

Stay At home 141

Chapter 141: I Knew You Wanted To Sell Yourself Too

All Mag could do was not to curse as he looked at the four upgrading choices in his head.

He suddenly realized why the system put the “Gokuraku Jodo” in the playlist. It was after his money.

And it was very smooth about it. It was an elaborate way to get money.

“System, how can you sleep at night?” Mag said, fighting to crush out his anger.

“I don’t need to sleep,” the system answered calmly, trying to keep smugness out of its voice.

“Yes, that figures,” Mag said scornfully. “What’s the fifth one?”

“Only four upgrading choices are available.”

“What if this holographic projection device isn’t good enough for me?”

“How much are you willing to pay?” the system asked tentatively.

“That depends on your product,” Mag said, giving a faint smile.

“The fourth one is the best you can get for now.”

“I made over 1,500 gold coins yesterday.”

“Tell me your requirements, and I’ll make the rest happen as long as they don’t violate the three rules,” the system said cheerfully.

“Good. I’m happy with your service.”

“That’s why I’m here,” the system said. “To provide you with great service.”

“Wonderful. I want you to install artificial intelligence in this music box. I want it to be even more intelligent than you,” Mag said.

The system fell silent. At last it said, “Do not question my intelligence. I know almost everything about anything, and I’m still learning. I’m like a god in this world. I can—”

“How much is a system like you gonna cost?” Mag interrupted.

“More than 100 million gold coins, I think,” the system said uncertainly after thinking for a moment.

“Can I sell you?” asked Mag.

“...”

Its silence was longer than the one before. “How dare you talk to me like that?!” the system roared.

“Who could afford to buy me? Even if they could, half the earnings must go to me!”

“I knew you wanted to sell yourself too!”

The system fell silent again.

Its silence spoke volumes. It was a system without any honor.

"I've said it before, but I feel the need to say it again," the system said solemnly. "I'm a respectable system. God created me to appease those cooks and supervise you. You should try your best to unlock all the dishes and make them popular in this world. Become a God of Cookery so that all those experiences from countless cooks would not go in vain."

Mag didn't want to listen to its complaints. He frowned. "I'd like the fourth one, but 200 gold coins is too expensive."

"That's where you're wrong," the system said. "This holographic projection device is very advanced. The projected 3-D image looks almost real. It would cost you 500 gold coins if it were not a prototype."

Mag took a look at Amy and Yabemiya, who were gazing at the little elf doing its weird dance. "190, and you can take back your first upgrade," he said without hesitation.

"I'm afraid I can't take back the first upgrade, since you have had it for over three days."

"I don't care," Mag said calmly. "They never knew how to dance to this song. They like the dance as it is."

"190 gold coins has been deducted. The upgrade will take 20 minutes. When do you want me to do it?"

"30 minutes later," Mag answered. Amy and Yabemiya were dancing weirdly and adorably.

Even the Ugly Duckling was kicking its legs to the beat on the chair.

Amy was very absorbed in her dance, her little white hands waving, her short legs dancing to the beat. Her cuteness brought a smile to Mag's face.

200 gold coins was too much for a music box.

But if the music box was for Amy, it was a different story.

It was even a bargain if it could make Amy happy.

Mag expected to earn more today. He had saved 5,000 gold coins, and he would be able to buy his first 0.5 strength in a few days. He might also finish his mission of getting 1,000 customers by then.

Mag didn't want to waste another breath on the system after the deal was done. He went off to clean the restaurant as he saw the young waitress was lost in her dancing.

Yabemiya noticed her lapse when the dance was over. "I'm sorry, Boss," she said, abashed, hurriedly walking over to Mag.

"It's okay. Go dance some more," Mag said, smiling.

Yabemiya shook her head. "No. I can dance after working hours." She took the rag from Mag, and started clearing tables.

“Father, dance with me! It’s so interesting!” Amy said merrily, dragging Mag by the hand towards the counter.

Chapter 142: You’ll Be Fat As Hell In No Time

Dancing was never Mag’s thing—just like singing. He tried some dance moves and gave up quickly. He took a seat and watched Amy dance, smiling all the while.

Amy had to have got her dancing talent from her mother too. Her dance moves might be childish, but she was a quick learner. She looked so cute dancing with her short arms.

She was learning from a lame dancer right now; her moves would become much better when her teacher was replaced by a 3-D dancer.

The chair was not big enough for the kitten to dance on, so it slid down along a chair leg, ran to Amy, and jumped excitedly around her.

“Ugly Duckling, I think you can eat tofu pudding today,” Mag said to his frolicking cat.

“Meow!” the kitten said as it looked back at Mag as if it had understood, its sapphire eyes shining with excitement. It rushed to Mag and brushed its head against his leg.

Amy stopped dancing. “Father, Ugly Duckling can eat tofu pudding now?” she asked, surprised.

Mag nodded with a smile. “Yes. It grows faster than normal cats,” he said. *It looks like it’s already one month old. Cats here are truly different.*

“But we don’t have any tofu pudding left, do we?”

“The leftover tofu pudding should be enough for it.” Mag had put it into the thermal container. It might not be as tasty as when it was fresh, though. He walked towards the kitchen.

