

Chapter 11 - Beautification Potion

"With that said, the ingredients for this potion..."

"Can you really make such a magic potion if you've got those ingredients?"

"It sounds fairly suspicious..."

Candy-dono immediately restarted the activity of our party as soon as he came back from his grandfather's funeral. It's good to get going again, but...he's picked up a very shady job this time. Candy-dono explains to us that it's a job where the client wants us to fetch the ingredients for a special, magic potion allowing you to turn into a handsome man or beautiful woman by all means, and that they'll pay a considerable amount of money for those ingredients.

"It's shady as hell."

"Is it a scam?"

"I hate to say this, but our job is to gather the ingredients for that potion and hand them over to the client. Once we give him the items requested, it's not our cup of tea if the client fails to combine them into a potion or if the result doesn't show the desired effect."

"You're quite blunt about this..."

"I mean, we don't have any responsibility for the client's potion production technique, do we?"

"No, we don't. It'll be our fault if we pick the wrong medicinal plants, but if we deliver the correct ingredients, the rest will be out of our hands. Right, Dalton?"

"...*nod*"

I guess Boltor-dono and Dalton-dono agree with accepting this request.

"The requested ingredients...are valuable medicinal plants that can only be found fairly deep in the mountains. They're rather rare, so they'll earn us some good money if we find them. Or rather, it'd be smarter to use them for other medicines. It's plain obvious that medicine to turn one into a handsome man or beautiful woman is completely lust-driven."

He's right. I also feel like it'd be much more reasonable to use those ingredients for medicines to cure serious illnesses or heavy injuries. Even if you don't artificially prettify a person's looks, they can still lead a normal life.

"Anyway, all will be fine as long as we pick up those special plants for the client."

"Understood."

"Okay, I understand."

"Just treat it as a regular job."

Adventurer might be a profession where you're free to do as you like, but it's not like you can afford to be too picky about the jobs. Twilight of Dawn heads towards a remote monster domain where the requested plants grow natively.

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"Ahh, thanks a lot. This is just what I wanted."

"It's great that we managed to find them."

"I'll add them to the magic potion right away."

As we moved to the area where the plants grow in the wild, we got worn out from all the battles with monsters that came to attack us, but we still succeeded in gathering the required medicinal plants. We immediately went back to get the client's reward, but the meat and crafting materials we looted from the monsters actually earned us more money than the reward for the plants.

Candy-dono usually lets us gather experience on expeditions which would earn us some cash while also training us. Looking at it like that, he's a man with an extraordinary talent in training young adventurers.

"A magic potion to prettify a man or woman, was it? Hmm..."

"Boltor-san, my name is Beckenbauer. I'm a magician focusing on research at the Sorcery Guild."

Mr. Beckenbauer looks like he's in the second half of his twenties, and gives off the feeling of still being young for a magician. Since the amount of his mana rivals that of Bruno, he should also be able to make a living as an adventurer.

"My main research subject revolves around the improvement of magic crests."

"Magic crests?"

"Correct, Bruno-kun. I'm researching how to create a standardized magic crest that can use specific spells by just pouring mana into it without having to rely on the senses and imaginations of individual magicians."

I see. As a magician who seems to be in the Sorcery Guild, he's truly considering various aspects.

"That is an amazing research subject."

"No doubt, but this research takes time and effort. Because it's extremely difficult to achieve results, I also do other research with the aim of finding sponsors. Normally, magic potions are outside my field of expertise. But, look, it's normal for nobles, who are ignorant of the world and don't understand magic, to believe that all researchers in the Sorcery Guild are the same. Also, no matter what kind of magic potion it might be, it's impossible to turn a human into a pretty woman or handsome man all of a sudden. Since other researchers have failed with this several times already, it won't be much of a problem even if I fail as well. As long as I can get some funds with this, it'll also be of advantage for my research on magic crests."

"You're way too frank about this." Boltor-dono comments.

Even so, Mr. Beckenbauer is quite sarcastic. Or rather, he's too openhearted...

"Is this magic potion going to fail as well then?"

"That's not what I've said. Since I've accepted the job, I'll properly compound it. Since I'll also be able to obtain more funds for my own research if it succeeds, I'll try my best as it also serves as a means to kill some time."

As he sure doesn't mince his words, I wonder whether he isn't getting alienated within the Sorcery Guild.

"All that's left is to grind these plants well and add them to the potion I contorted in advance. Do you want to watch?"

"Why not. I've got some spare time anyway."

Since we have nothing else planned for today, Candy-dono answers that he'll watch the completion of the magic potion. The rest of us have nothing planned either, so we decide to stay since we're curious.

Mr. Beckenbauer leads us to his laboratory. The place is filled with decorations of many magic crests and unfinished crests that have been recorded on framed pictures. The big table in the room is littered with beakers and flasks filled with magic potions of all sorts of colors.

"You do have lots of various stuff in here."

"There's also obviously failed products. But, the real deal is over here." Mr. Beckenbauer points at a bright red, potion-like liquid contained within a beaker.

"This?"

"After carefully grinding the medicinal plants and adding them to this, I'll mix all of it well, and once the sediment has settled down within the mixture, it'll be done."

If it succeeds, it'll make men handsome and women beautiful, huh?

