

VILE EVIL HIDES UNDER THE VEIL

Chapter 19: Potioneering!

Eren could see a hint of awkwardness flashed on aunt Nina's face after seeing him. But she quickly masked it with her gracious smile. She greeted him with the same charm Eren had known her for and replied:

"Morning, Erni. This order is placed by the Healer's association exclusively. And yes, they want the first delivery urgently. After I made my report, a quick response team was dispatched by the Healer's association. But the team had a casualty even before they could inspect the forest in depth.

The wild magic beasts came in tides without caring about their species or hierarchy and launched attacks on the quick response team. The beast tide only happens when a high-tier beast is controlling all the beasts in its vicinity.

This had almost confirmed that the forest now had a demon beast. Other teams were also experiencing the same thing at the same time.

But suddenly, since yesterday, all of this has been stopped. There's no beast tide running amok in the forest anymore. Certain possibilities arise for such situations.

First, the demon beast has left the forest without completing his evolution. If it has, we need to locate it before it causes trouble to any other area.

Second, the demon beast has failed its evolution and is now hiding in the forest, isolating itself from the outside world to expedite its recovery.

Third, the demon beast has completed its evolution and left the forest. That means it'll be able to control even more high ranked magic beast. The destruction it can cause will be many times worse.

Fourth, the beast has completed its evolution and is thinking about hiding in the forest before the heat dies down a bit.

We need to dispatch a considerable amount of manpower for all of the cases I've mentioned and those that I haven't. The manpower will include hunters and adventurers across various guilds and organisations."

Nina said all this while ensuring her work does not get hampered. What she didn't know was that the root cause of the whole ordeal was present inside the house, in the form of a coffee mug. But who would tell her that? Eren certainly won't! He just kept a blank face while hearing the hypotheses and let aunt Nina continue further:

"The manpower dispatched for handling a demon beast will need added potions and other equipment. But the sudden spike of demand for these products can't be met with sufficient supplies.

I've already sent my stockpile of potions of all kinds to various organizations. But it's still not enough. Plus, the Osan Healer's association is thinking about creating a potion bank.

In a potion bank, a particular organization buys the potions from potioners in bulk. Then they create an ideal environment using arrays and inscriptions for potions to last much longer than their usual shelf life.

The biggest reason a potioner can't stockpile the potions after a certain amount is because of the potion's shelf life. An individual potioner's reserve potions will always be limited. And a single potioner or a small team of them can't use and maintain arrays and inscriptions to store their potions for extended periods without making a loss.

But with a potion bank, potioners can keep on making potions without any worry. The bank will take care of the shelf life. With a central system, the potion users will have easy access to potions. Everything can get streamlined from there.

The potions bank system is usually followed in big cities. The city of Osan didn't need this facility before. But the presence of the demon beast has rattled the big guns. The kingdom too had approved funds for a new military base near city of Osan and a well-maintained potion bank.

The Osan Healer's association has received the contract from the kingdom. It wants a few of the healers to start making a fresh batch of the potions for the upcoming potion bank.

I've also received the request from the association. Don't worry. I'm almost finished with the first batch. My second batch is due next week because of the rotation system among the list of potioners. For the rest of the week, I can process the potion requests from other organisations at my pace and time."

Nina concluded after giving a detailed explanation to Eren. She thought since he was going to the academy that neared a big city, he should know about concepts like potion banks.

Nina thought Eren must have not heard about them since he seldom left the city of Osan that didn't have many specialized facilities and structures. Compared to those metropolitan cities, the city of Osan was a backwater town.

Eren of course knew about potions banks and more from his previous life. But he still listened to his aunt keenly. It is always a good choice to listen more and speak less when you have so many things to hide.

Eren asked if he could help Nina and she told him to have breakfast first before pitching in.

It wasn't like Eren didn't know about potioneering. Aunt Nina had taught him the basics. Plus, in his past life, Eren had taken various courses related to potion-making while he was in the academy.

Part of the reason why Eren didn't excel in battles after getting out of the academy was that he had focused on potion-making and ignored battle oriented courses. But due to an incident, he had to drop the idea of making a career in potion-making. He also stopped visiting aunt Nina because of the same reason, thinking the latter would criticise him after knowing about the incident.

Eren had taken a liking to potioneering, thanks to aunt Nina. She was a huge influence on him. He had liked her, so liking what she did for a living was also natural. And he had good talent in the skill to make a career out of it.

