

Stay At home 301

Chapter 301: So Angry!

“Hmm?” Elizabeth suddenly stopped at the entrance of the restaurant. She turned slightly to look behind her, upon which she caught sight of a black shadow ducking in the bushes. She hesitated momentarily before turning away from the restaurant. A burst of blue ice and frost appeared beneath her feet, and she disappeared in the blink of an eye.

“She’s gone?” After a while, a man in a black jumpsuit emerged from the aforementioned bush. He looked around with a flustered expression before stomping his foot, and merging back into the darkness.

Fox is spying on me? Elizabeth was sitting right on a tree branch beside the bush, and her brows furrowed slightly in deep thought at the sight of the figure that had disappeared into the darkness.

Looks like Father was right. Those people are not trustworthy. I’ll have to make a trip to that place today. Elizabeth gently massaged the ring on her right thumb as she mused to herself. She took one final glance at the Mamy Restaurant before disappearing into thin air, leaving only a trail of ice and frost on that tree branch.

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“Young Master, Board Member Devoe from the Devoe Tavern and Board Member Goodenia from Goodenia Clocks have been very secretive, and we were only able to discover some basic information despite paying a hefty price.”

In a slightly dim room, Mars reported his findings to Cyril, who was seated behind his desk. Mars had adopted the same respectful demeanor as he did when interacting with President Jeffree; even the humble smile that he wore was identical.

Cyril gently tapped an intricate red tobacco pipe on the table with furrowed brows. He said, “So, tell me what you know. Both of them are board members of our Chamber of Commerce, and they’re renowned figures in Chaos City. Who would dare to offend our Chamber of Commerce like this by taking them away for no good reason?”

“From the information that we have gathered, we have deduced that they might have been involved in a level 4 incident and a level 3 incident at the same time,” Mars replied with a grave expression. “Young Master, level 4 incidents are already confidential in the Gray Temple. I suggest we do not get involved in this.”

“A level 4 incident?” Cyril pursed his lips and leaned back in his leather chair with a nonchalant look. “So what? Didn’t you say that the people from the Devoe Tavern and Goodenia Clocks have already given us the money? Use half of that money to bribe the people at the Gray Temple and the city lord’s castle so we can bail those two out of prison. Otherwise, people are going to think that our Chamber of Commerce is too weak, and that we can’t even protect our board members. If any other issues arise, just resolve them with money. If we don’t have enough money, then ask for more from the two shops.”

“But...” Mars was still quite concerned.

“That’s enough. Young Mistress Chanel is waiting for me tonight. Deposit the money with Buffett Banks this time as well, and give me the deposit slips.” Cyril stuck his pipe into his pocket, and whistled as he walked out the door.

“Level 4 incidents can’t be resolved with just money. Things are a lot more complicated than you can imagine, Young Master...” Mars mused to himself with a resigned expression, and fell into deep thought as he stood alone in the dimly lit room.

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Yabemiya and Sally returned to the restaurant, and quickly returned to work. The restaurant returned to its former level of efficiency, and aside from the missing door as well as the trees on the corner of the plaza that had disappeared, everything was the same as it had been before.

All of the customers were gradually consoled by the delicious cuisine they were dining on, and as they basked in the enjoyment of dining, they soon forgot their horror and displeasure.

“Father, Big Sister Xixi and Big Bear have fallen asleep after Big Sister Aisha attended to them. Master Turtle says they’re fine now, and will recover after some sleep.” Amy held Ugly Duckling in her arms as she informed Mag of what had happened. A bright smile had returned to her adorable little face.

“You all did very well. You’ve done a good deed.” Mag nodded with a smile as he surveyed Amy and the others with approval in his eyes. Sally had risked exposure to treat the dryad couple, Yabemiya was quite powerless but still led from the front, and Amy had expressed an urge to help them the entire time.

All three of them were very kind-hearted, which was very pleasing for him to see. He didn’t object to helping others, as long as it was within their ability.

Elated smiles appeared on the faces of Amy and Yabemiya. Sally was cleaning the tableware, but she also wore a faint smile as if she had never been praised before.

After wolfing down a second bowl of rice and devouring the final chunk of shiitake mushroom, Novan put down his bowl and chopsticks with a genuine expression of contentment, and praised, “I have to admit, this is the most delicious food I’ve ever had.”

“Is it enough to change the world?” Krassu had finished his braised chicken and rice at roughly the same time, and he turned to Principal Novan with an inquisitive look.

“If even normal families can create such delicious meals, then it’s definitely enough to revolutionize the food culture on the Norland Continent,” Novan replied with a nod.

“If even normal families could make this, then they wouldn’t be charging eight hundred copper coins per dish.” Krassu pursed his lips.

“So, if you want to change the world, then this is still not enough.” Novan chuckled.

“That’s not necessarily the case. Even if they can’t make the same type of food, enhancing the flavor of normal dishes is undoubtedly something that many people would be willing to try.” Krassu offered an

opposing opinion as he pointed to the bowl in front of him with a smile. “This is a direction. The task of changing the world can never fall upon the shoulders of a single person, but perhaps he can point out the right direction.”

Novan fell silent upon hearing that, but his eyes grew brighter and brighter as he stared at the bowl. He suddenly stood up and rushed out the door as he said, “I have something important that I have to do. Thank you for your hospitality, I thoroughly enjoyed that meal.”

“Hey, you still haven’t eaten your tofu pu—” Krassu extended a hand toward Novan, but the latter had already disappeared out the door. He looked at the untouched tofu pudding in front of him, and shrugged as he spooned some of it into his mouth. “Savory tofu pudding isn’t all that delicious anyway, so it’s not really a tragedy to miss out on it.”

Several people from other tables turned to stare at the bowl of untouched tofu pudding on the table. Many of them wanted to take it for themselves, but they didn’t dare to ask Krassu for it.

“Master Half-beard, I wouldn’t be able to beat those big doggies, right? I’m so angry!” Amy climbed onto Krassu’s table and appraised him with a stern expression on her little face.

Chapter 302: Holy Roujiamo!

Krassu was very amused by Amy’s adorable expression of rage, but he still replied seriously, “Who said that? Our little Amy will only needs to cast a fireball to take care of all of those little doggies.”

“Really?” Amy was a little skeptical. Even though she hadn’t tried it, those big doggies looked very ferocious, and she didn’t know if a fireball spell would be enough to bring them down.

“Of course! Just not now. As long as little Amy learns magic from me diligently, it won’t be long before you can blast those little doggies away with your fireball magic.” Krassu nodded with an earnest expression before smilingly continuing, “Of course, if you want to use your staff to knock them on their heads, then that works as well.”

“Alright, I’ll be sure to focus on my studies. If they ever come back, I’ll smash them in the head!” Amy nodded with a serious expression before her gaze fell on the untouched bowl of tofu pudding. Her eyes then immediately lit up, and she turned to Krassu with elation on her face. “Master, is that for me?”

“Aren’t you already full?” Krassu asked with a peculiar expression.

“I was, but I got so angry, and that made me hungry again, so I should eat it. I haven’t eaten savory tofu pudding tonight.” Amy had already grabbed the bowl, and was digging in with elation.

“...” Krassu shook his head with a resigned smile, but it was quite pleasant for him to watch her enjoy her food. As such, he also picked up his bowl of sweet tofu pudding, and continued to eat it.

“Amy, this is a magic shield that can be used thrice. If you encounter a dangerous situation, use a small fireball to burn that red bead, and the magic shield will unfurl on its own to ensure your safety.” After finishing his meal, Krassu pulled out a beautiful blue crystal bracelet and put it on Amy’s wrist. There was a small red bead that was about the size of her pinky in its center; there were some complex symbols inscribed upon it in extremely small font, giving it an air of mystery and intrigue.

All of the customers were a little envious at the sight of Amy's new bracelet. A magic shield created by such a powerful magic caster would undoubtedly be very useful. Furthermore, it was very portable and light. All of the onlookers wished that they had such a thoughtful and powerful master.

"That sounds really awesome! Can I try it now?" Amy's eyes lit up with an eager expression as she looked at the bracelet.