“Meow, meow, meow!” Ugly Duckling jumped happily around the room. It stopped at the kitchen door, staring at Mag, excited.

Mag looked back at its expectant face. *Which flavor will it like?* He thought a moment, bought two shallow red-and-blue bowls from the system, and filled each with one flavor.

Mag might consider it a family member, and it might be very clean since they often washed it, but he would never let it eat at their table or use their tableware. Customers would find it unacceptable too.

Which will it prefer? wondered Amy as she looked at the steaming tofu pudding in Mag’s hands.

Yabemiya stopped working, and walked over to them curiously.

“Meow, meow!” The kitten stared at the two bowls in Mag’s hands and swallowed. It had waited this moment far too long. It was a dream come true for it. It stood on its hind legs in excitement, but they were not strong enough yet. It fell hilariously on its back.

“Look how stupid you are! Maybe the fall will make you more stupid, and I’ll get rid of you,” Amy said in disgust.

“Meow...” Ugly Duckling got up right away. It rubbed against Amy’s leg, and then looked up with expectation at the two bowls in Mag’s hands.

Mag put the two bowls down on the ground beside the counter. “Eat here. Do not overturn the bowls or scatter your food everywhere,” he warned.

The kitten nodded. “Meow, meow!” It had understood his words. Its eyes went wide as it looked at the tofu pudding. It sniffed at the left one first, and then the right one, as if considering which one to eat.

Mag and the two girls were staring at it with rapt attention, waiting.

“I like the sweet one,” Yabemiya said quietly.

“The savory one is more flavorful and appetizing,” Mag said with a smile.

“Both the sweet one and the savory one are delicious. You should eat the savory one first, and then the sweet one,” Amy suggested.

Ugly Duckling was too overwhelmed by the pleasant smell to hear them. It deliberated for a while, and licked the golden-red syrup.

“Meow!” it cried in excitement, eyes shining, and quickly got back to its syrup and tofu pudding. It was eating happily with a soft sound. The sweet smell floated in the air.

“It prefers the sweet one!” Yabemiya said, excited.

“I wouldn’t be so sure,” Mag said calmly.

After a while, Ugly Duckling rested its head on the bowl’s edge, and wrapped its two front legs around the bowl. It had found a much more comfortable eating position.

“Ugly Duckling, you’re so gluttonous and lazy, you’ll be fat as hell in no time,” Amy said helplessly.

Nine out of ten orange cats are fat, and the remaining one is very fat. Mag shook his head, watching his lazy cat. *Black Coal might’ve been right when he said it will get fat.*

Ugly Duckling raised its head after it finished eating everything in the bowl. Its face was messy. It licked its mouth, and turned to look at the other bowl.

Mag took a look at the bowl. Not even a trace of syrup was left.

He had thought it would walk towards the savory one, but it seemed it didn’t want to stand up. It moved over to the second bowl, dragging its hind legs. Then it wrapped its front legs around the bowl, and started eating again. It liked the savory one as much as the sweet one by the look of it.

Amy laughed. “Looks like it likes them both too. Only, it prefers to eat the sweet one first,” she said happily, and crouched down to touch its head. She was pretty satisfied with its performance.

It likes them both? Yabemiya was a little disappointed.

Smiling, Mag shook his head. *I should have seen that coming. Orange cats aren’t picky with food.* He could totally live with that since his daughter also liked both kinds of tofu. Seeing that Amy was playing

with the kitten, Mag took the music box in his hand, and said, "I'll make some alterations to the music box for you, Amy."

Chapter 143: App Store Is Now Open

"Alterations?" Amy's eyes flicked from Mag to the music box, and back again. "But I like the Mushroom Fairy. Will anything bad happen to her?"

Mag shook his head with a smile. "No. Instead, she'll become a more wonderful dancer than she is now, and she'll be able to teach you how to dance. She'll have more pretty clothes." Apparently, Amy had already bonded with the toy.

Amy's face lit up immediately. "For real? But how long will it take?"

Yabemiya was also very excited. *I can't wait to watch her dance again!*

Mag nodded. "About 30 minutes. Why don't you go play with Ugly Duckling? I'll give it back to you when it's ready." Then he walked upstairs with the music box.

The update would take 20 minutes, but Mag wanted to make sure the music box had nothing inappropriate for Amy.

The kitten gave a belch after finishing the savory tofu pudding. it rolled on its back and showed its white round belly, narrowing its eyes in satisfaction.

Amy pulled it by the ear. "Get up! Don't lie down after eating!"

"Meow..." the kitten said lazily. It brushed its little head against Amy's foot, and found a more comfortable position.

Amy frowned, taking her hand away. Suddenly, her eyes brightened up. "Sorry, I should let you get fat. The fatter, the tastier..."

The kitten seemed to have understood. It rolled back to its feet hurriedly, walking around the room. "Meow, meow!" it said to Amy, trying to prove it didn't want to get fat.

Amy shook her head, and smiled a dangerous smile. "No, you ought to lie down."

Ugly Duckling raised its voice. "Meow!" It started running.

Mag shook his head with a smile as he saw this, walking downstairs. *Poor cat...*

The system was altering the music box, so Mag went into the kitchen to knead dough. He didn't need to clean the restaurant or buy milk for the kitten, and he had two ovens now, so he could prepare more bai ji bread.

