of nine Demonic Wolves.

The mercenaries present all held their breath.

If these wolves were to launch a coordinated attack, casualties would be inevitable.

Fortunately, the wolves' attention was not on them at all.

Every Demonic Wolf was staring at the basin of blood, saliva dripping incessantly from their mouths.

Suddenly, two Demonic Wolves charged toward the basin.

Like a signal, all the others surged forward as well,

scrambling to bury their heads in the basin and lap up the blood within, like ants discovering honey.

The Demonic Wolf Pack Alpha that had retreated with Leon and the others was also coiled to strike.

It bared its fangs at the pack, seemingly displeased that wolves of lower status were fighting over what it had set its sights on.

Yet under Rena's control, it remained stationed obediently in place.

For a mere few hundred milliliters of liquid, the Demonic Wolves went mad with desire, and the scene quickly devolved into a vicious struggle.

Even with the Pack Alpha present, they could not resist the temptation of the Bait Agent.

Its absence caused the pack's order to further collapse.

To fight over the blood, they began tearing into one another—larger wolves drove off smaller ones, while the smaller wolves slipped back in during the chaos to secretly lick the blood.

The basin was soon knocked over.

The little remaining liquid spilled onto the ground, and the wolves frantically licked at the earth, as if possessed.

Leon observed carefully.

The scene was chaotic, but in the end, nearly all of the wolves had consumed the blood they had placed in the basin.

It was about time to try.

Leon glanced at Rena.

With a single look, she understood.

She placed her fingers in her mouth and began to blow a clear, melodious Whistled Signal.

When she needed to control a large number of Magical Beasts, this kind of whistle served as assistance.

The gentle, simple rhythm echoed through the space.

The Demonic Wolves that heard it began to feel a hazy drowsiness.

Rena activated her Blood Pact Blessing, using the blood the wolves had ingested from her as a medium, causing all the wolves to resonate with the Mana she was circulating.

However, the wolves quickly broke free from the drowsiness.

For Rena, controlling even a single Demonic Wolf was already a strain.

Attempting to control so many at once was simply impossible.

The pack soon realized that something was wrong with the source of the sound and swiftly turned their attention toward the group.

The mercenaries tensed, drawing their weapons one after another.

Rena's whistling suddenly incorporated a sharp, urgent note.

The Pack Alpha seemed to be instantly activated by the sound—it leapt forward several meters, positioning itself before the group and letting out a low growl at the pack.

With the former leader blocking their way, the restless wolves hesitated at once.

The Pack Alpha's physique was a full size larger than the others.

This was the growth advantage accumulated over years of having first claim to prey.

For the other wolves to replace it, they would basically have to wait until it grew old and weak.

At that moment, Leon activated Cursed Blood against the wolves.

In an instant, anguished howls filled the air.

All the Demonic Wolves except the Pack Alpha began convulsing in pain, purple smoke spilling from their throats.

Leon only tormented them briefly before suppressing the ability.

Rena then continued blowing the whistle, while also having the Pack Alpha emit an intimidating roar to suppress the pack's will.

After a single round of this ordeal, more than half of the wolves tucked their tails between their legs, lowered their heads, and chose submission.

Once the thought of surrender emerged, they were quickly hypnotized by Rena's whistle, their eyes turning vacant as they stood motionless.

Four sturdier Demonic Wolves were still struggling, trying to snarl at Rena behind the Pack Alpha.

Seeing this, the Pack Alpha stepped forward and roared angrily, forcing them to retreat again.

Leon activated Cursed Blood once more, and the wolves collapsed to the ground, convulsing in agony.

After the second round, the remaining four could no longer hold out.

They finally abandoned resistance, allowing Rena's whistle to invade their consciousness.

At last, all the Demonic Wolves completely settled under the whistle's influence, motionless, like lifelike statues.

Rena stopped whistling and tried issuing a command: "Sit."

The Pack Alpha and five Demonic Wolves sat down as ordered.

The remaining four seemed not to hear her.

After some thought, Rena tried having the Pack Alpha emit a low growl and issued the command again: "Sit!"

This time, all the wolves sat down together.

By dispersing the power of the Blood Pact across so many wolves, her degree of control inevitably weakened.

However, as long as she focused most of her attention on the repeatedly trained Pack Alpha, she could rely on the wolves' social structure and the Pack Alpha's intimidation to assist her in controlling the entire pack.

"Good—success!" Leon finally let out a long sigh of relief.

Simon and the others clicked their tongues in amazement, their gazes toward Rena now carrying a hint of reverence.

Thanks to this Witch's power, they had conquered a full ten Demonic Wolves without firing a single shot.

If they had truly tried to force their way through the labyrinth by brute strength, who knew how many would have died.

"Mr. Fenrir, should we move the cages in?" Simon asked Leon for instructions.

He could tell that without the Witch, these wolves would likely revert to their wild nature.

To be safe, it would be best to lock them up in cages.

“We can move the cages in first, but don’t rush to confine the wolves. The depths haven’t been fully explored yet—we don’t know what else might be inside,” Leon said.

Having subdued the wolf pack, they now possessed a combat force even stronger than this mercenary unit.

If there were further dangers deeper inside, these wolves would likely prove useful.

“Leave three people here to set up a Fire Pit. Go check on the progress of the others—if they’re about done, call some people in to help,” Leon began assigning tasks.