"Not now. You have to wait until you're in a dangerous situation before using it. You can only use it three times, so make sure not to waste those opportunities. If I were to make a new one, I'd have to wait for materials to arrive from Rodu." Krassu hurriedly stopped her from experimenting with the bracelet. The magic shield could protect her from all attacks below the 9th tier for a duration of three minutes. As mentioned, it could be activated on three separate occasions, and both the materials used as well as the crafting process were very complex.

"Alright. Thank you, Master Half-beard." Amy nodded and extended words of gratitude to Krassu.

"You're welcome." Krassu waved a hand with a smile on his face. He was always happy to spoil his adorable little disciple.

After finishing his tofu pudding, Krassu paid for his meal and departed. Sargerass had gone off somewhere, but he soon led his Burning Legion back to the restaurant. However, only Sargerass entered the restaurant, with a chair hoisted in his hand. The customers sitting at the table closest to the door just so happened to be leaving, and he sat down in front of that table with his folding chair.

"May I take your order?" Yabemiya strode over to him with a smile. Sargerass had sent a werewolf flying with his chair, and led his group of lava demons in an assault against the werewolves earlier. As such, Yabemiya had a very good impression of the scary-looking but kind-hearted lava demons.

She then took a confused glance at all of the other demons standing outside the restaurant, and thought to herself, *There are still tables available in the restaurant; why aren't they coming in to have a seat?*

"I want 30 roujiamos," Sargerass replied with a bashful smile.

Everyone in the restaurant turned to him in unison upon hearing that. 30 roujiamos! They had never seen anyone buy so many at once.

"30?" Yabemiya was also a little taken aback. Sargerass' usual order only consisted of around 11 roujiamos.

"That's right. According to the traditions of us lava demons, the most valiant warriors in battle have to be rewarded. All of them performed quite well today." Sargerass nodded with a smile, and turned to look at the lava demons outside the restaurant as a content expression appeared on his face.

"Alright, please wait a moment. However, if they're going to dine as well, they can come in and take a seat," Yabemiya reminded with a smile.

"That's alright, let them eat outside. If they come in, they might scare away other customers." Sargerass shook his head with a bashful smile. Scaring other customers was only the secondary reason; he was much more fearful that one of the lava demons would accidentally set the restaurant on fire, in which case he would not be able to afford the damages.

“Alright, then.” Yabemiya didn’t press any further. There was no rule stipulating that roujiamos had to be eaten within the restaurant anyway. She turned around, and strode toward the kitchen.

Mag smiled after hearing Sarger’s order, and said, “I’ll give them 36 as a sign of my gratitude. That’ll amount to one extra for each of them.”

He also had a good impression of those lava demons. In particular, he’d been very touched when they had stepped in earlier and yelled the war cry “for roujiamo!”.

“Kiel, is this so-called holy roujiamo really that delicious?” Markza asked Kiel, who was waiting with anticipation shimmering in his eyes.

“It’s not simply delicious. You’ll know when you taste it; it’s addictively delicious,” Kiel answered with a mysterious smile.

“I’m really looking forward to it now.” Cossus rubbed his bald head with a bashful and eager smile.

Amy pulled out a bench and sat on it at the entrance to the restaurant with Ugly Duckling in her arms. She then looked at the lava demons, and began to give them nicknames. “Big Bald Head, and Bald Heads No. 2, 3, 4...”

Kiel and the others all wore peculiar expressions, but their leader had already accepted the nickname of Big Bald Head, so what could *they* do?

“Your roujiamos are ready.” After a short while, Yabemiya emerged from the kitchen with a small mountain of roujiamos. She placed the platter of roujiamos on the table with a smile, and said, “As thanks for your help earlier today, our boss has given each of you another roujiamo for free.”

“He has my thanks.” Sarger’s eyes lit up as he grabbed six roujiamos for himself from the platter.

Yabemiya carried the platter outside, and distributed the rest of the roujiamos to the lava demons.

“The meat smells so good; is this the legendary holy roujiamo?” Calzac’s eyes were practically glowing as he stared at the roujiamos in his hands.

“They look really delicious, but they’re a little small. I can eat two in one mouthful.” Cossus tore open a paper bag, and bit off half of a roujiamo with one bite.

The other demons also took large bites out of their roujiamos to replenish the energy they had expended during battle.

“Delicious! This feeling! It feels like something is about to come out of my body!”

All of the demons who were tasting the roujiamo for the first time were flabbergasted.

“Roar!”

All of them roared almost in unison as flames erupted from their bodies, making it appear as if balls of fire had been ignited at the entrance of the restaurant.

“Wow, that looks really cool...” Amy’s mouth was slightly agape as she looked on with an adorkable expression.

Chapter 303: Earn 100,000,000 First!

The collective roar and scorching flames erupting from the lava demons outside the restaurant managed to attract the attention of all of the customers and passersby. After all, it wasn't every day that such a spectacular sight could be witnessed.

"How... How is this possible?! I seem to have broken through a barrier; my power level has been stuck at the 4th-tier for over 20 years, but I just jumped straight to the 5th-tier!"

"I can also clearly feel my barrier budging. Even though I didn't make a breakthrough, I should be able to make one soon!"

"I also made a breakthrough! I'm at the 5th-tier now!"

Cossus, Markza, and Calzac were all ecstatic, and they stared at the roujiamos in their hands with incredulity. The barrier that had troubled the lava demons for several hundred years had been broken by a mouthful of roujiamo.

Their mouths were wide open upon witnessing such a miracle, and if it weren't for the fact that they were experiencing it firsthand, they would have never believed that something like that was possible.

"Holy roujiamo! This is a beacon of hope for the resurgence of us lava demons!" Cossus stuffed the remaining half of the roujiamo in his mouth, and he could feel his blood churning in his veins. Lava flowed on the surface of his body, and an indescribable feeling welled up within him as if the passion that had lain dormant for countless years within his body was set alight. The lava demons felt as if they could suddenly see back to all those years ago, when their species had stood at the pinnacle of the Norland Continent.

Looks like making them eat outside was the right decision. Sargeraz glanced outside with a smile on his face. His dream was to have more of his brethren taste the roujiamo, and that was also the goal toward which the Burning Legion strove.

"Why do I feel like Mag just recruited a bunch of powerful bodyguards?"

"That's not important. They just helped out Mag, and Mag gave them a free roujiamo each in return! If an opportunity like this arises in the future, we have to make sure to grab it with both hands!"

"I'm willing to risk my life if he can give me a free sweet tofu pudding!"

All of the customers discussed spiritedly among themselves as they looked at the lava demons outside the restaurant. Of course, most of them were more focused on the rewards the lava demons had received.

A smile also appeared on Mag's face as he looked at the lava demons outside. It was his pleasure to bring some extra benefits to his customers with his food rather than just fill their stomachs and satisfy their taste buds.

Customers came and went; those that were late to the scene were very curious with regard to how the restaurant's door had disappeared. Thankfully, there were many kind-hearted customers who were willing to offer explanations.

"I heard that a 10th-tier golden dragon wanted to eat an extra serving of tofu pudding tonight, but Mag refused, and it threatened to trash the restaurant in its rage. However, its attempt to do so was foiled by two magic casters, and the three of them fought a devastating battle. In the end, Principal Novan had to interfere to bring the situation under control, but by then, the door had already been destroyed during the melee."

The stories being told by the customers became more and more exaggerated and preposterous as time wore on, and Mag shook his head in resignation.

"We have reached closing time, and all of the ingredients that we've prepared have been used up. Please come back tomorrow." Mag stood at the entrance of the restaurant, and politely turned away all of the customers who were trying to enter. The lack of a door created quite a peculiar sight.

"Alright, but if a giant 10th-tier dragon is onto your restaurant, then you have to make sure to be careful. If you can't handle it on your own, apply for protection from the Gray Temple. I want to be able to come and dine at your restaurant far into the future," a customer urged with a concerned expression.