When the system told him the new music box was ready, Mag washed his hands, and started up the stairs. Amy, Yabemiya, and the kitten stopped what they had been doing, and watched him with great expectation.

Mag went upstairs, and took the music box out. It didn't look too different, only higher. The elf was gone, and so was the layer of white particles. He could see several red dots on its floor.

On the side of its base was a four-inch touch screen. Apparently, he didn't need to push buttons anymore.

"The update is complete. The dancer is the same elf as you requested. I have given you 10 sets of clothes for free. You can buy more if you want—"

"Wait a sec!" Mag interrupted. "What is Miracle Nikki doing on my music box?! You plan to trick Amy into spending money on your stupid clothes! And you call yourself a respectable system!"

"Miracle Nikki is nothing compared to my work. The clothes are abundant and beautiful, the special effects are stunning, and the holographic device will show all the details of the clothes. It will give players unparalleled experience," the system explained proudly.

"I want a parent mode on this thing. And I don't want to see any ads, or you have to give me a full refund," Mag said coolly.

"This is child abuse! You will kill your girl's nature!" the system protested.

Mag's mouth twisted in distaste. "No, unscrupulous businessmen like you are killing children's nature. I don't recall playing Arena of Valor every day when I was young."

The system refused to give up that easily. "Maybe we should let the girl decide."

"Or maybe I should demand a full refund."

"Fine. All the pop-up ads are gone. Parent mode is on," the system said disappointedly.

Mag nodded. "I won't find anything like 'Ifuudoudou' on it, I hope?"

"Why are you so against 'Ifuudoudou'? It is another form of art. Many people have poured their hearts into it—"

"How many dance songs are on this thing?" Mag interrupted. *Why doesn't it understand that some things are not for children?*

"Sorry. Too many dance songs might have too much impact on this world, so only 'Gokuraku Jodo' is available right now. The second dance song will be unlocked after your daughter masters this one. You can see all the 30 nursery rhymes in the song list."

It was all Mag could do not to throw the music box away. *Devious bastard.* He turned it on, and found several links on the screen: clothes, dances, songs, etc.

Mag tapped "songs", and found them quite normal. The first one was "A Little Girl With Mushrooms", and then "Brother John", "Duckling"... They were all very popular.

Suddenly, an ad popped up, saying, "App Store is now open, and offers many holographic game apps and gamepads."

Chapter 144: She Has Brought Her IQ Down To Her Level
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The atmosphere froze. Mag lifted an eyebrow as he looked at the pop-up ad. Part of him wanted to yell at the system, but another part wanted to laugh.

For a while, the system said nothing. Finally, it said in an embarrassed voice, "My bad..." Then the ad disappeared.

Mag shook his head, and sighed silently. It's really all about money. It must have forgotten why it is here. I don't know if it's a good or bad thing. Still, holographic games might be interesting.

Mag wasted no time before going downstairs. The two little things were still waiting.

"Where is the Mushroom Fairy, Father?" Amy asked nervously as she walked quickly up to Mag, staring at the empty music box.

Ugly Duckling stopped running, lay down on the ground, and started panting.

I will never eat this much ever again! it thought to itself.

Yabemiya walked over to them, confused. Mag said he would make the elf even more wonderful, but where is it now?

Of course, she was sure that Mag would never lie to Amy; it was just she didn't know how to explain to herself what she was seeing. Would he conjure up the elf out of thin air?

"Don't worry, and don't blink. Prepare to be amazed." Mag didn't explain. He put the music box on the table, and tapped an icon on the screen.

Amy and Yabemiya were gazing at the music box with wide eyes, excited. Even the kitten was looking up as if wondering what would happen.

The lamps seemed to have been replaced by smaller versions of stage lamps.

With a clear "ding-dong", all the lamps came on. Colorful lights moved across the glass ball, and focused in the middle.

"Ding!"

Then, all the lights became one and exploded like fireworks in a spectacular display!

"Wow!"

Amy and Yabemiya exclaimed at the same time. Their eyes lit up. They had never seen anything like this before. The lights were even more beautiful than those on the Peace Memorial Day.

After the explosion, the lights didn't disappear, but gathered together and exploded again.

Finally, the lights were gone, and a beautiful blond elf appeared, with long eyelashes, pretty eyes, slim legs, and a knee-long silver dress. She nodded with a smile. "I'm Annie. Nice to meet you."

"It's amazing!" Amy said, clapping her hands. She walked around the table, her mouth open. The elf looked so real right now. Her skin was white and shining, and she smiled so naturally, just like a real elf would smile.

Yabemiya looked confused as well as surprised. She's so cute! But did he summon it by magic? The lights might be used for the magic, but she looks so real, and she can talk!

Ugly Duckling, which had been lying on the ground, got back to its feet quickly, and walked curiously over to them, craning its neck to get a better look.

"No, you're not Annie. You're Mushroom Fairy," Amy said as she realized, shaking her head.

The little elf cast a confused look at Amy.

Impressive! Mag thought as he stared at the elf. The 3-D holographic technology was pretty advanced in his past life. One of Luo Tianyi's concerts had used this technology before.