Boltor-dono stares at the red liquid with suspicion clearly coloring his eyes.

"It'd be great if it succeeds, but it's not like I'm harboring any exaggerated expectations. I'm just making a prototype since I've received money for it. In the first place, it's about high time for the idiot, who continues to make the same request to many researchers, to give up on this, but he's quite tenacious about this. Even if he turns into a handsome man, he still won't have any chance with the women because of his lacking character."

Yep, as expected, Mr. Beckenbauer does have a sharp tongue.

"Now then, I'm adding this..." Mr. Beckenbauer grinds the plants properly, and pours the pulp into the beaker with the red liquid.

Thereupon, the liquid gradually begins to emit smoke and bubbles.

"Is it fine like this?"

"Who knows?"

"You're the creator here..."

"I don't know what the end result is supposed to look like since it's never succeeded so far."

Hmm, that makes sense...but, if Mr. Beckenbauer is the one saying that, I feel like it's problematic on various levels...

"But, it looks like we can place some hope into this. When I asked my colleagues, who had failed before, about it, they never told me anything about it fuming and foaming in such a way. Maaan, I got to say, being talented sure is scary."

As I'm looking at Mr. Beckenbauer who's already praising himself while certain that it's succeeded, I somehow feel uneasy...

"Mr. Beckenbauer, hasn't the amount of smoke and foam become quite astonishing? It's gradually increasing in volume."

"That's because it's a special magic potion. It probably won't succeed unless you can see that much of a change."

Mr. Beckenbauer is saying some carefree stuff as usual, but once I look behind me, I realize that Boltor-dono and Dalton-dono have already escaped from this room. Is this what you call the intuition of veteran adventurers?

"Bruno, isn't this getting dangerous?"

"Maybe..."

"I'm not feeling so sure about this either."

The liquid in the beaker continues to produce so much smoke that it becomes increasingly difficult to see anything, and its burbling is gradually becoming very loud.

"Candy-dono."

"Let's get out of here!"

Following Candy-dono's order, Bruno and I try to leave the laboratory, but then I realize that Mr. Beckenbauer, the one responsible for this, has followed the other two earlier and vacated this place in advance.

"Just what has happened to his confidence from before?"

"Whatever, let us run away from here!"

However, it looks like we've been a moment too late. Suddenly the entire laboratory is filled with smoke, and after we breathe in some of it, we faint on the spot. As expected, the magic potion must have failed.



"Ugh..."

"That sucked."

"No kidding."

How long have we been out? When I opened my eyes, the red liquid in the beaker was already gone. I suppose it has evaporated after all of it turned into smoke.

In addition, it seems like we lost consciousness only for a moment. Mr. Beckenbauer, Boltor-dono, and Dalton-dono immediately rushed into the room.

"Oh noes...the magic potion is completely gone with all of it having turned into smoke, huh...? I wonder how I should deceive that idiot of a noble."

"""""" ... """"""

Mr. Beckenbauer laments over his potion having evaporated rather than worrying about us. I had expected as much to some degree, but as usual, he's foulmouthed, or rather, self-centered...

"In a certain sense, he has that typical disposition of a researcher..."

It's as Candy-dono says. I wonder if researchers won't accomplish anything if they aren't selfish to such an extent?

"Well, it's fine since we've still got some of the medicinal plants left. I guess I'll mix an appropriate potion so that it won't turn out like this next time..."

"That man is truly unbelievable..."

Regardless of whether he succeeded or not, he wants to hand the noble something close to a finished magic potion to cover the expenses for his magic crest research with the reward. Bruno is flabbergasted by that man's blunt way of speaking and acting.

"Come to think of it, we've ended up breathing in a full dose of that smoke, but it has no effect whatsoever?"

"It doesn't look like we got injured."

Us losing consciousness lasted only a moment, so there should be no external wounds.

We begin to check ourselves for injuries, but at the same time I start to feel some indescribable feeling of discomfort.

""...""

"What's wrong, Boltor, Dalton?"

Which reminds me, the two have remained quiet ever since entering the laboratory together with Mr. Beckenbauer. Looking at us, they seem so surprised that they've become lost for words.

"Boltor-san?"

"Dalton-dono?"

"You see...I'd like you three to stay calm and listen, okay? Haven't you guys turned into women?"

"Haha, why would I be a woman...huh?"

Just for caution's sake, Bruno tries to touch his own chest, but he stops moving just like that, sinking into silence.

"Klimt, try to touch your own chest."

"I'm a descendant of the Armstrong House. Our family's men are all blessed with bulky chests by birth, but chests and boobs are different..."



When I touch my chest as told by Bruno, I feel an elasticity that isn't supposed to be there. Just like him, I don't know what to think of this.

"Why does my chest feel so soft?"

"Because of that potion?"

"This is an effect I hadn't expected at all. That's my brilliance for you."

"Listen buddy, if you don't give it a rest, you're in for a rough time, okay?"

"...*nod*"

Mr. Beckenbauer, who created a potion that turns a man into a woman instead of one beautifying a woman or a man, admires his own talent, but gets rebuked by Boltor-dono and Dalton-dono for his imprudence.

"My dream has come true at long laa——ast! I have become a gi——irl!"

Moreover, just one person rejoices from the bottom of his heart over having turned into a woman — Candy-dono.