“Yes,” Simon and the others responded, immediately moving into action.

“Deploy the Demonic Wolves on the outer perimeter. You stand at the tunnel entrance, somewhere you can withdraw at any time,” Leon quietly instructed Rena.

Rena nodded obediently, manipulating the wolves into a defensive formation around the area.

At the same time, Simon’s remaining men began stacking the firewood they had brought into tall fire pit platforms.

To illuminate this vast underground space, they would need plenty of light.

After some time passed, the mercenaries who had finished clearing out the low-level Magical Beasts gathered here one after another.

Every person who saw the wolf pack under Rena’s control was astonished.

Some curious mercenaries even tried to approach and touch the wolves, only to be so frightened by a single twitch of a wolf’s nose that they fell to the ground, provoking a burst of laughter from the others.

“Enough fooling around—get to work,” Leon urged the mercenaries back into action.

They could not let their guard down until the labyrinth exploration was complete.

Soon, new fire pit platforms were erected and lit.

The blazing flames drove away the darkness, finally allowing everyone to glimpse the overall form of this ruin within the mountain.

Judging from the size of the space, nearly half of the interior of this mine was hollowed out.

The shape of the enormous cavern was very uniform, with an arched ceiling.

The highest point in the center reached a full twenty meters.

Amid the rampant weeds and shrubs, fragments of ruined walls were scattered here and there.

This place had clearly once held man-made structures, but something had destroyed them all.

In the center was a pool of water that looked bottomless, seemingly connected to underground water veins.

There were many signs of Demonic Wolf activity here.

One enormous pit was filled with the bones of their leftovers.

Their main food sources were Wild Goats that entered the cavern in search of grass and rock salt, as well as the Giant Rats native to the labyrinth.

There was also plenty of their feces scattered in the grass.

One mercenary stepped on it and immediately cursed aloud.

Aside from the ten Demonic Wolves they had brought under control, there seemed to be no others present.

“Mr. Fenrir, we’ve found something!!” a mercenary shouted loudly from the deepest part.

Leon turned at the call.

The mercenaries’ torches illuminated a wall standing at the very depths of the labyrinth—ruined yet still majestic.

The relief carvings upon it were no longer discernible, but the outlines of doors and windows could still be vaguely made out.

Part of the great door’s edge looked as though it had been deliberately smashed open, creating a massive breach.

Everyone was surprised.

To think there was actually a hall here—and one that looked incredibly ancient!

Just what was the origin of this labyrinth?

As Leon continued his careful observation, one of the young mercenaries who had first discovered the hall could no longer restrain himself.

He volunteered eagerly, raising his torch as he walked inside.

“I’ll go in and take a look first!”

Entering first to scout was certainly risky, but if he discovered gold, silver, or valuable antiques, the first person inside would have a chance to secretly pocket some.

This was an opportunity to get rich!

“Hey!!” the captain responsible for this mercenary shouted harshly, trying to stop him.

At this moment, Leon raised his hand to halt him, allowing the mercenary to go in.

He also told the others, “Move a bit farther away from here.”

He lowered his gaze to the ground.

Everywhere around was evidence of Demonic Wolf activity—footprints, remnants of prey, and feces and urine used to mark territory.

Yet the large area around the hall’s entrance was covered only in overgrown weeds, completely devoid of wolf activity.

There was hardly even a trace of the usual acrid smell of urine.

The wolves dwelled here, yet seemed unwilling to approach this hall.

Leon faintly sensed that something was wrong.

Exploring the labyrinth was ultimately unavoidable.

Since someone was willing to volunteer as a scout, Leon was more than happy to accept.

He led the others far back and waited.

After more than ten minutes, a shrill scream suddenly rang out from within.

Everyone was startled.

Just as the mercenary’s captain opened his mouth to shout, a terrifying roar erupted from inside, completely drowning out his voice.

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

# **What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! #Chapter 98 : Fourth-Level Magical Beast - Read What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 98 : Fourth-Level Magical Beast**

Chapter 98: Fourth-Level Magical Beast

Upon hearing that terrifying roar, everyone involuntarily felt their hearts seize, their legs even going a little weak.

Rena's breathing suddenly became rapid.

This feeling of instinctive fear being abruptly stirred was extremely similar to when Leon released his Cursed Blood.

To achieve such an effect with nothing but a single roar—she could not imagine what kind of creature could have produced it.

The demonic wolves, including the pack alpha, began howling restlessly, their cries shrill and filled with undisguised fear.

Leon noticed the disturbance among the demonic wolves and, without the slightest hesitation, turned around and sprinted away.

“Retreat! Retreat!!” he shouted while running, waving his arms.

“Everyone evacuate the Labyrinth! Immediately!!”

To terrify the demonic wolves to this extent, the owner of that roar within the hall was absolutely no benign creature.

And now, that “brave” young man who had gone in first to investigate had already awakened its master!

If they did not flee now, when would they?

The mercenaries also reacted one after another and began swarming toward the tunnel entrance.

They had only taken a few steps when the hall's gate suddenly erupted with a thunderous explosion.

A massive, scale-covered head smashed through the edge of the gate and burst out from within the hall—the breach on one side of the gate had clearly been created by this creature as well.