The system had done a great job. The definition of the image was excellent; even subtle expressions were so clear.

The elf might not be as intelligent as the system, but it was smart enough.

Also, it could become smarter through learning. Mag might've found the system admirable if it were not a money-grubber.

The 20,000 copper coins seem worth it. I'm looking forward to the holographic games. Mag smiled as he looked at Amy's cheerful face.

"Mushroom Fairy is your real name, not Annie. You must have forgotten," Amy said solemnly.

The little elf looked more confused now. "I have forgotten my name?"

"Yes. You're Mushroom Fairy," Amy said with iron certainty, giving a solemn nod.

"I'm Mushroom Fairy?"

Amy nodded. "You are."

The little elf gave a nod. "Hi, I'm Mushroom Fairy."

"You have finally remembered!" Amy said merrily, clapping her hands.

Mag gave a strange look as he watched the elf who had been brainwashed by Amy. Amy has brought her IQ down to her level.

Yabemiya's mouth opened and closed. She didn't believe what she was seeing. She didn't say anything, though, since the elf seemed pretty happy with her new name.

"Okay. Do you want to learn how to dance?" Mag said, and was about to tap the screen.

"Only 'Gokuraku Jodo' is available right now. Do you want to learn this one?" asked the little elf.

"Yes!" Amy and Yabemiya said simultaneously, gazing at the elf with a surprised look. She can understand our words!

“Well, you have to find an open space about 3 meters square so that you won’t bump into anything while learning,” Mushroom Fairy said with a smile. “Let me show you how to dance to this song first.”

The music started, and the elf began dancing in her silver dress.

No one else has ever watched an elf dance to this song, I think... He looked at the graceful dancer, and nodded. “Not bad.”

Chapter 145: Maybe They Drug Their Food

Mag watched five times before he went back to working in the kitchen.

This new dancer made the old one look like a joke. Moreover, she taught in a methodical way and followed their progress. Although she couldn’t correct their dance moves, she was no less a professional dancing master.

Yabemiya moved two tables aside to make enough space for them to dance on, and pulled down the shades to block unwanted eyes.

She was a little embarrassed to dance in front of Mag at first, but the look he gave her was as gentle as the one he gave his daughter. She grew used to it quickly, and lost herself in the dance.

Their spirit infected the kitten. It was jumping and running, more willingly than when it had been forced to run.

Life is more than just work, Mag thought as he watched Yabemiya, who was struggling to copy the elf’s movements. He smiled. *Hope she can walk out of her past and find happiness here.*

At lunch, Mag made some Yangzhou fried rice, and chopped a piece of stewed meat for Ugly Duckling.

Mag had been worried that the cat might not like the food, but it sniffed at it, meowed happily, and dug in. It shoved its head into the plate and ate hungrily.

Orange cats are indeed gluttonous, Mag thought, and started eating.

“Dancing is interesting, Father,” Amy said merrily, taking a large bite of roujiamo. “I want to learn more in the afternoon.”

Yabemiya was also looking expectantly at Mag with a roujiamo in her hand. Her face was still red from dancing for two hours. She might look a little tired, but she felt terrific.

Mag nodded with a smile. “Sure. But you have to wait till all the customers are gone. They don’t like to be disturbed while eating,” he said. *Amy would begin her lessons with Krassu tomorrow.*

“Thank you, Father!” Amy said cheerfully.

Yabemiya smiled. Her golden tail wagged in excitement.

Mag took a bite of his roujiamo. *She’ll study under Krassu three days, then under Urien also for three days, and rest one day.*

Amy would eat her meals in the restaurant and have some rest at lunch hours. Mag liked this way of teaching.

He didn't worry that her teachers would be too strict or about the risks involved in studying magic, since the two old men were looking for every opportunity to criticize each other.

"Meow, meow..."

Ugly Duckling finished its meal in a short while. It licked its greasy lips, and raised its head to meow at Mag, not quite satisfied.

Mag had started to grow on it since he made it food.

Amy turned to the kitten with a smile. "I can give you some from my plate if you want."

Ugly Duckling looked up at Amy incredulously.

Amy continued, "The more you eat, the faster you grow. And then..."

The kitten backed away from her hurriedly, shaking its head.

Mag took a look at the two empty plates. *It should be enough for such a small cat. Its appetite is incredible. It will get fat if nothing is done about it.*

Fortunately, we have Amy.

After lunch, Yabemiya cleared the table. Mag took a look at the time, and went to open the shades. His eyes went wide.

The line had reached as far as the green belt in the square. Mag counted more than 100 people.

Everyone was waiting in the line: demons, humans, dwarves, orcs, and elves. It was unprecedented.

Some wanted to knock at the door, but when they saw the fearsome orcs and people from the Gray Temple waiting patiently in the line, they thought better of it.

Several restaurateurs came together, and looked at those people.

"I never saw anything like this in the Aden Square before! Impressive!" said a woman in a flowered apron.

"You can say that again. Also, that one is only several days old! We have opened here for dozens of years!" a balding man said, scratching his greasy head in confusion.

"Just a thought, but could it be that they are drugging their food?" a skinny old man said as his eyes lit up.

