

Stay At home 591

Chapter 591 Have a Drink Before We Kill

The sound of a muffled thunderclap erupted as rain began to fall from the sky.

The passersby on the streets began to walk more quickly, and most of them ducked into nearby shops to temporarily avoid the rain, thereby bringing a valuable influx of customers to the shops that were still open this late in the night.

Outside Mamy Restaurant, atop a large tree in the square, Bertley was entirely clad in black as he stood on a branch, completely stationary. He allowed the rainwater to wash over his body as he continued to stare intently at Mamy Restaurant.

The location he was situated was a blind spot, so he had no idea what was going on within the restaurant.

After a brief hesitation, he slowly slid down the tree and crouched low as he traveled through the bushes. Thankfully, the pitter-patter of the raindrops obscured the faint sounds of his movement.

As he approached Mamy Restaurant, his heart began to clench up with nerves. This was the first time that such a feeling had welled up in his heart since he received the mission to spy on Louis.

Why is Louis visiting this restaurant after everyone has left? Is he really just here to buy a box of mooncakes for his children, or is there some sort of unspeakable secret the two of them share? Could they have both somehow been related to the incident three years ago? With that in mind, Bertley's breathing began to accelerate.

He had been tailing Louis for over nine months, and had gotten a very good grasp of his habits and daily routine in the process. As such, he knew that Louis' actions were a little abnormal today, and he couldn't help but become suspicious.

Bertley didn't know much about the incident that had taken place three years ago, but he knew who Alex was and he knew what kind of reward he would receive if he were to find and kill Alex. He would be given riches and power that would otherwise be completely out of his reach. That was something that the leader of the Cheetahs had told him in person prior to his deployment.

Of course, if he were to go back and report this information, he would also be richly rewarded, but compared to the reward for killing Alex, the former completely paled in insignificance.

There were countless people in this world who wanted to make a name for themselves by killing Alex.

He was the number one knight in the Roth Empire, and had once stood at the pinnacle of the Norland Continent. Even though he had been reduced to a cripple, killing him would still be a monumental achievement that would see the killer's name recorded in the history books.

Bertley was also one of those people. With his aptitude, it would be very difficult for him to progress to the 5th-tier in his lifetime. Even among the Cheetahs, he was only below average in terms of power level, and was destined to be a nobody for the rest of his life, taking on monotonous surveillance missions like this one day after day.

He had emerged from the slums in the western region of the Roth Empire, and had seen many horrendous things. He knew how grueling it was to live on rubbish scraps and rainwater, so he climbed up the ranks in any way possible. He joined the army, and had done things like backstabbing his comrades so he could take their accolades for himself. His dream was to be able to ascend to the upper class in the Roth Empire someday.

However, he gradually discovered that if he wanted to achieve that goal, power or status were imperative. With his aptitude and background of a slum-dweller, there was no way that he could ever reach his dream.

Meanwhile, Alex had joined the army almost at the exact same time as him, but had been rewarded by the king with the empire emblem as well as a massive manor in the center of the city's eastern region after just three years.

God is always so unfair. These people were descendants of major families anyway, yet they still possess extraordinary talent. They're sought after by countless beauties and revered by the masses. People like him really deserve to die... Bertley laid a hand on the dagger hanging from his waist. A bolt of lightning flashed past, lighting up his twisted sinister features.

The Black Falcons were hiding from the rain under the canopy in front of Mobai's forge, making them appear as if they were just normal passersby trying to avoid the rain.

The thin man approached Narson, and whispered, "Team Leader, we've already gathered some information: the restaurant owner's name is Mag, while that little half-elf girl is his daughter, Amy. No one knows his past history. All they know is that he opened this restaurant here over a month ago and business soon became extremely good for them. All of the customers refer to him as a culinary genius."

"Mag?" Narson's brows furrowed deeply. That name somehow struck him with a sense of familiarity. All of a sudden, a thought occurred to him, and his heart rate began to accelerate.

Alex's name was vastly renowned across the entire Norland Continent, but only very few people knew that Alex was only his surname. He hailed from a major family with a glorious history, one that had defended the empire's borders for several centuries.