Leon ran while twisting his head to look back.

The creature that burst out of the temple had a head alone as large as a box truck, bearing obvious reptilian features, resembling either a giant serpent or a lizard, yet far more imposing than either.

Its face was covered in bony protrusions, its scales far thicker than those of a serpent and gleaming with a metallic luster.

Atop its head grew an umbrella-shaped crest with ridged patterns, from which extended three pairs of dragon horns of varying sizes.

Yet what best embodied its majesty was its pair of eyes—two dazzling golden eyes, brighter than a campfire, as if molten lava were churning within their sockets!

The instant one looked into those eyes, intense fear would be projected directly into the mind.

A dragon!

Although he had never seen one with his own eyes in this world, Leon understood the moment he saw it that this was a dragon-type creature ranked at the very apex of Labyrinth beings.

That roar and gaze capable of evoking instinctive terror were precisely its Dragon's Might!

This dragon was clearly enraged.

The moment it burst out of the hall, it charged straight after the fleeing crowd.

Only after it rushed out did Leon realize that its body was not as massive as he had imagined.

Though it possessed four limbs, it had no wings, and a row of sharp spines ran along its back.

This was a Drake.

Like a Wyvern, it belonged to a subspecies of dragonkind.

Its size and strength could not compare to those of a true dragon, yet it still possessed power sufficient to crush an ordinary army—and even among fourth-level magical beasts, it ranked at the very top.

This damned Labyrinth actually harbored a fourth-level magical beast, a Drake!

Leon had no time left to complain about this.

He could only focus single-mindedly on escaping.

“Run! Faster!!” he shouted at Rena.

Rena had followed Leon’s instructions and remained near the tunnel entrance.

Upon seeing the Drake appear, she also turned and began to flee.

As soon as she formed that intention, all the demonic wolves synchronized with her, following her as they fled toward the tunnel exit.

However, Rena’s running speed ultimately could not match that of the others.

Not long after entering the tunnel, the mercenaries charging for their lives overtook her one after another.

Leon caught up from behind and suddenly noticed that the pack alpha had just rushed up from the rear.

He stepped forward and grabbed Rena, who was still running.

“Yah!” Rena cried out in surprise.

“Get up!” Leon hoisted Rena and shoved her onto the demonic wolf’s back, allowing her to lie prone on it.

“Hold on tight!”

Rena came to her senses and quickly adjusted her posture on the wolf’s back, simultaneously pouring her consciousness into the pack alpha.

Under her control, the wolf cooperated, stabilizing her position and bursting into a full sprint, soon carrying her forward to catch up with the others.

The tunnel was fairly wide, and there were two exits.

After the crowd split up and fled, escaping together with the wolf pack was not overly congested.

However, the Drake also plunged into the more crowded tunnel and slightly altered its form, drawing its limbs into its body and elongating itself like a gigantic serpent.

After all, Drakes were dragon subspecies specialized for subterranean environments.

Those at the rear tried firing their guns at the pursuing Drake, but the bullets merely sparked uselessly as they struck its scales.

It was said that dragon scales were incomparably tough, that even their eyelids were impervious to blades and firearms.

Now they knew that this claim was no exaggeration.

“Ah! Damn it!” Simon had just fired a shot and turned around when he tripped over a vine.

By the time he scrambled back up, he had fallen slightly behind.

Fortunately, the Drake was still some distance away.

He got back on his feet and resumed running.

Yet at that very moment, the Drake opened its mouth and unleashed the most terrifying weapon of dragonkind: breath.

Acidic mist spewed forth from its gaping maw, surging down the tunnel like ocean waves.

Wherever the acid fog touched rock, it sizzled and emitted white smoke as the stone began melting on the spot.

By the time that wave of acid mist reached Simon from behind, it had already thinned considerably.

Even so, when it seeped through the gaps in his leather armor, Simon still felt a searing pain, as if scalding oil had been poured all over him.

“Ugh—AAAH!!” He staggered a few steps and collapsed to the ground.

The torch in his hand fell beside him, and when he tried to get back up, the pain left his body unresponsive.

“Help! Help me!!” he cried out desperately to the receding crowd.

Behind him, the Drake was rapidly closing in.

Rena turned her head and, without thinking, focused her attention on the demonic wolf running at the very rear.

“Go!!”

Driven by her intense will at that moment, the demonic wolf wheeled around, charged back, clamped its jaws onto Simon’s collar, and dragged him along at a full sprint.

Though Simon kicked his legs in agony, it was still far better than becoming food for a dragon.

Even so, this delay allowed the Drake to close the distance.

Just as its throat began to writhe, brewing another breath attack, Leon suddenly thought of something and pulled out a second flask.

This was a backup blood sample.

Inside were one hundred milliliters of his blood mixed with an anticoagulant.

In addition, he had infused it with a small amount of Mana, greatly amplifying the power of his curse.

In their current state, those blood contents would be lethally corrosive even if merely splashed onto someone, let alone ingested.

He turned around and hurled the flask at the Drake like a grenade.

The Drake sensed it and suddenly snapped its jaws shut, biting the flask to pieces and swallowing it whole.

This was an unexpected boon for Leon.

He had only intended to splash the creature with his Cursed Blood.

Now that the Drake had willingly swallowed it, all the better.

He immediately activated his ability.