"You might be onto something here. Their customers look strange when they come out," said an old woman. "A young girl walked past me in the morning with a bread in a bag, and she moaned when she took a bite of that bread! They drug their food, I think."

"We should report this to the Gray Temple!"

"Absolutely!" They had lost a great number of customers already.

“You people are unbelievable, in a bad way. Stop backstabbing and go see for yourself what they have to offer,” a fat man said as his mouth twitched. He untied his apron and tossed it onto his signboard, walking towards them. “I saw the young girl too this morning. She was enjoying her food. Wasn’t that obvious?”

Chapter 146: A Rainstorm Is Coming?

The old woman blushed.

They exchanged embarrassed glances and fell silent.

“I’ll go see what is going on there,” the woman said as she untied her flowered apron, and walked towards Mag’s restaurant.

“We should all go and try their food. Maybe we can find out their secret,” the balding man said with a smile as he watched his two counterparts walking off.

Smiling, the others echoed their agreement, and walked towards Mamy Restaurant together.

...

More new customers. Mag smiled, trying hard to hide his pride. He opened the door.

They looked to the door as they heard the beautiful sound of the door opening. Many had been waiting for a long time, but they knew Mag’s rules, and nobody knocked at his door.

“I’ve been waiting for the whole morning, Mag. My legs are asleep,” Vicennio said sullenly as he leaned on the doorframe, his voice feeble. He was at the head of the line.

“I’m sorry, but rules are rules.” It was all Mag could do not to laugh as he watched Vicennio, who looked much better now.

Women have strong sexual desire.

“Thanks to your rules, I can’t move my legs,” Vicennio said as he tried to lift his foot. He was still holding onto the doorframe; he didn’t want to fall to his knees again. “Come on, give me a hand.”

The customers behind him laughed.

Mag helped him in, and seated him at the table by the door.

“I’d like three plates of Yangzhou fried rice. Two for here and one to go,” Vicennio said. Then, he grabbed Mag’s hand as if he suddenly remembered something. He lowered his voice. “Are you sure this dish is much milder than roujiamo? My life is at stake here.”

“Yes, I’m sure,” Mag answered as he withdrew his hand, patting Vicennio on the shoulder.

Vicennio gave a nod. “I’ll trust you on this.”

“Come on in, everybody,” Mag said to the customers outside, smiling.

“Welcome to Mamy Restaurant!” Yabemiya said, walking up to the customers with a smile, and started taking orders.

“Us old men are not as resilient as young people, Mag,” Krassu said. “We suffer a lot standing here for a long time. Can you do something about it?”

Their talking caught Urien’s attention. He had had Black Coal and Green Pea look after his shop, and had waited here for almost a half hour.

The other customers were craning their necks to look at Mag, waiting for his answer.

Mag shook his head with a smile. “Sorry. There is nothing I can do. You can eat as much as a young man. You’re strong, though you may not look like it.”

Krassu glanced at Mag. *I’m Amy’s master. How can he be so ungrateful?*

The tables were filled up in a short while. The remaining customers had to form a new line, which went from the counter to the outside of the restaurant.

Mag was a little surprised when he saw the end of the line. *The last seven people look familiar.*

As he turned to walk towards the kitchen, he suddenly remembered. *That big, greasy guy is the owner of that pork steak restaurant. I have seen him slaughter pigs before. And the other six are restaurateurs too, I think.*

What are they doing here? Do they plan to go on a rampage in my restaurant? Mag raised an eyebrow. Mamy Restaurant was pretty popular in the Aden Square already; it was attracting more and more customers despite its poor location.

It was great news for Mag, but the same thing couldn’t be said for other restaurateurs at the Aden Square. Mag had managed to win over their customers, and most of them were rich.

In fact, Mag had seen this coming. After all, he came from a business family. He might have never been a businessman before, but he had seen too much in the business world to fret.

He was confident that there would be copycats. His dishes were nothing like the food in this world; they were bound to challenge their concept of cooking.

Mag didn’t find copycats annoying, though; they were a sign that he was affecting this world’s eating and cooking habits. He found it amusing.

He didn’t worry his copycats could cook half as well as him.

He would gladly become a pioneer, but he wasn’t about to teach them the skills. He didn’t like the idea of sharing his market.

They can try to figure out how to cook these dishes. There’s nothing I can do to stop them, thought Mag.

But it will take them years to find out the right way. The ingredients I use are extraordinary, and we always have new dishes. There’s no place like Mamy Restaurant. A smile touched Mag’s lips.

A rainstorm is coming? Mag shook his head. *No. It’s a sprinkle at best.*

Chapter 147: Your Green Onion Bing Doesn't Stand A Chance Against This

"I can help you add self-destruction devices into the food if you want. They will protect your secret," the system said suddenly.

"How much?" Mag was a little intrigued.

"10 gold coins each."

"No, thanks!"

It's even more expensive than roujiamo! Mag thought.

...

"Your Yangzhou fried rice," Yabemiya said with a smile as she put the plate in front of Vicennio. *He knelt before Mag in the morning. He looks so pale; he must be starving.*

"Thanks," Vicennio said without lifting his head. His attention was totally attracted by the food already. He had watched others eat this dish in the morning, but he hadn't paid too much attention. Now that this colorful dish was right before him, the tantalizing aroma made him swallow in spite of himself.