About a dozen years ago, Alex made himself known to the world for completing a series of seemingly impossible military feats on the Roth Empire's southwestern border. He then became known for slaying demons and wicked dragons. As the name "Alex" grew more popular and widely renowned, everyone assumed that to be his first name.

However, his actual name was Mag Alex.

Narson knew this as he had carefully read through all of the files on Alex prior to leaving Rodu. In fact, he had memorized most of the information in those files.

This was a habit of his, and the basic requirement for a Black Falcon.

A half-elf little girl who was of just the right age, a father and daughter duo with a mysterious past, and a man who shared the same first name as Alex. It appeared that lightning had struck thrice, making it very difficult to believe that this was all just a coincidence.

There were still many contradictions surrounding Mag that were difficult to explain, but this information was enough for Narson to gamble on it. If this restaurant owner really was Alex, then capturing him would elevate Narson to unforeseen heights.

If he wasn't Alex, then he would merely have falsely killed a restaurant owner. They had many ways to escape from Chaos City, and definitely wouldn't leave behind any evidence pointing to the Black Falcons.

"Kill that restaurant owner, then capture that little half-elf girl alive. After that, split up and leave Chaos City immediately," Narson instructed.

"Team Leader, is he really Alex?" The thin man looked at Narson with a perplexed look as he asked, "How could Alex become a chef and run a restaurant in Chaos City?"

The other Black Falcons also wore similar expressions. In particular, after tasting the delicious mooncakes being handed out at the moon festival celebration, they were finding it very difficult to draw a connection between this man and Alex.

"This is an order that you must follow. Here in Chaos City, I am the supreme commander of the Black Falcons." Narson's expression became quite serious as he instructed, "Disperse and surround the restaurant. Once that lame visitor leaves, we'll begin our operation."

"Yes." The other Black Falcons nodded in unison.

"I'm sorry; looks like I'm causing trouble for you," Louis said apologetically.

"It's alright; you've always been really oblivious to spies on your tail anyway." Mag shook his head with a smile. He placed a large barrel of beer onto the table and smiled as he asked, "Care for a drink?"

"Of course; it's always nice to have a drink before we kill." A smile also appeared on Louis' face as he limped over to Mag.

Chapter 592 Killing Isn't as Satisfying When Drunk

The rain grew heavier and heavier, splattering against the floor-to-ceiling glass and creating beautiful splashes under the lights.

The two men sat across each other with a large glass of beer sitting in front of each of them as they looked at one another in silence.

Louis smiled and broke the silence first. "I bet no one on the entire Norland Continent would believe that Alex would've become a chef, let alone one capable of making the most delicious mooncakes in this world."

"Just like how no one would believe that the nightmare of the entire orc race would become a merchant." Mag chuckled in response.

"What can I do? I've got a lame leg now, so I'll only be dragging our comrades down on the battlefield. I didn't die, though, so I have to make the most of my life. Otherwise, your efforts to save me from those orcs would have gone to waste." Louis nodded with a smile.

“Indeed, we should all try to make the most of our lives. I find cooking quite interesting at the moment, so I became a chef. Your efforts to save me from Rodu also haven’t gone to waste.” Mag also nodded in response.

“After being a merchant for these past few years, I’ve discovered that I’m still better at and more interested in killing people.” Louis laid a hand on the hilt of the long saber that was hanging from his waist. Mag could see that deep finger indentations had been worn into the hilt, suggesting that the blade had been used extensively.

“I actually feel like cooking is a bit more interesting than killing now.” Mag shook his head in disagreement.

Louis was rather taken aback by that response. He looked into Mag’s eyes, and discovered that they were a lot softer than they’d been in the past.

“Your daughter is very adorable; she’s not like you at all.” Louis chuckled as he abruptly changed the subject.

“What do you mean she’s not like me? You just haven’t seen my adorable side!” Mag crossed his arms and feigned anger at Louis’ remark, but there was a hint of amusement in his eyes.

Louis, AKA Thirteen, hailed from an aristocratic family. His father had also been a homeless wanderer during his youth, and prior to Louis’ birth, he had already fathered 12 elder brothers for Louis. Thus, Louis was ranked 13th in age, and was thus given the nickname Thirteen.