"I'll... be sure to do so." Mag nodded with a resigned expression. He couldn't turn down the concern that his customers were extending to him, but he didn't know who had spread the rumor about the giant 10th-tier dragon. As far as he knew, there didn't appear to be such a powerful being that was targeting the restaurant.

Yabemiya strode over to him, and asked, "Boss, should I go and find someone to fix the door? I wonder if any carpenters would be willing to come at such a late hour."

"Don't worry about. I'll go find a shady craftsman, and he'll install a new door." Mag shook his head with a smile before saying to Yabemiya and Sally, "You two should hurry home. You still have to work tomorrow morning, so go back early and rest."

"Please watch your mouth! The wooden door produced by the system is most definitely of an impeccable quality! Moreover, the price is very competitive, so there's no semblance of shadiness involved whatsoever!" The system's indignant voice erupted.

Mag ignored the system as he turned to Sally, and asked, "By the way, Aisha, how many orders did we take today, and how much money did we make?"

Sally pulled out a notepad from behind the counter, and did some careful calculations before delivering a report. "Today, we made a total of 136 servings of Yangzhou fried rice, 650 roujiamos, 820 tofu puddings, 416 servings of braised chicken with rice, and 512 servings of plain rice, and we made a total of... 799,000 copper coins from 1,022 orders."

"Wow, so much money!" Amy's eyes immediately lit up, and it was as if there were little stars shimmering in her pupils.

"799,000... How much money is that...?" Yabemiya looked up into the sky and thought about it carefully. In the past, her monthly wage had been 600 copper coins, but the restaurant had made more than a

thousand times that in just a day. If all of that were to be converted into copper coins, it would definitely be able to pile up a small mountain!

“Nice.” Mag nodded with a smile. He, too, was pleasantly surprised. 799,000 copper coins in total earnings amounted to a gross profit of close to 500,000 copper coins!

What did it mean to have a daily income of 500,000? It meant that if he could keep up this rate of income, his restaurant would be able to earn 180,000,000 copper coins in a year!

200,000,000 copper coins of income in a year from running a restaurant... Just when did earning money become so easy? Even Mag himself was feeling a little stunned.

Back when he had first opened the restaurant, he’d only been hoping that it would generate enough income to ensure the survival of his daughter and himself. However, as more and more dishes were introduced, and the number of customers increased by the day, his profit margins expanded drastically, and the rate of development had far exceeded his expectations.

Mag smiled, and said to Sally and Yabemiya, “Very good. Let’s keep this up. We’ll set a small target; let’s earn 100,000,000 first! Next month, I’ll be able to give all of you pay rises.” The meteoric rise of the restaurant had been heavily dependent on the highly efficient and accurate work Yabemiya and Sally had done. As such, they deserved higher wages as reciprocation.

“Boss, I feel like my wages are already very high, and I’m very satisfied.” Yabemiya immediately waved her hands.

“I also feel the same way.” Sally nodded in agreement. She was already very content with the fact that she could have a serving of Yangzhou fried rice and two tofu puddings a day.

“You deserve better,” Mag said with a smile, but he didn’t press them any further.

“Father, can I go to visit Big Sister Xixi and Big Bear before I go to bed? They didn’t even finish their meal earlier; won’t they be hungry?” Amy held Ugly Duckling in her arms, and looked up at Mag with a concerned expression.

Chapter 304: 10 Copper Coins or Dignity?

Sally nodded, and said, “They’re still very weak due to excessive blood loss. The magic potions can help them recover to a certain extent, but if they want to make full recovery, they will require more rest and nutrition.”

She was the one who had administered treatment to the two of them, so she was quite familiar with their condition.

“I’ll go and cook some chicken soup for them. They probably won’t be able to eat anything substantial anyway. Let’s gather the leftovers for a late dinner to celebrate our earnings today.” Mag nodded with contentment. He was in a very good mood.

At that rate, he would be able to purchase his next strength point soon, and the level of his restaurant would also increase as a result.

After being fooled around with by the system for so long, he was actually also quite curious how the restaurant would change after reaching level two. Perhaps he would be gifted with some new powers.

Of course, Mag was mainly looking forward to the upgrade in the restaurant's defense system. The events that had transpired earlier during the day gave him a sense of urgency. He was in an alternate world, after all; there were countless powerful and dangerous beings there. As such, it was quite a concern that even a 4th-tier werewolf could easily break into his restaurant and pose a threat to himself as well as his daughter.

The underlying hazards made him feel quite insecure, so he was very eager to upgrade the restaurant. If its level could continue to increase, the defensive system would become progressively more powerful—until it became the safest fortress in the world.

If he could upgrade the defense system to the highest level, even if the things that happened all those years ago were to reoccur, he would be able to sit back with Amy and relax, watching from the restaurant without any fear for their safety.

Mag was slightly looking forward to such a scenario.

"Father, am I really allowed to eat before I go to bed tonight?" Amy's eyes immediately lit up. Meg had always prohibited her from eating before bed.

"Yes, tonight is a special exception." Mag nodded with a smile before turning to Sally and Yabemiya. "You two should eat before you go as well."

"Really?" Yabemiya's eyes shimmered with excitement.

Sally was also full of anticipation upon hearing that.

"Of course. If you're worried about them, then pay them a visit and see if they can eat something. I'll go prepare dinner." Mag nodded, and turned toward the kitchen.

"Then we'll be going now," Amy said as she and Sally walked out the door.

"System, install a door for me," Mag instructed internally as he looked at the empty streets outside the restaurant.

"The system refuses to provide service for a slanderous customer," the system replied in a tsundere voice.

"I see. Looks like I'll have to take a break tomorrow to fix the door. I was hoping that at this rate, I'd be able to upgrade the restaurant in about ten days or so, but it appears that these things cannot be rushed. I should take things slowly," Mag said with a calm and collected expression. He pulled a fire chicken drumstick out of the fridge, and began to chop it up in a slow and methodical manner.

"After reassessment by the system, it was found that you have good credit. Even though you insulted the system, this is only your first offense, so it can be overlooked—" the system said after a momentary silence.

"Just waive the installation fee this time. What can you do with 10 copper coins anyway? You're destined to earn big money in the future, so it would make you seem too petty if you were to focus so

intently on 10 copper coins,” Mag interjected before the system had a chance to finish. He soaked a handful of shiitake mushrooms in some water, and began to stir-fry the chicken.

“This is a stern warning: do not interrupt the system’s speech! I have a personality! I have dignity! I need respect!” The system’s enraged voice sounded.

Mag put down the knife in his hand with a serious expression, and asked, “Then let me ask you this. What is more important, 10 copper coins or your dignity?”

The system fell into a prolonged period of silence.

“Ding! 10 copper coins installation fee successfully taken!

“Ding! Wooden door successfully crafted!

“Ding! 20 gold coins wooden door crafting fee successfully taken! Wooden door is now being installed!” the system notified with an elated voice, and a new door was installed in the restaurant in the blink of an eye.

Mag looked at the notification for the successful installation of the restaurant door and opened his mouth, but swallowed his words in the end. The system’s shamelessness knew no bounds. “Fine, you win.”

The late dinner consisted of Yangzhou fried rice as well as braised chicken with rice. After all, eating a roujiamo before bed could make it difficult to fall asleep, and making tofu pudding from scratch was too difficult. Furthermore, the amount of daily consumption of tofu pudding had to be regulated as well.

Mag cooked two portions of braised chicken in two different pots; he didn’t put any ingredients aside from chicken and shiitake mushroom in the pot that was meant for the dryad couple. He also put more soup in that one as the main objective was to cook some chicken soup for them. Chicken soup was very nourishing, particularly when coupled with shiitake mushrooms, and would contribute greatly to their recovery.

In the other pot, he cooked the braised chicken as he normally would. They had had an early dinner, and after four hours of intense work, Mag really was feeling a little hungry. Sally and Yabemiya had run themselves ragged in the restaurant, so they most likely felt the same. That was why he decided to cook a late dinner for everyone.

Mag placed the lid on his earthenware pot, and thought to himself, *For a late dinner, spicy crawfish, lamb and kidney kebabs, and beer are mandatory. System, get me a recipe for kebabs. I’ve roasted countless kebabs over the years.*

Eating in such a health-conscious manner defeated the purpose of having a late dinner.