Purple smoke began seeping from the corners of the Drake’s mouth.

The Drake immediately broke into hoarse coughing, its pursuit stalling for a moment and allowing everyone to widen the gap.

Yet the next instant, it let out a furious roar filled with rage and resumed the chase.

The entire tunnel rumbled as its scales scraped against the stone.

Perhaps the dosage had been insufficient.

Perhaps the curse itself was not powerful enough.

Leon realized that his Cursed Blood could only cause this half-dragon pain—it was still far from killing it!

“The exit!” someone shouted in wild joy.

They had reached the vicinity of the exit and merged with companions who had fled through the other tunnel.

People and wolves alike surged out of the Labyrinth.

Even after leaving the mine, they did not stop, continuing to sprint along the mountain path toward the pass, for the Drake’s enraged roars had never ceased.

After running at full speed for another hundred meters or so, Leon looked back.

In the pitch-black mine entrance, the Drake’s lava-like eyes gleamed.

However, after chasing them to the mouth of the cave, the Drake suddenly stopped, as if it had abruptly awakened to something.

Leon could not help but slow down, carefully observing it.

The Drake let out a low, rumbling growl from its throat.

Moments later, it retreated and vanished into the depths of the mine.

“It went back!” Leon shouted loudly, signaling everyone to calm down.

Although magical beasts could not stray far from a Labyrinth, they could still operate within a certain range around it for a time.

For some reason, this Drake seemed unwilling to leave the Labyrinth.

Was it related to that hall? Leon pondered inwardly.

Simon, who had been dragged out by the demonic wolf, let out pained groans.

Rena quickly ordered the wolf to release him, and Simon’s subordinates rushed forward to administer aid.

Everyone else stood in place, shaken.

Some were immensely relieved, while others wore blank expressions.

Only after quite some time did Leon remove his Protective Mask and let out a long, helpless breath.

A Drake—there was actually such a troublesome fourth-level magical beast in this Labyrinth.

This was truly unbelievable!

Something like this could not be dealt with by merely recruiting a few dozen mercenaries.

He had never imagined that such a massive problem would surface at this final critical juncture!

The fact that the demonic wolves could move around the perimeter indicated that the Drake largely remained holed up inside the hall within the ruins, rarely venturing out—as if it were guarding that hall.

Leon was certain that there was something unusual within this Labyrinth.

But if that Drake was not dealt with, the Labyrinth could neither be explored nor operated.

Rena sat atop the wolf's back, still shaken, her gaze tinged with worry as she looked toward Leon.

Leon glanced at Rena, then at the other mercenaries.

"Take care of the wounded. We're withdrawing for now. I'll pay everything as agreed. Let's leave this place first!"

The next day, at the Inquisition, Director's Office.

"There's a Drake in the Labyrinth—" Bishop Beckett said after listening to Leon's account, his expression grave as he tapped his knuckles against the desk.

"How did you end up encountering a fourth-level magical beast?"

"I suspect it may be related to the ruins within that Labyrinth," Leon said.

"This isn't archaeology. Heretical ruins are something Church scholars should be interested in. We only need a Labyrinth that can be operated," Bishop Beckett replied.

“I understand. But if that Drake isn’t dealt with, the Labyrinth can’t be operated at all.” Leon stared at Bishop Beckett.

“Sir, surely the Earl doesn’t think this is something I should resolve on my own as well?”

Faced with such a major problem, Leon felt he had sufficient grounds to seek additional support from the Earl.

“Subspecies like half-dragons are not easy to handle. Even the Church would have to dispatch its most elite knights. And we cannot call upon Church forces. If Church forces are used to resolve a Labyrinth, it will be sealed and placed under supervision.

“Not to mention that the Labyrinth Church on Arend Island would almost certainly never approve such a sealing. If you ask for my advice, my advice is to switch to another Labyrinth,” Bishop Beckett said.

“Switching to another Labyrinth means spending time again, investing resources anew. And if something like this happens again—” Leon shook his head slightly.

“Sir, with the Earl’s power, is there truly no way at all to deal with a single Drake?”

Bishop Beckett pondered for a long while before replying, “There is a way. And the person capable of resolving this problem just happens to have been assigned by the Earl to River Valley County, in charge of business there.”

“Then—”

“But whether you can borrow his strength is another matter entirely,” Bishop Beckett interrupted.

“So he’s like Bar as well—someone who doesn’t want to see me succeed?” Leon asked.

“No. I think he belongs to the type who simply doesn’t care. This person has a very peculiar temperament. He basically only answers to the Earl’s direct orders. If it’s something he doesn’t like, he’ll refuse even the Earl. I myself have no real connection with him. I don’t think he would be interested in this matter. I advise you not to place too much hope in it,” Bishop Beckett warned.

Leon fell silent for a moment, then still spoke.

“Could you tell me more about this person in detail?”

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

# **What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! #Chapter 99 : The Apostate Knight Order Commander - Read What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 99 : The Apostate Knight Order Commander**

Chapter 99: The Apostate Knight Order Commander

River Valley County, a mountain villa.

Leon once again sat in the reception hall waiting.

Bishop Becket sat beside him in accompaniment.

“Johnny Wellman—” Leon repeatedly turned this name over in his mind.

Before coming, he had learned some information about this man from Bishop Becket.