Even though Louis’ father became a wealthy merchant, Louis was not interested in business whatsoever in the first 26 years of his life. He was much more interested in honing his blade skills and ran away from the family when he was just 15 years old, escaping to the southwestern border, where he became a soldier. That was also where he had met Mag Alex, who had also just joined the army.

These were Mag Alex’s memories. Mag had thought that he could detach himself from those memories, analyzing them in an objective manner before taking advantage of the situation. However, with Louis sitting across him, he was unable to suppress the feeling that he was in the company of an old friend.

This was a true friend who had stuck with him through thick and thin, the kind that Mag would be willing to entrust his life to in the blink of an eye, even though they hadn’t contacted each other for three years.

That was the feeling of absolute trust that welled up in Mag’s heart as he looked at Louis.

This kind of feeling made him slightly uneasy, but also filled him with yearning.

He began to understand the true meaning of memory integration and assimilation. After assimilating Mag Alex’s memories, both the information and emotions contained within those memories had been passed onto Mag.

For example, he was struck by a powerful urge to protect Amy when he had seen her for the first time. That wasn’t due to his paternal instincts or because of how adorable Amy was. Instead, it was a powerful emotion that had resulted from assimilating Mag Alex’s paternal love for Amy. In his mind, he was Amy’s father, and he wanted to protect and cherish her forever.

Mag didn't resist this assimilation process, as it would make it easier for him to blend into this world. Furthermore, the process didn't affect his independent awareness. If he wanted to, he could even suppress and reject these emotional inclinations, so he had full control over everything.

However, Mag chose to accept this type of emotional inclination on this occasion. Louis was a man who had risked his life to smuggle Alex and Amy out of Rodu, and then found someone to treat his injuries and completely alter his appearance before taking them to Chaos City.

Mag didn't have many true friends in his past life; he wanted to add to that list in this life. There was no stronger bond of friendship than this.

Louis looked at Mag and suddenly burst into raucous laughter.

"Pipe down; you're going to wake Amy up." Mag furrowed his brows.

"Sorry, I suddenly remembered when we first joined the army. You were trying to appear cool and mysterious, so you refused to speak. Our team leader then made you meow 100 times as punishment. Everyone from three entire battalions came to watch. Thinking back now, I think you have shown me your adorable side." Louis was crying from laughter.

Mag's expression immediately darkened. Even though he hadn't been put through that experience himself, he was still struck by an intense sense of humiliation upon recalling that memory.

He had been afraid of Louis bringing up embarrassing stories like this. Thankfully, Amy had already gone to bed.

After his laughter died down, Louis downed all of the beer in his glass in one go before slamming the glass onto the table with a dull thump. He burped and gave Mag a thumbs-up as he praised, "This is some really good wine."

"Would you like another glass?" Mag asked with a smile.

"No, thanks. Killing isn't as satisfying when drunk." Louis shook his head as he rose to his feet with his hand on the hilt of his blade. He looked at Mag with a smile, and said, "Save the wine for me. If I don't come back, then drink it in my stead."

"You said you wanted some mooncakes for your kids, right? I'll prepare some for you to take back with you," Mag offered.

"Don't worry about it. My kids have their mother and their 12 uncles to look after them; they won't starve." Louis shook his head in a nonchalant manner. He looked at Mag, and said, "You should go upstairs and stay with your daughter. You're the only one she has."

"I may have a limp leg now, but don't forget I'm still Lone Wolf Louis. I can take care of a few rats with ease." Louis chuckled as he turned to walk out the door.

Mag fell silent as his hands slowly balled up into tight fists. He looked on with a heavy heart at the limping figure walking into the rain.

The door slowly swung shut, and the sound of the falling rain was abruptly muffled, making it seem as if he had been separated from the outside world.

Mag looked at the empty glass across from him and chugged down his own beer in one go. He then rose to his feet with a smile and picked up an umbrella as well as a sword before striding out the door.

Chapter 593 Eight and One

Howling winds accompanied the pouring rain as a massive storm ensued.

Mag opened his black umbrella to keep out the rain while holding his sword in his other hand. His eyes narrowed as he searched for the limping figure outside.