But the 'incident' closed the doors of Eren becoming successful as a potioneer for good. In his past life, Eren had been caught between a rock and a hard place because of this situation. He couldn't make a penny out of the job he was good at and was forced to do the job he sucked most at and had no real experience in. Even his status as a LA academy pass-out couldn't rescue him up from his cycle of misery.

That incident had the biggest impact on Eren's life, both financially and emotionally. He took the drinking to curb the feeling of being dejected and unsuccessful. Things only went downhill for him from that point.

In this life, Eren will make sure to fry the balls of the perpetrators that caused that incident before he let the same thing happen to him. He'll fry their balls even if they were to act differently in this time as an act of revenge for giving him those mental scars that have accompanied him in this life as well.

Coming back to the present. Eren had his breakfast and then wore an apron just like aunt Nina. He secured his hands with gloves before starting to help her.

Nina observed that Eren's skills had improved. He could do most things without her instructions now. And his timing was near perfect as well. Nina was impressed with this young and budding potioneer.

Eren had told her that he too would take courses related to potioneering after enrolling into the academy. At first, aunt Nina was sceptical. But after looking at Eren's performance now, she could conclude that it was indeed the right decision. She too will be able to help him a lot if he becomes a potion master.

Eren decided to further his cause while aunt Nina was paying so much attention to him. He had already impressed her with the skills he had shown so far. Of course, he could take things up a notch with potion making, but that would be too hard to believe for aunt Nina. He had shown her just enough to impress her while keeping things in check.

Now it was time to show Nina something else! Eren purposely went to aunt Nina's desk and acted as if he was looking for an ingredient he couldn't find on his own.

Aunt Nina didn't object. Potion making was a dynamic process. The type of ingredients used to make a particular potion was fixed but the quantities of the ingredients weren't. It means at a particular point, a potion can get unstable on its own without any external interference. A potioneer had to adjust the quantities of the ingredients accordingly mid-process to stabilize it or use an apt stabilizing agent that normally wouldn't be part of the original recipe.

A standardized recipe of a potion was based on ideal environments. It assumed every ingredient to be of certain value, shape, size, and temperature. It also assumed a fixed environment with no ambient room temperature and mana fluctuations.

But real-life potion-making couldn't meet every parameter set by the standardized recipe. That's why a potion would get stabilized. Introducing a

stabilizing agent would turn the effectiveness of the potion down a notch. That's why potioners were tasked with adjusting the quality, quantity, drop-rate, time of introduction, and many such minute aspects of the process in real-time as per their situations.

Potion making was a science that bordered the realm of art. A successful potioner would develop their individual ways of making potions that would be different from standardized practices.

These modifications to the original recipe found after a lot of R&D will be their assets in the field. They won't share it with anybody other than their disciples and family members.

Of course, the modified recipes only worked under certain conditions that's why they weren't ideal for everybody. But if they suited the ingredients you get supplied with, one could avoid wasting years spent in doing R&D.

That's why the potioners were most concerned about not letting their modified recipes get released outside their inner circle. Just like aunt Nina, they would avoid hiring any domestic or lab help. And would take in contract-bound disciples instead that can help them in their work while ensuring their secrets stay as secrets.

That's the reason it wasn't an odd sight when a potioner getting into their zone would run across their labs always looking for something or the other when their potion pool showed first signs of being destabilized. Nina too would occasionally go to Eren's table to take some ingredients from him.

But then she observed Eren had not got back to his table even after taking the ingredients off of hers. She felt puzzled and turned around only to see a mesmerized Eren. He still had the ingredients in his hand but apparently, he had stopped caring about them or his potion pool.

Eren was looking at something with absolute interest. Therefore he didn't realize that aunt Nina had turned around.

That's right. Eren was looking at her butt!

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Author's Note: Hello. This chapter gives a detailed introduction to this world's potion-making. Some readers might feel like it's dragging the storyline or see

it as some info dump. But I felt it was necessary to do that now because Eren's plans and his career will revolve around the subject.

Plus, the chapter has also served as an explanation behind why Nina preferred not having house help. I'll try to compress such explanations to a concise level OR make them multi-purpose explanations as I did here, to keep the flow of the storyline maintained.

Rest assured, the 'incident' that happened with Eren will be revealed once the novel enters the academy arc. ?