The pleasant smell caught others' attention as well. Those restaurateurs fixed their wide eyes on the fried rice.

Andrew frowned. *What's this? Why did he have to chop everything into such small pieces? The taste and texture are ruined!* His pork steak was known for its big size, and was the 18th most delicious food at the Aden Square, mostly because of its size. He liked to watch people gobble down his steak.

The smell of eggs has mixed perfectly with the smell of other ingredients, and together they have created such a wonderful aroma. What's inside the eggs? Rice? But rice grains are so small. How did he do it? Bernice wondered.

Her dishes featured fineness. Her restaurant's specialty was ranked 13th among the most delicious food. She was good at making the best of ingredients, and she was well aware of the skills needed to chop everything into the size of a rice grain.

The ingredients look to be of high quality, but did he cook them all together with oil and seasonings? I wonder how it tastes. Besides, different people like different foods. I don't think they all find that dish tasty, Miles thought, frowning.

His restaurant accommodated all tastes, and that was why he had many regulars in spite of his lack of specialties.

They held their questions and doubts in check; they didn't plan to cause any trouble here.

Vicennio could feel their eyes on him. He raised his eyes to theirs. "Guys, please do not stare at me like that. You're making me nervous," he said, moving the plate closer to himself.

Andrew smiled. "Sorry. Don't worry. We're just watching."

“Okay...” Vicennio dropped his gaze back to his food. Apparently, the strong butcher’s words didn’t make him feel any better. His stomach was rumbling. He picked up the spoon, and took a bite.

This is good!

Vicennio’s face lit up instantly. The taste of different ingredients spread in his mouth, delicious and intoxicating.

When he swallowed, the food slid down his throat like a warm current. His drowsy cells were beginning to revive like the dry field after the rain. He felt so good, his weariness was largely gone, he didn’t look as pale as before, and he could feel his strength coming back.

Vicennio’s eyes went wide. He gazed at the fried rice with a surprised look on his face. *It’s working! Even better than those pills. And it’s so delicious. No wonder my wife liked it.* He took another bite, and then another. He smiled, and was completely lost in the food.

Mag’s seven counterparts swallowed.

Is it really that good?

They all had the same question in their minds. They watched Vicennio wolf down the fried rice, and could only imagine what it tasted like.

Some customers became a little restless after waiting as the aroma of roujiamo and Yangzhou fried rice floated in the air.

The half-dragon waitress was taking orders and serving food. She’d never made a single mistake, smiling all the while, so the customers waiting couldn’t bellyache too much.

Then the seven restaurateurs saw the roujiamo. “What’s that?”

“A loaf of bread stuffed with chopped meat. How tasty can it be?” Andrew said. He was even more confused now. *Why do they have to serve meat with bread?*

“Did you smell that? It’s so different, don’t you think?” said Bernice. It was clearly a much stronger smell than the first one, and it whetted her appetite immediately.

They were chefs as well as restaurateurs, so they were more interested in figuring out how to make the food.

“Yes. Deep-fried pork steak doesn’t smell like that,” Andrew said, shaking his head.

“Nor does roasted meat,” the old woman said.

Miles frowned. “I don’t think he boils meat in water.”

“Why do I get the feeling that he cooks in a completely different way? Did he invent all these dishes himself?” the balding man asked.

“An inventor, huh?” Bishop sneered. “So many restaurants want to invent new dishes, and they all end up shutting down. These customers only find the new dishes interesting here, and I don’t think their interest will last a long time.”

A customer nearby overheard their little conversation. He took a look at Bishop. "I beg to differ, grandpa," he said, twisting his mouth. "Your green onion bing ¹ doesn't stand a chance against this roujiamo."

Chapter 148: Are They Here To Make Trouble, Boss?

Then, the customer took a large bite of his roujiamo, and continued, "Mmm! I'll never get enough of this!"

The seven restaurateurs hurriedly looked away, abashed.

They had never thought they would be recognized by the customers eating here; worse still, the customer had overheard them speaking ill of Mag, and harshly criticized them. How embarrassing!

Bishop blushed. His spring onion bing was fairly popular at the Aden Square, and had made it into the top 100 most delicious dishes the year before last.

He couldn't pretend he hadn't heard that insult. He could feel his anger rising.

"Relax, old man. We're here to eat, not to cause trouble," Miles said, tugging at his sleeve.

The last thing they should do right now was hurl insults at this customer in Mag's restaurant.

Bishop had been in this business for dozens of years; he was no fool. He took a deep breath to calm himself down, gave a faint snort, and said not a word.

That customer hadn't intended to pick a fight. He got back to eating his roujiamo.

Afterwards, more people recognized them, and asked what they were doing here.

"We're just here for a little get-together. It's a nice place," Miles replied with a dry smile. They wouldn't have come if they had known they would encounter so many of their regulars.

Yabemiya noticed them too. She was a little worried about what they might do, but still she approached them with a smile and a menu. "May I take your order?"

The old woman sucked in her breath when she opened the menu. "What?! Your prices are ridiculous!" she said, staring at the young waitress.

"Yes. They are much too expensive," a voice added.