“Recipes will be progressively unlocked. Please maintain a resolute heart as the future God of Cookery. For the God of Cookery, no dish is beyond his cooking skills,” the system replied in a frantic voice.

“All you do is spout nonsense.” Mag pursed his lips. He was already used to that type of useless answer provided by the system, but he couldn’t do anything about it.

“Eh? Father, how did you get the shady craftsman to replace the door so quickly?” Amy entered the restaurant with amazement on her little face.

“I know, right? We didn’t even see anyone come to install it.” Yabemiya also wore a curious expression. She stroked the wooden door, only to find that it was almost identical to the previous one, and had been crafted from the same type of wood.

“The craftsman was a little shameless, but he was very efficient. He brought the door over and had it installed within five minutes,” Mag replied with a smile. He poured all of the chicken soup into a large bowl, and asked, “How are the two dryads? Can they drink chicken soup?”

“They’re still very weak, and eating is a little difficult, but they should have no issues drinking chicken soup,” Sally replied. When they had gone to visit the dryads, Xixi and Lulu had already awoken. Their injuries were still bothering them a little, so they weren’t able to fall asleep again.

“Then I’ll take this chicken soup to them.” Mag brought out two little bowls and spoons, placing them on a platter along with that large bowl of chicken soup. He held the platter in his hands, and strode out the door.

He was quite interested in hearing about how the dryads had died out.

Chapter 305: Nurturing the World Tree with Chicken Soup

The magic potion shop was a little dim as there was only a single oil lamp lit in the corner. Within the spacious hall, there were shelves upon shelves of all types of magic potions, and a layer of black cloth had been draped over the birdcage outside the door. It appeared that Black Coal and Green Pea were already asleep.

“Master Urien, I’m here to bring them some chicken soup,” Mag said to Urien, who was mixing magic potions in front of the counter, as he carried the platter in his hands.

“Come on in,” Urien said without even raising his head. His voice was still quite low and husky.

Amy trailed along behind Mag. Smiling, she asked Urien, “Master Turtle, we’re having a late dinner tonight. Would you like to join us?”

“Late dinner?” Urien’s nostrils stirred slightly as he caught a whiff of the alluring aroma of the chicken soup. He swallowed involuntarily, and his gaze fell on the chicken soup in Mag’s hands.

“This is for them. If you don’t mind, please come and join us for some food at the restaurant. You’ve been working hard tonight, so you must be hungry,” Mag hurriedly said.

“Go on. They’ll probably go to sleep soon.” Urien withdrew his gaze, and continued to swirl the long-necked crystal vial in his hand. The blue liquid and purple liquid within gradually merged together as he did so.

Mag carried the platter with chicken soup and walked through the door behind the counter. He arrived in a small room; on the wide shelves that were usually reserved for magic medicinal ointments, there

were instead two figures lying there. There was a lit oil lamp in the corner, illuminating their pale faces and hands, which were tightly latched onto one another's.

"Mag..." Xixi turned toward the door upon hearing that voice, and her gaze fell on the bowl of chicken soup. Her nose twitched slightly, and her eyes instantly lit up. Even though she was feeling quite weak, she was still filled with anticipation as she asked, "Could it be... that you've brought food for us?"

"We sure have. Big Sister Xixi, Father says you're both too weak, and haven't had any dinner, so he brought over some food for you and Big Bear. You can only sleep well after you fill your stomachs," Amy, who strode in through the door, answered in Mag's stead.

"I made you some chicken soup." Mag placed the platter onto the table with a smile on his face. He lifted the lid on the bowl, and the alluring scent of chicken soup immediately wafted throughout the entire room.

"It smells so good! I love the braised chicken and rice. Mag, you're the best!" Xixi's eyes immediately lit up as she attempted to struggle into a sitting position.

"Be careful." Yabemiya rushed over and helped her up. After being treated by Sally, the wound on her lower abdomen was essentially healed, but she was still very weak from excessive blood loss.

"I was worried that you wouldn't be able to eat anything, so I only cooked some chicken soup; not quite the braised chicken and rice you were referring to." Mag poured two bowls of clear transparent chicken soup, and carried them over to the makeshift bed. He passed one bowl to Yabemiya, and kept the other. Lulu was riddled with wounds, so it appeared that he would have to be fed.

"Mag, you're such a good person." Xixi was very touched, but her eyes were already drawn to the chicken soup in Yabemiya's hands. She turned to look at Lulu, and asked in a beseeching voice, "Can you feed Lulu some soup first? He bled a lot, so he must be very thirsty now."

"No... You drink first. I'm not thirsty. As long as I can watch you drink, I won't feel thirsty at all." Lulu shook his head, and looked at Xixi with a gentle light in his eyes.

"No need to sacrifice yourself for the other. You can both drink at once." Mag was only there to deliver some chicken soup, but they were still stuffing dog food down his gullet ¹ !

The chicken soup that he had cooked on that occasion was less intense in flavor when compared to the chicken soup used for the braised chicken. Yabemiya scooped up a spoonful, and blew on it gently before feeding it to Xixi.

"Such delicious chicken soup! It's not as rich as the braised chicken's soup, but its savoriness has not been diluted at all. It doesn't have many ingredients in it, but that only makes the taste of the chicken soup purer." Xixi's eyes immediately lit up.

The delectable chicken soup flowed down her throat and into her stomach in a warm stream. Her feebleness instantly diminished significantly as a result, and she could sense that the shriveled World Tree was absorbing that peculiar energy. It was as if rain had finally fallen after a prolonged drought, and she was struck by a sense of elation.

Her throbbing wound had become warm and a little numb, while the pain was quickly receding.

Using chicken soup to nurture the World Tree... Will the World Tree grow up to be a little strange as a result? Xixi could sense that the World Tree within her body was absorbing the energy within the chicken soup with elation, but she was slightly concerned.

On the other side, Mag was also feeding Lulu spoonfuls of chicken soup. Compared to Xixi, who had the World Tree to protect her, Lulu's injuries were clearly not going to recover anywhere near as quickly.

However, after swallowing his first mouthful of chicken soup, his raspy throat was immediately soothed, and a warm sensation spread throughout his entire body. His pain had also been drastically alleviated, and his tightly furrowed brows began to relax. The chicken soup was even more effective than the pain-killing magic potions that Urien had given him.

The two small bowls of chicken soup were quickly devoured, and Mag stood up to pour more soup for them.

"Mag, can I have some meat?" Xixi asked with a pitiable expression. She was staring at the bowl on the table with yearning in her eyes.

"Are you sure you can eat meat?" Mag was a little taken aback as he turned toward Xixi. She was struggling to even move just a moment ago, but was requesting to eat meat all of a sudden.

"Of course!" Xixi's eyes instantly lit up. Her mood seemed to have been lifted significantly, and she nodded in confirmation.

"Alright, then." Xixi's condition really appeared to have improved quite a bit after drinking the bowl of chicken soup, so he ladled a few chunks of chicken into her bowl. He then passed the bowl to Yabemiya before preparing to fill another bowl for Lulu.

Lulu shook his head with a grateful expression as he said determinedly, "I'm full now. Give the rest to her, thank you."

"Alright." Mag wasn't going to try and dissuade Lulu as he withdrew the bowl in his hand. He was quite appreciative of Lulu's doting love for his lover.

After all, there were countless smooth-talking men in the world, but a man who was actually willing to give up his life was very praiseworthy.

"Help me up! I can drink a third bowl!" After finishing the second bowl of chicken soup, Xixi had recovered some of her mobility. She swallowed the chicken she was chewing, and her expression lit up with excitement. The World Tree was constantly healing her body and replenishing her energy, thereby giving her an extremely high rate of recovery.

"Big Sister Xixi, you're a white kitty, so what's your baby going to look like if you have one with Big Bear?" Amy asked Xixi with a curious expression as the latter was preparing to tuck into her third bowl of soup.