“This man is responsible for managing an armed fleet used for cross-sea transport on behalf of the Earl. Seventy percent of the Earl’s import and export goods are escorted by him. The name he is known by is Johnny Wellman, but that name is false. His real name is Jonathan Ruit, and he is an apostate knight of the Creator Church,” Bishop Becket had explained to Leon at the time.

“An apostate knight? Then that would mean he’s a wanted fugitive?” Leon asked.

“No. He betrayed the Church but was not wanted, because he has already been registered as dead,” Bishop Becket replied.

“Was it arranged by the Earl?” Leon’s first reaction was that the Earl had staged a fake death to let this apostate knight escape pursuit, and in return the knight served under the Earl.

“The situation is more complicated than you think.” Bishop Becket gathered his thoughts and began to explain carefully.

“He originally belonged to the Church Navy. He was a knight order commander, commanding three battleships and two escort vessels—”

Hearing this, Leon was inwardly startled.

A knight order commander—this was a rank far above a fully appointed knight, and he even managed a fleet.

Using the military ranks Leon was familiar with, this man was at least equivalent to a colonel.

A knight commander was on the same level as an archbishop.

One step higher, and he would even be qualified to be elected as a cardinal.

“According to the Church’s registered records, during the war against the heretics ten years ago, in a brutal naval battle, his fleet was encircled and annihilated. He himself went missing as a result and was ultimately declared killed in action. The Church even posthumously honored him.

“But in reality, he survived. He did not return to the Church. Instead, he took the name Johnny and began engaging in underworld business within the Empire. Later, the Earl found him and reached an agreement with him, recruiting him into his service.” Bishop Becket continued.

“Was there some hidden reason behind this?” Leon asked.

“I don’t know. First, we belonged to different departments within the Church, and the difference in rank was considerable. Second, the files for that campaign he participated in were sealed by the Church Disciplinary Order. Only with approval from the College of Cardinals could they be accessed. The Earl has never disclosed the details to anyone else either.” Bishop Becket added a reminder at the end, “You’d best not investigate it either, and definitely don’t mention it in front of him.”

After that, Leon proposed persuading Johnny Wellman through the Earl.

After all, once this Labyrinth was taken down, the local supply source the Earl wanted would basically be secured.

After careful consideration, Bishop Becket also agreed.

Immediately afterward, Bishop Becket directly used his secret god’s blessing in front of Leon, using a secret god sigil to establish remote contact with the Earl.

It was Leon’s first time learning that blessings in this world could actually be used as a substitute for phone calls.

After Bishop Becket relayed the problem Leon had encountered, the Earl replied as follows:

“Johnny and I are only in an employment relationship established through a transaction. This kind of extra task is not part of our agreement. Just having him temporarily handle River Valley County is already quite a stretch.

“However, he is indeed the best candidate for this matter. I can arrange for you to meet him. Whether you can persuade him will depend on you.”

Afterward, the Earl sent people to River Valley County to arrange this meeting.

Bishop Becket also expressed his intention to go along, giving the reason that “if anything goes awry during the talks, at least there’ll be someone to mediate, so you don’t end up getting chopped to pieces.”

To be honest, after Bishop Becket said that, Leon felt even more uneasy.

Soon, the agreed time arrived, and the other party did not make them wait long.

Before long, a burly, middle-aged man with a scruffy beard entered the hall under the butler’s guidance.

The moment he came in, everyone in the room smelled a strong stench of alcohol.

It was as if this middle-aged man had been soaked in a wine barrel until the flavor had seeped into his bones.

Bishop Becket and Leon stood up at the same time.

Bishop Becket spoke first: “Long time no see, Mr. Johnny.”

“Mhm.” Johnny responded casually, then let his gaze fall on Leon.

“You’re the one who wanted to see me, right?”

“Hello, Mr. Johnny, I am—”

Leon had just extended his hand when Johnny raised one hand to stop him.

“Alright, alright, kid. So now you’ve seen me. Can I head back now?”

Leon froze in place for a moment.

“Is this—some kind of local joke?”

Johnny did not look like he was joking.

He genuinely seemed prepared to leave after just meeting once.

“Mr. Johnny, please don’t be like this. This is a negotiation requested by the Earl,” Bishop Becket stepped in.

Johnny sighed impatiently after hearing that.

“Tch. If it weren’t for the Earl asking me to come take a look, I wouldn’t waste my time at all.” Johnny said, fixing his gaze on Leon.

“I already know what this is about. Kid, you want to find someone to kill a Drake in the Labyrinth, right?”

Leon nodded.

“Then you should understand my answer now. I’m not interested.” Johnny spread his hands.

“Just staying in River Valley County is already out of respect for the Earl. Expecting me to clean up someone else’s mess? Sorry, kid. Find someone else.”

Bishop Becket sighed inwardly.

This was the expected outcome.

Johnny’s refusal was extremely decisive, leaving seemingly no room for negotiation.

“The future profits generated by this Labyrinth can allow you to take an appropriate share,” Leon immediately threw out the condition he had prepared.

He had thought this through for a long time.

If this Labyrinth could be suppressed, the target the Earl had set should be achievable—over six million in annual profits.

Even taking just twenty to thirty percent would be quite considerable, and it would be long-term income.

