Chapter 17: You Must Act With Integrity!

"…" Remy hesitated a bit, but he ultimately couldn't resist the temptation of having his salary doubled. He ground his teeth before drinking down more than half of the remaining contents of the potion while inwardly hoping, 'Boss, please don't cheat me…'

Before he could even finish his thought, the wound on his hand suddenly itched, and under his amazed gaze, the deep cut quickly healed at a visible speed.

"That healing potion is real!"

Along with Remy's surprised shout, the others also focused on the wound, especially Mason. His mouth was open, and he couldn't seem to close it.

'Fuck, how could a dark red healing potion be truly real? A dark red potion is a failed potion, that's what the Great Alchemist said! This is definitely some sort of trick!'

"How about it, Mage Mason, would you say that our Gilded Rose's healing potion is effective?"

Lin Yun talked in an unhurried voice, but the tone felt ear-piercing in Mason's ears. He thought for a bit and couldn't think of any other explanation for what had happened, so he glared with an angry expression. "Mafa Merlin, you definitely did something! How could a dark red healing potion really work? That must be it, that guy was one of your employees after all, who knows what kind of trick you prepared!"

"True…" After listening to Mason, he nodded and agreed, "This healing potion is being sold by the Gilded Rose and an employee of the Gilded Rose just tested its effects, it does sound a bit too unfair…"

"Good that you know!" Mason cut in.

He didn't expect that before he could even finish his words, a cracking sound came from under his feet.

It was followed by a blood-curdling scream.

A blood-red vine suddenly burst out from under Mason's feet. It was a bright red and carried a dense, bloody smell. That blood-red vine quickly wrapped its way around Mason, starting from his feet up until it covered his whole body. It constricted him very tightly, to the point that no matter how much Mason struggled or screamed, he couldn't stop the viper-like vine…

"The Blood Vines spell!" someone exclaimed from the crowd.

Indeed, the 5th Rank Blood Vines Spell.

This was a truly sinister spell. It was rumored to have come from a demon, and had been created based on the Bloodsucking Vines of the Abyss. This magic created creeping tendrils that were just like the Bloodsucking Vines. Once they coiled around a target, their thorns would enter the target's body and greedily suck out the victim's blood. If the caster didn't stop the spell, the target would eventually be drained until they became a dried corpse.

"Wh-what do you think you are doing!" When he thought about what would happen to him, Mason felt the fear of death for the first time and his voice became hoarse and dry.

"Didn't I just explain? I agreed that having anyone from the Gilded Rose test the effectiveness of the potion is truly unfair. Thus, I believe having Mage Mason display the effects is a lot better." Lin Yun's voice was still perfectly calm. If not for having just seen it with their own eyes, who would have thought that such a gentle young man was using such a sinister spell?

"No! Don't kill me! I will compensate, I'll apologize!!!" To the panicked Mason, this smile was simply more frightening than any evil grin. Mason, who had never met any setbacks, was truly fearing for his life this time. The blood vines around him were coiling even more tightly as sharp thorns kept piercing his skin one after the other, his blood constantly being absorbed by the thorns. Mason already started feeling his body turning cold.

Struggling, screaming, pleading...

Mason looked like a sheep under a butcher's knife. Besides incoherently begging for forgiveness, there were only desperate shrieks and rough breathing.

The subordinates brought by Mason tried to rescue him, but they couldn't break through the blood vines. Even without Lin Yun's direction, those crazily spreading blood vines were keeping them away.

Soon, only a passionate red mass stood out in the room.

Lin Yun unhurriedly remarked, "Mage Mason truly loves making jokes. Why would I kill you? The Gilded Rose is open for business, and customers are kings. Killing is something that would never happen here, we are only having a friendly chat to check the effectiveness of this healing potion."

"Yes, yes! Check, check!" At this time, Mason could only say that much. Let alone testing the sketchy potion, even if Lin Yun made him admit that he was a goblin, Mason wouldn't hesitate at all at this point.

"Good, now we can proceed with the testing." Lin Yun looked at Mason before softly lowering his right hand that had been controlling the Blood Vines Spell. The tyrannical blood vines withdrew underground with a burst of magical fluctuations, disappearing in an instant, as if none of this had ever happened.

It felt as if they had never even been there.

Mason, who had just narrowly escaped death, was the only proof that those tyrannical blood vines truly had appeared. They had tightly coiled around him and pierced his skin with the sharp thorns, leaving numerous small cuts. At this moment, Mason looked as if he had been stung by a hive of bees. Just looking at him made people feel a bit nauseous. Blood was continuously flowing out, and in a short amount of time, a puddle of blood colored the ground.

Mason seemed to be at his last breath as he was laying on the ground. Even if an outstanding doctor saw his condition, he would most likely be shaking his head while sending him home to prepare for his funeral.

Lin Yun put the remaining dregs of the healing potion in front of Mason, and after looking once again to check Mason's wounds, he nodded with satisfaction. "This kind of injury should be convincing enough."

"…" Everyone present, including the young apprentice who had been cut a moment ago, immediately felt cold when they heard that inhuman statement.

"Good, there, Mage Mason, I'll have to trouble you to drink this, let us take a look at the effects."

As Lin Yun supported him, Mason managed, with some difficulty, to right himself. He then struggled to drink what remained of the healing potion. The whole time, Mason didn't dare to look at Lin Yun. Those blood vines had definitely left him thoroughly frightened.

The healing potion once again displayed its miraculous effects. Mason had only just drunk the last gulp, yet the bloody wounds had already started healing, and after no less than half an hour, Mason could be said to be as good as ever before. If not for his whole mage's gown still being in a mess, Mason could almost imagine that everything that had just happened was a nightmare.

An extremely frightening nightmare.

After finally waking from that nightmare, how could he dare to stay in the Gilded Rose? After his injury recovered completely, he was about to leave, crestfallen, with his subordinates…

"Hold on."

But in the end, the nightmarish voice echoed once again, and Mason completely stiffened up.

"Wh-wh-what is it?" Mason managed to get the courage to open his mouth, but his voice was still trembling.

"Mage Mason, isn't this a bit wrong? Didn't we come to an agreement? If this potion had a good effect, you would eat the bottle. Mage Mason, you can't be like this! You must act with integrity!"

"…" Mason's face suddenly froze. Seeing that fist-sized potion bottle, Mason truly felt like his heart was dying.

"How is it, Mage Mason? Are you eating it yourself? Or should I help you?"

"…"

"Bon appétit."