Chapter 306: Fallen One Renounced by the Gods

The dark and foreboding Bastie Prison was like a massive beast that was lying dormant underground, extending a weirdly shaped horn in the darkness. It was guarding the southwestern corner of Chaos City, and maintaining order in its lawless night.

“Lord Brandli, we’ve already clarified the details of Gabriel’s Black Iron Cross serial murders. The first crime took place three years ago, when an assistant knight test examiner’s family of four was brutally murdered. Two years ago, a body was discovered in the sewers in the Southern region of the city, and there was a cross carved onto the arm of the body with a knife. Three months ago, three murders took place in Chaos City in quick succession, and the victims included two children under ten years of age. A black iron cross was left behind at all of the crime scenes.”

In a dimly lit room, there was a man in a black jumpsuit, with a black cloth obscuring his face, revealing only his eyes. Facing Brandli, he had his head slightly bowed in a respectful manner, and reported, “After extensive comparisons, we discovered that the black iron cross that Gabriel was carrying has the same appearance as the ones left on the crime scenes, and is made of an identical material. After raiding Gabriel’s residence, we discovered many more of those black iron crosses, as well as a victim’s severed limb. We can determine from the aforementioned evidence that he is the serial murderer we are looking for.”

Brandli nodded, and asked, “Do Devoe and Goodenia have anything to do with this? Why did they attack the Mamy Restaurant? What were their intentions?”

“The two of them most likely do not know anything about the string of murders, so at this stage we’re almost certain that they have nothing to do with those crimes. However, Boss Devoe of the Devoe Tavern has many underlings that have been involved in shady dealings. Two years ago, the boss of a winery owed him some money, so he hired Gabriel to give his debtor a brutal beating, resulting in a permanent disability. After that, Devoe took over his winery. There have been many other instances of him hiring thugs to plunder riches from others; on one of those occasions, the victim succumbed to their injuries and died.

“Goodenia’s situation is a little better. He only got into an altercation with the Mamy Restaurant over a bowl of tofu pudding. He felt like he had been humiliated in the restaurant, and went back with Devoe to start some trouble, only for the subsequent events to occur,” the man in black hurriedly replied.

“If the Devoe Tavern has committed such atrocious crimes in the past, then why hasn’t our Gray Temple done anything about them? They’ve committed murder!” Brandli asked with furrowed brows.

“About that...” The man in black was a little hesitant.

“Tell me,” Brandli commanded with a sharp look.

“Prior to our investigation, the Devoe Tavern has already been reported to our Gray Temple on many occasions. However, due to some indeterminate reasons, none of those reports were followed up on. The earliest of those reports could be traced back to three years ago,” the man in black replied in a low voice.

“Do we have a spy among our ranks?” Brandli mused.

The man in black shook his head, and replied, "We do not have the jurisdictional power to investigate such matters."

"Alright, I'll report this to the higher-ups," Brandli concluded with a nod. The hierarchy within the Gray Temple was very clear-cut, and without special permission, one couldn't investigate cases that were beyond their jurisdictional powers. That regulation effectively restricted the power of the workers on all levels, but made investigations very difficult at times.

After a brief silence, the man in black continued, "Furthermore, during this period of time, someone has attempted to bail out Devoe and Goodenia. There have also been many attempts made by outsiders to gather information on the case, so even the contents of the confidential 4th-tier incident have most likely already been exposed."

"Who's trying to bail them out?" Brandli's brows knitted even more tightly together.

"People from the Chamber of Commerce," the man in black replied in a faint voice.

"They've been becoming more and more invasive of late. They've probably even forgotten their identities!" Brandli slowly clenched his fists, and strode toward the door as he said, "Tell Deputy Warden Jonathan that Lord Rolan has always kept an eye on Bastie."

"Yes." The man in black bowed his head deeply to express his utmost respect and admiration.

...

Upon a black palace that was close to twenty meters tall, there were specks of bright light that acted as embellishments, making it appear as if there were stars hanging from its walls.

At the very center of the temple was a circular platform that was over two meters tall. An elf in a deep blue magician robe stood on the platform, and gently twirled the wand in her hand. Specks of blue light emerged from the tip of the wand before falling upon those stars, making them even more dazzling.

She was an elf of indeterminate age, with a plain set of features. Despite that, she gave off an incomparably regal air. Her face was expressionless as she looked up at the countless stars overhead as if she were surveying the seeds that she had sown.

At the very center was the largest and brightest star. None of the other stars dared to approach it, let alone compete with its radiance and glory.

However, there was a large star slightly further away that seemed to be on the rise. It wasn't as bright as the largest star, but it was more dazzling than the stars around it.

There was a hunched old hag with a hooked nose standing at the foot of the platform, and she was absolutely furious. She sharply screeched, "Mistress Helena, that filthy Irina is jeopardizing the future that you picked for us elves! Her heinous crimes are punishable by death! She is a fallen one renounced by the gods, and has had her body soiled by a mortal, a b*tch who has birthed a half-breed! How dare she show such arrogance and insolence?!"

"Silence! The princess is not someone that you can insult," the elf on the platform responded in an indifferent voice. A black leather whip flew through the air before striking the old hag's face, issuing a crisp sound which reverberated throughout the palace.

The hunched old woman was sent flying, and only managed to arrest her momentum after crashing into a stone pillar. She got up unsteadily, using the pillar for support; only half of her face was swollen, but it had completely swelled up. She looked up at Helena with horror and befuddlement as she said in a trembling voice, "Mistress Helena, did I say something wrong? If our brethren were to hear about what she has done, then how would she be able to live with herself? How would she be able to continue to occupy the seed of life and be hailed as our princess?"

"You're right. Irina has indeed done something that brings shame on us elves. She has allowed herself to be soiled by a human, and has been abandoned by the gods." Helena turned to Hetty, and the black whip instantly wound itself around her neck before lifting her off her feet. She was brought level with Helena, upon which the latter shook her head, and said, "But if word of this were to spread, it would tarnish the reputation of us elves, making us the laughingstock of the entire Norland Continent. Only a handful of people know about this, and we must keep it that way. You must never reveal this secret, or I might just kill you right now to make sure that you don't get to tell anyone."

Hetty looked at Helena with horror and reverence in her eyes. She could sense an aura of death coming from the whip that was tightening around her neck, and that pain was being inflicted upon her by the very same Mistress Helena whom she had served for several hundred years and frenetically worshipped. She hurriedly nodded before the whip could snap her neck.

"Remember this, prior to the emergence of a new princess, Irina will remain the only princess of the elves. You should watch yourself." Helena lifted a finger, and the whip around Hetty's neck was withdrawn, upon which she fell to the ground with a thump.

She lay sprawled on the ground with a face pressed tightly against the ground, and gasped, "Yes... I will..."

"Abide by her wishes, and allow Snarr to return safely." Helena looked up at the brightest star in the sky. A smile appeared on her face as she mused in a faint voice, "If they're really still alive, then I'm very curious to see what that little guy has become... Find them."

Chapter 307: You're Being Unreasonable!

After hearing Amy's question about reproduction between a white cat and a black bear, the first thing that sprang to Mag's mind was obviously Gun Gun ¹.

It was an adorable creature that could feed itself just by acting cute all day; it could be said that it was the most leisurely and carefree animal in the world.

However, at their core, Xixi and Lulu were still dryads. They only became a bear and a white cat, respectively, after their transformation. As for whether their baby would transform into a panda or not, that was not something Mag could be sure of.

From a theoretical standpoint, they satisfied all of the prerequisites for that to happen. As for whether their genes would facilitate the birth of a panda, that was something that he was looking forward to seeing.

Xixi faltered slightly upon hearing that question. She then turned to Lulu, and a warm smile appeared on her face as she replied, "Lulu says he's going to have many babies with me. We'll have bear babies and cat babies so we can have the best of both worlds."

"Then... After you give birth, can I play with your babies?" Amy's looked at Xixi with an expectant gaze.

"Of course they can play with little Amy. You'll be their big sister," Xixi replied with a smile. She was also looking forward to that day.

Xixi soon finished her third bowl of soup, and ate half a bowl of chicken as well. Faint green light began to shimmer from her lower abdomen, and her face returned to its normal color.