Moreover, if Johnny was willing to join the Labyrinth’s equity, he would become tied to Leon through shared interests, which would be very beneficial for Leon establishing a foothold within the Earl’s sphere of influence.

“Wow, that sounds really nice. But who knows how many years you’ll last in this line of work? Heh, you’re dealing in a business that costs heads.” Johnny still looked uninterested.

“You can also choose a one-time settlement. At the very least, please tell me what kind of conditions would make you willing to consider this,” Leon did not want to give up easily.

Both Bishop Becket and the Earl had said this man could solve the problem, and he was also a former knight order commander.

Leon believed Johnny truly had the ability.

“Conditions? What kind of conditions can you offer?” Johnny let out a snort of laughter and looked down at Leon from above.

“Do you think my people are the same as those disposable, worthless little punks under your command?”

“Mr. Johnny, first of all, I will pay according to conditions you are willing to accept. Second, I do not use people and then discard them,” Leon replied seriously.

“Oh? Sounds like you treat your subordinates pretty well? Quite a few people died when you ran into that Drake this time, didn’t they?” Johnny looked at Leon with mockery.

“Only one died. He was the first to run into the Drake. Another was injured by the Drake’s breath, but his life is not in danger,” Leon answered.

“What a pity. If more people had died, you could’ve saved quite a bit on costs,” Johnny said with a grin, casually pulling out a tin flask and opening it, clearly intending to drink in front of everyone.

Normally, when underworld mercenaries died during missions, if payment was per head, the employer could usually save the fees for those who died.

If payment was per mission, then the surviving members split the reward.

“No. I paid over two hundred thousand in total to the others, and for the one who died, I separately paid one hundred thousand, delivered directly to his family,” Leon replied calmly.

Johnny suddenly stopped bringing the flask to his mouth.

“What did you just say? You paid one hundred thousand Fenni for a dead man?” Johnny suddenly looked at Leon with great interest.

“Was that to thank him for dying so the rest of you could live?”

“I have an agreement with my people. If they die while working for me, I take responsibility for their funeral expenses, and I provide a compensation payment to their designated beneficiary. Their medical and nursing expenses are also borne by me,” Leon answered.

This time, not only Johnny, but even Bishop Becket looked at Leon in surprise.

Even apprentice knights of the Church would not necessarily receive such high compensation upon death.

Johnny blinked as he looked Leon up and down, as if seeing some novel species.

Suddenly, he burst out laughing and slapped the table, roaring with laughter.

“Hahahahaha! Medical expenses? Compensation? Paying death money to a bunch of street punks? Hahaha, incredible—there’s actually someone as stupid as you in this world!! Do you know how easily these people die? If ten of them die, you’ll have to pay a million. Have you done the math?”

Leon watched Johnny laughing uproariously without changing expression and only replied, “Since you’re buying their lives, at the very least you should put up real money.”

The compensation for the fallen and the medical and nursing costs for the injured made up a large portion of this expenditure.

Afterward, when the priest handled the aftermath according to the contract, he repeatedly said things like “See?” to Leon, but Leon did not regret it.

After quite a while, Johnny finally stopped laughing, still smiling as he looked at Leon.

“Kid, do you know that even if you die working for the Church, you wouldn’t get paid that much? You’ve made those little punks’ lives more valuable than your own.”

“That’s the Church’s problem. I once worked for the Church and was injured. The Church dismissed me with a one-thousand-Fenni reward. If I wanted to avoid becoming crippled by my injuries, even donating every coin I earned to the Holy Healing Monastery wouldn’t have been enough. Then the Church would’ve gained one more apostate inquisitor. I don’t want something that ridiculous happening in my organization,” Leon said.

“Ha! On that point, I actually agree! You’re right—everyone in the Church is a bunch of damn bastards!” Johnny suddenly pointed at Leon and grinned, as if he had found common ground.

Leon froze for a moment, thinking that he hadn’t gone that far.

Bishop Becket, standing to the side, looked awkward and could only clear his throat.

“But even if there are a few more apostates, the Church will keep running just fine. Do you really think that by spending a bit more money to buy some loyalty, you can build an organization stronger than the Church?” Johnny asked.

“I’m doing this just so I can live with myself. Since I’ve been drenched in the rain before, I understand how miserable it is for others in the rain. Even if I can’t hold an umbrella for them, I shouldn’t at least snatch away theirs,” Leon replied, looking Johnny in the eye.

Johnny raised an eyebrow and let out a light snort through his nose.

It was unclear whether he agreed or found it laughable.

After a stretch of silence, just as Leon was about to continue discussing the earlier conditions, Johnny suddenly said, “Three million.”

Leon froze.

“What?”

“Three million Fenni. I’ll help you kill that Drake.” Johnny raised three fingers.

While surprised, Leon realized he didn’t have that much money on hand.

“Right now I—”

“You can pay half as a deposit first. Settle the rest within a year. Also, anything valuable in the Labyrinth ruins, we get priority. The Drake’s corpse belongs to us, but you can take the brain and heart to refine Mana,” Johnny lazily laid out the conditions.

“Oh, and one more thing. I take responsibility for my own people. I don’t need you using some compensation money to buy loyalty. Don’t mention that bullshit agreement of yours in front of them. Understood?”