They could buy half a roast suckling pig in the Fryer Tavern with 600 copper coins, which was the sixth most delicious dish at the Aden Square. They didn't see much meat in this Yangzhou fried rice.

And Bishop's green onion bing was only five copper coins each.

The most expensive dish in their restaurants was not over 200 copper coins. The prices on this menu were just unimaginable.

They thought Mag was ripping people off, or that he was trying to scare them away with these ridiculously high prices. They were all gazing at Yabemiya, waiting for an answer.

The young waitress shook her head, smiling. "Sorry, but there's nothing wrong with this menu. Our prices are reasonable." So many people had questioned their prices recently that she had gotten used to it.

People who were daunted by the prices would leave, but those who stayed were all conquered by the dishes, which made Yabemiya very happy and admiring Mag even more.

She didn't know what these restaurateurs were here for. She was afraid they might look for trouble.

She was not afraid to fight, though; perhaps she could take care of them all by herself. Yet, she wasn't a big quarreler.

The old woman raised an eyebrow. "You call these prices—"

"I'd like a plate of Yangzhou fried rice and a roujiamo," Andrew interrupted. Then he turned to face the old woman. "So many people are eating here. They can afford it, and so can we."

Bernice nodded. "I'd like a plate of Yangzhou fried rice and a roujiamo too," she said to Yabemiya.

There must be a reason for so many people to eat here. Also, I don't think they're all fake customers hired by the owner, Bernice thought as she looked at Brandli. Nobody can hire a magic caster from the Gray Temple, and he looks very powerful too.

"I'd like a roujiamo, please," Bishop said after he thought for a while.

"I can only earn 300 copper coins a day, and I won't spend it all on a roujiamo," said the old woman. She turned and left.

The other restaurateurs exchanged a wry glance.

The old woman's restaurant was having a hard time these days. Her palate was not as refined as it used to be. Her mutton soup had made it into the top 50 most delicious food once, but it was many years ago. It was nearly impossible for her to recreate that taste now.

Her son and his wife had died years ago. Her grandson was a real handful, and he had no talent in cooking. Their mutton soup tasted worse by the day. Only a handful of regulars would eat there out of sympathy for her. She could barely make enough to get by.

The rest of the restaurateurs placed their orders.

"Okay, but it's not easy to eat Yangzhou fried rice while standing. I can get you roujiamo if you want," Yabemiya said with a smile.

"No, thanks. We'll wait. Please serve us the food after we're seated," Bernice said. The others nodded their agreement. They had come here to taste and enjoy the food.

Yabemiya nodded. "Sure." She turned and walked into the kitchen. "Are they here to make trouble, Boss?" she whispered worriedly.

Chapter 149: You Got Something You Want To Say?

Mag shook his head, smiling. "Don't worry. I don't think they have the nerve to do that." He could see that they were not unreasonable people. *They're here to feel out my restaurant,* Mag thought.

Even if they planned to make waves, Amy would take care of them, and I have two powerful magic casters here.

They're probably just here out of curiosity.

When my restaurant becomes more famous in the Aden Square and all throughout Chaos City and the whole continent, more cooks will come, hoping to learn a thing or two from me.

"I think they'll like our food too," Mag continued. He removed the fried rice from the wok into a plate.

"I'm sure they will," the waitress said, picking up the plate. Mag's calm infected his waitress; her beautiful smile returned.

She didn't believe anyone could cook as well as her boss.

She had worked in another kitchen for so many years, but most of the ingredients and seasonings that Mag used still looked strange to her.

Mag was a genius in her eyes. He had managed to cook all kinds of divine dishes using his magical hands. He was not an ordinary cook.

"Are you hungry, Amy? I can buy you something to eat if you want," Krassu said as he smiled at Amy, holding the spoon in his hand. Then he gave a smug look at Urien.

Krassu was trying to irritate Urien here since the latter had promised to pay for Amy's meals while she studied under him. Amy's meals were not very cheap.

Urien gave a snort, and his spoon got frosted up.

Amy shook her head. "No, thank you, Master Half-beard. I'm already full," she said, cracking a cute smile. "But you can always pay for my meals when I study under you if you really want to buy me something to eat."

Krassu's face went still. He had never thought his plan of provoking Urien would backfire.

A smile crept across Urien's face. "I'll pay for your supper too, Amy. No problem," he said, his hoarse voice full of gloating pleasure.

Amy nodded happily. "Thank you, Master Turtle!" Then, she turned to look at Krassu as if waiting for his answer.

"Well, I'll pay for your meals too on the days I teach you." Krassu sighed, giving a helpless nod.

There was nothing for it but to admit defeat before her cuteness again.

I have more money than I can count. Surely I can afford her meals, Krassu thought as he remembered his salary paid by the royal family. He had tossed all his coins into a large room.

The room had been filled up with coins years before, and Arthur had moved them into a larger room and exchanged the old coins for new ones. Some rare old coins had fetched a lot of money.

He didn't know how much money he had exactly, but it should be more than enough. He had decided to write to Arthur to ask him to bring the money with him. Money was really important if he wanted to win his little disciple's heart.

"Thank you, Master Half-beard!" Amy said cheerfully, swinging her little legs on the long-legged chair. Ugly Duckling was sleeping on her laps, so Amy's movement woke it up. It opened its eyes, and gave her a sullen glance.