"Mag, Amy, Aisha, and Yabemiya, I am truly grateful to all of you for saving Lulu and myself." Xixi supported herself using the counter, and extended a bow of gratitude.

"It wasn't much, don't mention it." Mag shook his head with a smile.

"Don't worry, Big Sister Xixi. If any more bad people turn up, Amy will chase them away," Amy promised with her hands clenched into little fists.

"That's right. We all think that you two are good people, while the werewolves are bad people, so it's only right for us to help you," Yabemiya chimed in as she nodded.

Sally merely nodded, and didn't say anything. She was looking at Xixi's lower abdomen with a hint of surprise in her eyes.

Earlier, when she was administering treatment to Xixi, she had discovered that there was something in Xixi's body that could absorb life magic. That entity was completely different in nature compared to life magic, but somehow was a little similar, and she found it quite intriguing. There was even a period of time when she had thought that she was hallucinating.

However, she sensed the very same aura from that green light. Xixi had been severely wounded, but was able to recover and move about so quickly; that strange type of magic energy clearly played a major role in that process.

The chicken soup was very delicious and nourishing, but it was still inferior to actual medicine.

"Lulu, let me feed you some chicken soup. You have to drink some more so you can get well soon." Xixi slowly made her way over to Lulu with a bowl of soup in her hands.

Xixi appeared to be close to a full recovery, and Lulu was very relieved. He shook his head with a doting smile, and said, "You drink it. It's much more satisfying for me to watch you drink."

"No, if you won't drink it, then I won't drink it, either." Xixi pouted as she shook her head. She blew gently on a spoonful of chicken soup before bringing it over to his lips, and she smiled as she said, "You drink the soup and I'll eat the chicken. That way, we'll be able to finish this entire bowl of soup."

"Let's go have some dinner. Otherwise, we'll all be stuffed full of dog food soon." Mag picked up Amy and strode out the door.

Yabemiya and Sally trailed along silently behind them. The dryad couple had just survived a massive ordeal, and it was best to give them some privacy.

Lulu looked into Xixi's eyes, and caressed her face with his hand. He was feeling very self-critical as he said, "Xixi, I'm so useless. I wasn't able to protect you."

"Who told you that?! Lulu is my hero! There is no one better than Lulu in this world, nor is there anyone who loves and adores me as much as Lulu!" Xixi countered vehemently.

You adore me like a child, while I adore you like a hero.

...

After inviting Urien over for a late dinner, Sally used her magic to wash the dishes before departing with Yabemiya. Their busy day had finally drawn to a conclusion.

Mag locked the door and closed the blinds after they left. Amy was herding Ugly Duckling as they ran laps in the restaurant, and Mag looked at them with a warm smile on his face. He wasn't in a hurry to go upstairs. Instead, he sat down in a chair to watch them.

"Meow~" Ugly Duckling cried for help. It had only nibbled on two mouthfuls of braised chicken, but was now being forced to run 10 laps in the restaurant. That was physical torture!

Mag chose to ignore it as he looked at Amy with a dotting smile. She was currently wielding a little leather whip as she followed Ugly Duckling, hot on its trails. It was much more important to him that his little girl had a fun time.

After finishing the ten laps, Amy picked up the exhausted Ugly Duckling in her arms, and gently stroked its head as she said, "You're such a good little kitty. That's 10 laps for today; you have to keep this up tomorrow as well."

Ugly Duckling immediately fainted in her arms upon hearing that.

"Let's go upstairs. It's time for bed. You have to go to Master Urien for lessons tomorrow. The lessons start at 7:30, so you can sleep in a little." Mag turned off the lights, and carried the two little fellas upstairs.

Amy was tucked in after brushing her teeth. She turned to Mag, and asked, "Father, the principal is really powerful. Will I become as powerful as him in the future?"

"Of course. As long as you study hard under the tutelage of Master Urien and Master Krassu, you'll become an even better magic caster than Principal Novan." Mag nodded with a smile. She had inherited the bloodlines of a 10th-tier knight and a 10th-tier elven magic caster. Furthermore, she was being taught magic by two 10th-tier magic casters, so she really did have an immeasurably bright future ahead of her.

"I wanna be a super magic caster..." Amy closed her eyes with elation, and soon fell asleep.

"Before you become a super magic caster, let me protect you." Mag planted a gentle kiss on her forehead, and adjusted her blanket before turning to leave. At the same time, he said internally, "System, I want to buy a sword."

“The system can provide countless choices. There are long swords, daggers, claymores, rapiers... You name it, I have it...” the system replied as if it were a salesman.

“The same sword as last time will do, but I have a condition,” Mag interjected in a calm voice.

“Please specify.”

“As my strength increases, I’ll have to constantly change to different swords. You have to repurchase the swords that I discard,” Mag said with a serious expression.

“You’re being unreasonable! The system creates custom-made swords, and those swords will only be a perfect match for you! They’ll be useless after I repurchase them, so there’s no way I’d be able to sell them again. I refuse!” the system grumbled.

Chapter 308: Slaying a Dragon with a Single Sword Strike

“The repurchase price will be half of the selling price. Trust me, with my rate of progression, this will only be a profitable deal for you.” Mag smiled nonchalantly as he said, “You have to realize that we have an arms shop next door. I can order a custom-made longsword high in quality for 1,000 gold coins there, and it won’t be very difficult for me to sell it for 500 later on.”

In the arms market, supply exceeded demand, so buyers held the ascendency. He was using that against the system, which allowed him to gain the upper hand in their negotiation. From his past experience, that was quite an effective bartering method.

“Deal!

“Ding! 1,000 gold coins have been successfully deducted! The longsword is complete, and can be delivered at any time.”

The system was still a little indignant, but it had no choice but to comply.

“Deliver it now. Place the sword by the door to the balcony.” A faint smile appeared on Mag’s face as he changed into a set of loose clothes from his wardrobe before making his way to the balcony.

Opening the door, he discovered that there was a longsword waiting for him on the balcony. It was identical to the one that he had used on that mission in the Valley of Thorns.

After he was almost impaled by the sword falling from the sky, Mag had completely lost confidence in the system’s postage and handling. As such, he decided to be more careful this time in order to avoid repeating that harrowing ordeal.

Mag picked up the sword, and found that the hilt was slightly cool to the touch. It weighed about 2.5 kilograms, and felt a little heavy, but it wasn’t cumbersome in any way. He twirled the sword in his hand, and its blade shimmered with a cold gleam under the moonlight.

He gently closed the balcony door, and took a deep breath. His mind became extremely serene, and he adopted a very serious expression.

The days of constant cooking in recent times had brought about many changes for Mag. The most prominent of those was that he had learned how to concentrate on one thing, as well as how to get in the zone in a short period of time.

After experiencing death, he began to understand what was truly important to him.

His black longsword blended into the darkness of the night. He abruptly stepped forward and thrust his sword out.

It was a very simple sword strike. There were no embellishments or fancy tricks; it was just a plain and simple thrust.

However, his sword traveled in an extremely straight trajectory.

The tip, blade, and hilt of the sword, as well as his wrist and forearm, were all on the same parallel line, without even the slightest discrepancy. It was as if everything had been measured using the most accurate ruler.

The thrust was invariably straight, and unavoidably quick.

Mag withdrew his sword before repeating the same motion expressionlessly. It was still the exact same sword strike that was unleashed previously. The angle, speed, and even his hand's position were all completely identical.

On the balcony of the third floor, Mag stood under the moonlight, and unleashed one sword thrust after another. Each strike seemed to be completely identical, but also somehow different at the same time.

The bland and boring motion appeared to be effortless, but Mag's clothes were soon drenched with sweat. Despite that, every single thrust was still straight and true, with impeccable speed and trajectory.

"98, 99, 100..." After unleashing the final strike, Mag retracted his hand, which was slightly numb by that point. He exhaled; the numbing sensation crept along his fingers, all the way up to his right shoulder. However, his eyes were particularly bright, and he seemed to be reminiscing about something as he fixed his gaze on the sword in his hand.