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

## **What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! #Chapter 100 : Mutual Sympathy Between Fools - Read What Witch? A Deadly Apothecary! Chapter 100 : Mutual Sympathy Between Fools**

Chapter 100: Mutual Sympathy Between Fools

Johnny’s conditions made Leon momentarily unable to react.

The price was not low, but it had already been adjusted to fit within what he could bear.

He did not have three million on hand, but one and a half million was entirely affordable, and after a year—once he completed the Earl's quota—he would also be able to pay the remaining balance.

The drake would be killed by Johnny, and it was only reasonable that the drake's corpse and the valuable items within the ruins would belong to him.

What instead seemed rather generous was that Johnny had proactively given up the parts that could be refined into Mana.

The drake's brain and heart could only realize their greatest value in their hands, but even if Johnny had demanded that all refined Mana be handed over to him, Leon would not actually have had much objection.

For Leon, spending three million Fenni to eliminate the drake occupying the Labyrinth—and even being allowed to defer half the final payment—so that his Labyrinth management strategy could proceed smoothly, was already quite a good deal.

He had once seen in the witch's legacy materials held by Rena that the higher the level of a Magical Beast, the greater the amount of Mana that could be refined from it, and the higher the purity generally was.

If this claim was true, then the amount of Mana that could be extracted from that drake should be quite considerable.

For him, it would truly be timely help in completing the Earl's quota.

Yet precisely because of this, he instead felt some confusion.

Why had Johnny, who initially showed little interest in this matter, suddenly agreed—and even adjusted the conditions to accommodate his situation?

While he was still puzzled, Johnny suddenly extended his hand across the table toward him.

“Are you asking me to pay half of the remuneration right now?” Leon was caught somewhat off guard.

“I didn't bring it with me. I'll need to have someone deliver it—”

“It's the map, you idiot!” Johnny said impatiently.

“Haven't you already explored the Labyrinth? I need to know the specific situation inside to make proper arrangements! And tell me the drake's size—otherwise how am I supposed to kill it?”

Leon hurriedly took out the mining map from his person.

Johnny did not even wait for him to agree before pushing the topic forward, as if the matter had already been settled just like that, leaving Leon somewhat unable to keep up with the pace.

He spread the map out on the table and roughly explained to Johnny the specific situation of their previous Labyrinth exploration, including the ruins connected to the mine, the hall deep within that massive space, and the drake entrenched in the hall.

“Lord of the Labyrinth.” After listening, Johnny suddenly uttered this term.

“What?” Leon asked instinctively.

“That ruin must be a temple where the Islanders worshipped Moilai. That drake is definitely the guardian of the temple—a Lord of the Labyrinth summoned by Moilai in response to her followers to protect the temple,” Johnny said with certainty.

Islanders—Leon tried hard to recall the history he had learned in this world.

Three hundred years ago, Islanders had been a heretical nation that existed along the eastern coastline of this continent.

They believed in a special sect.

In addition to the Four Gods of Origin, they also worshipped a heretical deity known as the Earth Mother Goddess.

The sect’s emblem was a pentagram, identical to the emblem commonly used by witches today.

Throughout history, the Islanders and the Noren Empire had never been on good terms.

The Empire’s Church proclaimed that the true identity of the Earth Mother Goddess worshipped by the Islanders was none other than the Primordial Witch Moilai, who hated the Four Gods and humanity, and that their faith was a blasphemy against the Four Gods of Origin.

Three hundred years ago, during a full-scale war, the Empire—at the height of its power—successfully crushed the Islanders, leading to the destruction of their nation.

Legend held that at the time, a portion of the Islander forces escorted the surviving Islander princess across the sea and established a new nation on the archipelago on the other side.

That nation was the present-day heretical country of Moirland, which openly worshipped Moilai alone.

Today, vast stretches of land along the Empire's eastern coast—including River Valley County and South Harbor County—had once been Islander territory.

This naturally also included Arend Island.

"Then will there be anything special inside that temple?" Leon asked tentatively.

"Who knows? But being able to support a drake means the Mana within this Labyrinth should be extremely abundant," Johnny said as he stroked his chin and pondered for a moment.

He then took out a nautical chart of the surrounding area and pointed at Arend Island.

"Tell me the landing point."

"Here. There used to be a dock here, but it's already damaged. There's a mountain path that leads directly to the Labyrinth entrance," Leon said.

"Then gather there tomorrow morning at eight. I'll prepare the equipment and manpower, but at least someone needs to guide the way. And remember to bring the money," Johnny arranged on the spot.

"Tomorrow already—" Leon was somewhat surprised by Johnny's efficiency.

"Do you have any inconvenience?" Johnny snapped back impatiently.

"No. Then tomorrow," Leon replied.

"Then it's settled." Johnny nodded and finally lifted his pewter flask to take a gulp.

Then, seeing Leon still sizing him up, he spread his hands with a baffled expression.

"You can leave now. I didn't prepare to keep you for dinner."

"All right. Then I'll trouble you with this matter, Mr. Johnny," Leon said as he stood up, then glanced at Bishop Beckett.

"You head down the mountain first. I have something I'd like to say to Mr. Johnny," Bishop Beckett said.

"Alright." Leon walked out alone, passed through the courtyard, left the villa, and went down along the mountain path.