Amy stopped swinging. "You got something you want to say, Ugly Duckling?" she asked, looking down at her kitten.

The kitten shook its head immediately, and looked up at Amy with an obedient look. "Meow, meow..."

"I don't know what you want if you don't show me."

"Meow?" the kitten said reluctantly as if skeptical about Amy's words.

"If I find what you want reasonable, I'll be happy to oblige. I'm very kind," Amy said sincerely.

The kitten hesitated a moment. Then it pointed at Amy's legs, swung its own legs, shook its head, and gave a sleeping pose, staring expectantly at Amy with its sapphire eyes.

Amy mussed up its hair. "I knew you have a problem with me!" She laughed as the kitten's face twisted in her hands.

"Meow..." the kitten cried despairingly.

Amy didn't stop until she had had her fill of fun. She cupped its face in her hands. "You can always sleep on the floor if you don't like me swinging my legs."

Ugly Duckling took a look at the floor, and then at Amy's legs. The spineless little thing went back to sleeping on Amy's laps again.

With such delicious food, people were eating fast. The line was shortening by the minute.

Many patrons ate their roujiamo in the street. It was said it felt better eating roujiamo while walking.

Amy's face lit up when she noticed those restaurateurs. "Green Onion Bing Grandpa, Mr. Pork Steak, Mrs. Flower Apron... Why're you here?"

For a moment, they froze. They didn't know these nicknames themselves, and they were not sure they knew this half-elf girl.

Their nicknames were strange, though to be fair, they were quite accurate. *Is this girl the owner's daughter?*

"Are you here to make trouble?" Amy asked curiously.

Chapter 150: I Can Wear It When I Learn How To Cook From Father

The six restaurateurs were taken by surprise. They had not expected to hear this question from the owner's daughter; for a moment, they didn't know how to answer.

More people recognized them now that Amy had pointed them out. *Are they really here to make trouble?* they wondered

Krassu and Urien turned to look. *They'd better not try and do anything stupid here.*

Brandli was also looking at them with surprise. *They must be insane if they think they can make waves here.*

"I used to visit your restaurants. The pork steak must be very tasty, and the green onion bing smells good too!" Amy continued. Then, her face changed. "But what're you doing in our restaurant? You're welcome to eat here. Father's rainbow fried rice and roujiamo are really delicious.

"You don't want to look for trouble here. You don't want to make me angry," Amy said solemnly, shaking her little fists in anger.

"She looks so adorable!" Bernice said, smiling. She had an adolescent son and daughter, who preferred hanging out with friends to staying at home. It had been a long time since she last saw such a cute girl. Her heart was overflowing with motherly love.

"We're not here to look for trouble," Andrew said, clumsily waving his hands as he looked at the cute little girl. *She likes my pork steak. The nickname she gave me sounds a little odd, but I kind of like it. How can I explain to her why we're here?*

"We're here for food, little girl, not for trouble," Miles said calmly with a smile, shaking his head.

"Really?" Amy said dubiously. Then she put down her hands, and nodded. "Okay."

The six restaurateurs let out a sigh of relief; the little girl's stare had given them a lot of pressure.

"Sorry. Please forgive my daughter. She's a little rude," Mag said with a smile, putting down a plate of Yangzhou fried rice on the table beside them. He touched Amy's head, but there was no blame in his eyes.

I don't think they come here with good intentions. Amy's words will serve as a warning, Mag thought.

Mag was as pleasant to those who ate here as he was unpleasant towards those who made waves.

Amy rubbed her head against Mag's hand.

"There's nothing to forgive. She's such a cute girl," Bernice said, looking at Mag up and down. Plainly, she liked what she was seeing. *He looks so neat and handsome.*

"We each own a restaurant in this square," Miles admitted with a smile. "It seems your business is very good these days, so we've come here to try the food."

Miles was around 40, of medium stature, with a black short coat and well-groomed hair. Mag nodded and smiled at him. "Welcome! Please sit down and wait for a second," he said, beckoning them to the two tables which had just become vacant. Then he turned around, and walked into the kitchen.

Other customers got back to their food, disappointed. They had expected a conflict, but not even sharp words had been exchanged.

“He seems like a nice guy,” Bernice said as she took a seat, smoothing her hair. She was pushing 40, but her skin was still rather soft. Only her hands were a little rough from all the washing and chopping.

Bishop nodded. “Yes. I was very grumpy when I was his age,” he said, ashamed as he remembered his little outburst before.

“You’re still very grumpy,” the balding man said, smiling. They all shared a laugh.

Bishop was known for his short temper, and because of that, his three sons were well disciplined growing up; each of them was more than capable of running his restaurant now.

“The years have made me kinder,” Bishop said, blushing.

Bernice turned to look at Amy and smiled. “You must be Amy.”

Amy nodded. “Yes. But Mrs. Flower Apron, where is your flower apron?”

“I left it in my restaurant,” Bernice answered with a smile. “Do you like it? I can give you one if you like.”

“Yes! Thank you! I can wear it when I learn how to cook from Father,” Amy said merrily, clapping her hands.

“Your roujiamos, please enjoy,” Yabemiya said with a smile as she put the plate down on their table.