"Thirteen Swordplay Forms, all of which are plain yet effective killing techniques. First form — straight thrust. When completely mastered, its unchanging form can combat anything that the enemy throws my way. This is the true way of the sword," Mag murmured to himself.

That was a sword technique that Mag Alex had practiced for over ten years. The first five forms were the most basic sword strikes, consisting of a thrust, jab, swipe, slam, and slash. Each of those motions had been practiced tens of thousands of times by Mag Alex, and they were all deeply ingrained in his muscle memory.

A portion of Mag's body had already recovered, so what he had to do was to redevelop himself, and tap into the maximal extent of his current potential, thereby completely mastering his body's abilities.

Progression in power was a slow and steady process. If Mag wanted to become stronger, he would have to train differently from everyone else. The system had given him a body that had once reached the pinnacle of human ability, offering him strength points afterward so he could slowly tap into his body's latent potential. Furthermore, there were powerful sword techniques and combat tactics in his memory.

Those factors gave Mag a very high starting point as well as limitless potential. However, he was still Mag, and not Alex.

It was just like how the system had prepared the best kitchen and ingredients for Mag, then injected the most premium recipes and experience bag into his mind—if he wanted to cook the most perfect dish, he still had to practice countless times in the test field for the God of Cookery. In doing so, he would convert someone else's experience into something that he fully mastered, thereby allowing him to use the best ingredients to cook the best dishes.

He was facing the same problem in his quest to get stronger. He had the most powerful body as well as the most applicable cultivation methods and experience in his mind, but he had to make all of that his own.

Of course, that was something that Mag had become very proficient at.

Something that could be achieved through relentless hard work was not difficult to him. He didn't back down when he trained night and day without any sleep in the test field for the God of Cookery, so practicing sword techniques for one to two hours every night was nothing to him.

He transferred his sword over to his left hand, and continued to practice the same thrusting motion. His movements were impeccable and fast, even more so than when he was performing them with his right hand.

Everyone on the Norland Continent knew that Mag Alex's sword strikes were very fast when using his right hand, but there were also many who knew that his left hand was even faster. However, most of those who knew about the latter were already dead.

On that night three years ago, Mag Alex had been ambushed by six 10th-tier powerhouses. He had managed to kill three of them, and he used his left hand during that battle.

Mag practiced his sword technique diligently as he thought to himself, *It's a pity that I can't use essential energy before reaching the 5th-tier.*

He flicked through the powerful sword techniques in his mind, and was very eager to give them a try.

Essential energy was similar in nature to the internal energy that was often mentioned in wuxia ¹ novels.

Humans were the weakest among all species when first born, but they were able to rank among the eight species that ruled over the continent. The key lay in their ability to awaken essential energy, and invent ways to cultivate. Thus, the frail humans were able to combat the likes of the giant dragons and demons.

Essential energy cultivation elevated the upper limit of the human body's capabilities, allowing both speed and power to be enhanced as essential energy increased.

After reaching the 5th-tier, essential energy could be used in conjunction with battle techniques, thereby drastically improving one's combat prowess.

A fifty-meter-long saber projection was perhaps a little far-fetched, but a sword projection that was three to five meters in length was certainly not an exaggeration.

Once upon a time, when Mag Alex was at the pinnacle of the 10th-tier, he had unleashed a sword projection that was twelve meters in length, and slain a dragon with a single strike!

Just imagining being able to vanquish a fireball with a sword strike instilled him with a sense of excitement.

That was the true world of swords and magic that Mag had envisioned.

Chapter 309: Warning, the Restaurant is Under Attack!

Of course, Mag didn't even have any essential energy yet, so there was no point in thinking about sword projections.

However, as he accumulated more strength points, his essential energy should be able to slowly recover. With the enhancement effects of essential energy, humans would be capable of doing many things that were once impossible to them.

Back then, the purple-striped griffin had been an important factor in Alex's dragon-slaying quest. However, the key was to strengthen one's body through the use of essential energy.

With a powerful sword technique as accompaniment, essential energy could unleash devastating power. It would allow one to slice through a giant dragon's hard scales with ease, thereby inflicting grievous wounds upon them.

Back then, the purple-striped griffin, and the man who wielded his sword with a single arm, struck fear deep into the hearts of the giant dragons. The giant dragons were the kings of the sky, but there was actually a time when none of them could be seen in the air above Rodu.

Battle techniques were methods of utilizing essential energy during battle. Only battle techniques could unleash the full power of essential energy, thereby resulting in a marked improvement in one's combat prowess.

The last five forms of the Thirteen Swordplay Forms were actually sword techniques, so they could only be used after he reached the 5th-tier.

Mag shook his head to rid himself of those unnecessary thoughts, and continued to focus on his sword practice.

He wasn't even a 1st-tier knight yet, so sword techniques were things that he only had to think about in the distant future. His current priority was to practice his sword forms, and make himself invincible among beings of the same tier. That would construct a good foundation for him to improve upon in the future.

The practice session lasted an entire hour, and Mag was well and truly drenched in sweat by the end thereof. His wrists were throbbing as he put his sword away in a safe place, and he went downstairs to take a bath.

A short while later, Mag lay down in a warm bath and closed his eyes in contentment. After an hour of painstaking practice, he had unleashed the sword strike 200 times with each hand, which gave him a

better understanding of and control over his body. After reaching his exhaustion threshold, he was able to clearly identify his body's tenacity as well as its potential for improvement.

Of course, an hour was definitely not enough. Mag had already formulated a training schedule that centered around progressive overload for himself. He was going to gradually increase the duration and intensity of his training sessions, which would take place at night, after Amy had already gone to bed.

"She's progressing in her cultivation at a phenomenal rate; I can't let her leave me in the dust. That would be way too embarrassing," Mag murmured to himself as he clenched his fists tightly. His heart was filled with unprecedented motivation.

That night, Mag slept very soundly. However, he wasn't awoken by his alarm clock the next morning. Instead, he was jerked awake by a dull thump and a shaky bed.

"Hmm?" Mag opened his bleary eyes, but he immediately snapped awake at the sight of the drawing that was hanging from his bed frame, which was oscillating from side to side. He threw off his blankets and threw himself to Amy's little bed. It was an earthquake!

Right at that moment, the system's voice suddenly sounded. "Beep, beep, beep! Warning! The restaurant is under attack! The energy level is at the 3rd-tier, and it has yet to break through the restaurant's defense systems."

"3rd-tier?" Mag's stopped cold in his tracks. The tremors had already stopped. There was no damage aside from the fact that his alarm clock had been knocked over, and the drawing on his bed frame was completely crooked. However, the restaurant had been completely unmoved when it had last been struck by a 3rd-tier attack, so he was a little perplexed.

"System, is someone trying to cause trouble again?" he asked.

"Unable to identify the identity of the intruder or the method of attack used," the system replied in an indifferent voice.

Mag looked at the alarm clock on his table, which told him that it was only 5am. Amy was still sound asleep on her little bed with Ugly Duckling in her arms; he heaved a sigh of relief upon seeing that. He put on some clothes, and quietly went downstairs.

Even though a 3rd-tier attack wouldn't be able to break through the restaurant's defense, it was still a little concerning that they were being attacked out of the blue. As such, Mag decided to assess the situation himself.

He opened a set of blinds and looked outside. The sky was still quite dim, and there were no people in the streets. The melee that had taken place the day prior had destroyed the restaurant's door as well as a few large trees outside. People from the Gray Temple were presumably going to visit later in the day to replant those trees.

There's no one there. Was it a prank? Mag looked around and confirmed that there was no one hiding in the bushes, either. He became more and more perplexed, and hesitated momentarily before opening the door. His feet remained planted within the restaurant as he poked his head out and surveyed his surroundings. His gaze then fell on the forge next door, upon which his eyes widened. He exclaimed, "Mobai, what happened to you?"

The forge had already been reduced to a pile of rubble. Mobai held a large iron hammer in his hand, and his face had been blackened by soot as he sat at the entrance of the forge. Most of his disheveled beard had been burned away, and he looked like a coal miner who had just returned from a shift.