“What do you want to say? Did Mastan ask you to pass on some message again?” Johnny glanced at Bishop Beckett.

“The Earl didn’t instruct me to pass on any message. I’m simply personally curious and would like to ask why you suddenly agreed to his request,” Bishop Beckett asked seriously.

He was genuinely curious about the reason.

After all, with Johnny, whether the Earl’s face mattered or not depended entirely on his mood.

“Is that important? Don’t you also want me to handle this? Otherwise, you wouldn’t have come personally, and Mastan wouldn’t have specially had someone meet that kid,” Johnny said.

“If the Earl knew this outcome, he would certainly be surprised. I understand very well why the Earl favors him, but I don’t understand why you also appreciate him so much,” Bishop Beckett said.

“I appreciate him? That kid?” Johnny reacted as if he had heard a joke.

He took another gulp of wine, then lowered his head and stared absently at the mouth of the pewter flask, watching the liquid inside churn.

In his mind suddenly surfaced the raging waves of that day, and one passionate face after another marching toward death.

“It’s nothing more than mutual sympathy between fools—” Johnny suddenly muttered, his voice so low it sounded like he was talking to himself.

“What?” Bishop Beckett asked instinctively.

But Johnny did not continue the topic.

Instead, he said, “Help me tell Mastan this: after I finish handling this matter, I’ll stay in River Valley County for at most another two months. I miss my ship.”

Hearing this, Bishop Beckett smiled faintly.

“Rest assured, Mr. Johnny. Since you’re willing to help him settle this matter, the territory on River Valley County’s side will soon have someone take it over.”

The next day, Arend Island.

Leon stood on the dock waiting, with ten mercenaries serving as guards behind him.

At seven thirty in the morning, the river's morning mist had already thinned considerably.

The rising sun illuminated the water's surface, and faint silhouettes of sailing ships could be seen.

At around seven forty-five, a ship's shadow finally emerged from the morning mist in the northwest, sailing straight toward them and drawing closer and closer to Arend Island.

It was a fairly large armed commercial cargo ship, with rows of broadside gunports arranged along both sides.

The ship was fully under sail and moving quite fast, heading straight for Arend Island from the northwest.

It looked like it had come directly in a straight line from some port in River Valley County.

As Leon watched, he suddenly felt something was off.

He sensed the wind direction and found that the wind was generally blowing westward at the moment, from the sea toward the land.

Yet the direction in which the ship's sails were billowing was almost completely opposite to the current wind.

Was the ship specially constructed, or had someone aboard employed some special power?

While Leon was still speculating, the ship had already approached the damaged dock.

It cautiously dropped anchor at a distance, then lowered three small boats that headed toward the shore.

Leon saw Johnny himself.

He boarded the small boats with five others, and also had people lower two ballistae from the large ship with ropes, placing them onto the small boats, along with several crossbow bolts that looked like whaling harpoons, their tails linked to iron chains.

The three small boats quickly reached shore.

Johnny was the first to disembark, stepping onto the half-destroyed pier.

"Thank you for arriving as agreed, Mr. Johnny," Leon stepped forward to greet him.

“You brought manpower to help me move things? Very good. Then hurry up and help me get the equipment up!” Johnny gestured for Leon’s men to get to work.

Leon turned his head and gave a look, signaling the mercenaries to go help.

“I only found out this morning that this island actually has a lord. Are you sure there won’t be a problem?” Johnny asked casually.

“Viscount Arend will not interfere with matters here. I will handle it properly,” Leon replied.

This time, he had specifically sent a priest to personally lead people to the other side of the island, to Viscount Arend’s territory, informing them that the Church was carrying out a highly critical investigation here and that any unauthorized personnel were strictly forbidden from approaching.

Otherwise, they would bear the consequences.

He also had his own people guarding the nearby mountain paths.

Absolutely no one else would be able to approach this Labyrinth.

“And the money?” Johnny asked again.

“Here.” Leon signaled a subordinate to step forward and open the box.

Inside were neatly stacked Church Gold Vouchers with a total face value of one and a half million.

Johnny merely glanced at it.

Without counting or verifying, he gave a look to someone beside him, who stepped forward and took the box.

“Then lead the way,” Johnny ordered Leon.

“Will you be fighting personally?” Leon sized up the fully armed Johnny.

That day, Johnny was not wearing armor, but a hard long coat coated with a layer of waterproof wax oil, clearly meant to deal with the drake’s acid mist breath.

In addition, he had a sword at his waist and a crossbow on his back.

“Otherwise? There aren’t many people in this world who can kill a Fourth-Level Magical Beast just by bringing along a small squad,” Johnny said in an utterly matter-of-fact tone.

“When you hunt that drake, I would also like to go in—” Leon asked tentatively.

“Don’t worry, there’s no need for you! Just stay in a safe area and wait for everything to be over,” Johnny cut him off before he could finish.

“No, I mean—may I go in as well? Can I observe?” Leon asked.

He was very curious about how Johnny intended to hunt that drake.

His understanding of this world’s transcendent powers was still insufficient, and such an opportunity was rare.

“Do you think this is a sightseeing trip? We’re not your bodyguards, and we won’t guarantee your safety!” Johnny frowned at Leon.

“I will take responsibility for my own safety,” Leon replied seriously.

“Suit yourself. Let’s go,” Johnny snorted.

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