“Hehe, morning, Mag. I... I accidentally caused an explosion, but it’s alright.” Mobai turned to Mag, and gave him an awkward smile.

“It’s alright?” Mag was a little skeptical as he came out of his restaurant. The forge had been razed to the ground, and all types of weapons were scattered throughout the wreckage. The neighboring shop where no one lived had also been destroyed, and even the shop that was situated an entire block away had collapsed. The situation certainly didn’t look “alright”.

It was possible to imagine just how terrifying an explosion it had been.

A peculiar expression appeared on Mag’s face. *An accidental explosion? This is a bloody terrorist attack!*

Mobai was still sitting amid the wreckage with a bashful smile on his face. Mag then suddenly figured out where his neighbor had disappeared to for the past couple of days. He had been experimenting with explosives underground!

If Mag wasn’t mistaken, the tremors he had felt in the Mamy Restaurant were most likely a result of that explosion. In the face of a 3rd-tier attack, the Mamy Restaurant would have most likely been toppled like the nearby shops had it not been for the restaurant’s defense systems. He and Amy were still sleeping there, so the consequences would have been dire had they not have been protected by the system.

“Mobai, what you’re doing is not right. What if that explosion had topped the restaurant? If you’re going to do experiments, at least notify your neighbors first.” Mag was a little angry as he appraised Mobai.

He was very sympathetic toward his blacksmith neighbor as the latter’s father had been eaten by a giant dragon, but that wasn’t an excuse for him to experiment with explosives at home.

Furthermore, Mobai hadn’t given any prior notice to his neighbors before conducting his experiments. He was clearly not taking the lives of others seriously, and that lackadaisical attitude left a bad taste in Mag’s mouth.

Mobai stood up with an apologetic expression, and replied, “Sorry, Mag, I didn’t think that the explosion would be so powerful. I used similar ratios of materials for many experiments in the past, and the resulting explosions were only able to blast through the first layer of the magic shields. I only added a pinch of powdered beast core this time. I didn’t think it would make such a drastic difference. I had set up three layers of magic shields in advance, but it still wasn’t enough.”

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Mobai’s apology was very sincere, and he did appear to have taken appropriate measures prior to the experiment. He had set up three magic shields, and kept the dosage of materials the same, but he had added... some powdered beast core?

An explosion of that caliber was impossible to set off without a sufficient amount of explosives. From the crater at the center of the forge, it could be deduced that Mobai had been conducting his experiment at least 500 meters below the ground.

The fact that the explosion was still able to cause such massive damage despite occurring so deep underground was a testament to its power. The explosives created by Mobai were clearly incapable of producing such devastating effects, which indicated that the powdered beast core that he had added was crucial.

“Even so, I hope you can avoid doing these experiments at home in the future. I have a responsibility to keep Amy and my customers safe.” Mag nodded in response. He could accept Mobai’s explanation, but he couldn’t allow Mobai to keep doing those dangerous experiments so close to the restaurant.

“I will. After what happened today, I wouldn’t dare to continue doing these experiments at home.” Mobai nodded apologetically before rubbing his hands together with excitement, and continued, “Speaking of which, I seem to have found a way to enhance the power of the explosions. Adding just a small pinch of powdered beast core has already increased its power more than a thousandfold. If I add even more, won’t my explosives pose a threat even to giant dragons?”

After coming to an understanding with Mobai, Mag’s expression eased significantly. As long as he didn’t do those experiments at home, Mag didn’t care what he did.

Furthermore, he was also quite interested in finding ways to enhance the power of explosions. After all, he was living in a dangerous world, and he still couldn’t get that RPG from the system. Perhaps he could create explosives of his own to defend himself.

Just thinking about being able to set up two RPGs outside the restaurant struck him with an indescribable sense of excitement.

Gunpowder hadn’t even been invented in the alternate world yet, but Mobai had created a bomb that was even more terrifying than TNT. Mag couldn’t help but feel a hint of admiration toward Mobai. Could it be that he was the legendary Hexplosives Expert ¹ ?

“If you have enough quantity and can compress the energy, it may be able to bring down a giant dragon.” Mag nodded, and contemplated momentarily before continuing, “But if your target is a giant dragon, I suggest that you focus on using compression to increase energy density rather than solely focus on increasing the power output. Then, create something that could launch your explosives as a projectile so the explosion can take place right beside the giant dragon.”

“What would I be able to use to launch my explosives?” Mobai asked as his eyes immediately lit up. It was a problem that had been bothering him for a long time. He turned an expectant gaze toward Mag, hoping that he would provide an answer.

“A cannon,” Mag replied.

“Cannon?” Mobai was confused.

“Yes, a cannon, something that can shoot a projectile toward a giant dragon.” Mag nodded.

“Warning! What you’re doing is very dangerous! It is very possible that your actions will drastically increase the development of the Norland Continent, resulting in abnormal development of this entire world!” The system’s stern voice sounded.

“System, gunpowder was invented in the Tang dynasty. Even though it was used in some subsequent battles, it only managed to replace bows and arrows a thousand years down the track. Don’t accuse me of trying to change the world; those accusations are completely unwarranted.” Mag pursed his lips before continuing, “Besides, I didn’t invent gunpowder in this world. This guy has already invented TNT! I can only marvel at a prodigy like him.”

The system fell silent.

“Is there really something like that? What is this cannon thing?” Mobai couldn’t help but take a couple of steps toward Mag. His eyes were shimmering with excitement; what Mag was proposing was something that resonated deeply with him.

“A cannon is a projectile-launching device. However, it is only a theoretical construct that exists in my mind. It’s yet to be decided whether it can be replicated in real life.” Mag shook his head with a smile.

“Then, can you tell me about it? I’m in desperate need of something like that. If it’s feasible, I’m happy to pay you for the idea.” Mobai stared at Mag with an intense light in his eyes.

“I’m not in need of money. It’s just that there have been people who have been causing trouble for the restaurant recently. If you succeed in creating a weapon that can take out giant dragons, can you craft one for me and set it up in front of my restaurant so I can intimidate others?” Mag asked with a smile.

“Of course. If I do succeed, that won’t be a problem at all.” Mobai faltered momentarily before nodding.

“I haven’t thought through it very well yet, but perhaps it can provide some inspiration to you. Come and have a seat in my restaurant.” Mag nodded before turning toward his restaurant.

Mobai looked down at his blackened clothes and hands, and he shook his head as he refused, “I… I think I’ll have to pass on that offer for now. I’ve already called some people to come over and repair the shops. Plus, I’ve got dirt all over me, and your restaurant will open soon. I don’t want to negatively impact your business.”

“That’s alright. Come on in. The staff will clean up the restaurant before we open. There are some things that I can only explain to you through the use of diagrams.” Mag continued to walk toward the restaurant without even turning his head.

Mobai hesitated momentarily before trailing along behind him.

“Wash your face and hands first.” Mag emerged from the kitchen with a basin filled with water.

“Thank you.” Mobai could sense that Mag had been repressing his rage the entire time, but that anger seemed to have transformed into respect and a hint of admiration.

Mag carried away the basin of water, which had turned black, and brought out a cup of water for Mobai. He then placed some paper and a pen on the table. He sat down in a chair, and smiled as he said to Mobai, “Have some water. What I’m about to elaborate on next will be a little complex, so just take in as

much as you can. In any case, it'll be too early for you to worry about making cannons before you make your explosives more stable."

"Explosives?" Mobai took a sip of water before turning a perplexed gaze toward Mag.

Mag immediately came to the realization that the term "explosives" didn't yet exist in that world. Thus, he smiled, and asked, "What do you plan on calling that exploding thing that you created today?"

"When you put it that way, explosives isn't a bad name." Mobai thought carefully about it before nodding.

"Alright, we'll call it explosives for now. A cannon is something that uses gunpowder to create powerful propulsion force in a sealed space. That force will launch the compressed explosive through a barrel, creating an explosion in the end." Mag drew a few diagrams on the paper before pointing to the barrel, and seriously said, "So this is roughly what it would look like."