After taking a glance out of the corner of his eyes at the two figures under the canopy of Mobai's forge, Mag strode out of the restaurant. The wind and rain instantly drenched his shoes and the bottom section of his pants, but his expression didn't change in the slightest as he made his way toward Louis at an even pace.

"He came out, Team Leader, and he's holding a sword!" The thin Black Falcon's eyes lit up initially, but a fearful look then appeared on his face. Why would an ordinary chef carry a sword with him out on a rainy night? If Narson really was correct and this chef truly was Alex, then wouldn't he be able to kill all of them?

"Looks like he really is Alex, and that lame man must have some sort of unspeakable connection to him. He's most likely the one who took Alex to this place three years ago. We have to make sure to kill both of them." Narson was a lot calmer in comparison. Aside from excitement, there was also a hint of wariness in his eyes.

All of the information that he had read stated that Alex had sustained injuries that were impossible to recover from, and that there was no way he would ever be able to use a sword again.

However, just the name Alex was enough to strike fear and caution in anyone's heart. Furthermore, it appeared that this man was far from a cripple, so all of them were naturally feeling quite wary.

Louis strode over to the bushes, and laid his right hand on the hilt of his blade.

Right at that moment, a large umbrella appeared over his head, shielding him from the pouring rain.

Louis faltered as he turned to Mag with a perplexed look.

"The rain is really heavy, so I decided to accompany you for a bit," Mag explained with a smile.

"Alright." Louis hesitated momentarily as he looked into Mag's eyes before making his way into the square with Mag in accompaniment.

The two of them walked at a leisurely pace, and there were no signs suggesting that they were in any peril at all.

Bertley slowly lowered the dagger in his hand as he hid in the bushes. His back was completely drenched in a mixture of rainwater and cold sweat. He stared intently at the man holding the umbrella, and he could clearly see the longsword in his hand.

The sword was quite long and thin, a little different from what the sword in the legends was supposed to be like.

However, the fact that he was walking alongside Louis on a rainy night with a sword in his hand was enough to tell a compelling story.

However, Bertley still wasn't in a hurry to strike, as he had already discovered a few others with the same objective as his. They weren't Cheetahs, so they could only be Black Falcons.

The Cheetahs were under the eldest prince's command, while the Black Falcons answered to the second prince. They existed to do dirty work for their respective masters in the shadows. The two of them were natural enemies, and had fought countless times with many of their members perishing every year as a result of their ongoing feud.

Now, they were all pursuing the same target. There was only one Cheetah present, but there were eight Black Falcons on the scene. The Cheetah wasn't stupid enough to reveal himself and make the first move.

"Go after them!" Narson waved a hand and led the way into the rain. The seven Black Falcons followed along soundlessly.

It's best for me to wait in the shadows for now. Hopefully, Louis and that man can wear themselves out and kill all of the Black Falcons so I can swoop in and land the killing blow. Bertley lurked in the darkness for a while longer before following the eight Black Falcons deeper into the Aden Square.

"You shouldn't have come out. With your past injuries, even if you can walk now, it would be very difficult for you to fight anymore. Your identity has most likely been exposed as well," Louis whispered urgently with furrowed brows.

"I find cooking more interesting nowadays, but I have to admit that I'm still a better killer than I am a chef. As long as I can still hold a sword, I can still kill." A smile appeared on Mag's face as he glanced at their pursuers out of the corner of his eye. He then shook his head, and said, "Besides, some of them were drawn here by you, while the others came here of their own accord. If I don't kill them before they can spread the news, my identity will truly be exposed. Hence, they have to die."

Louis took a glance at the longsword in Mag's hand, and asked, "You changed swords?"

An ironic smile appeared on Mag's face as he said, "This one is a bit more suitable for me at the moment. Besides, my old sword is being kept at the royal palace to commemorate me, is it not?"

"How many of them are there?" Louis asked.

"Eight and one. I'll take on the eight, you take care of the one that came after you. We have to act fast. If we let even one of them get away, we'll be in big trouble." Mag was searching for a suitable location to facilitate their battle. Being forced to kill someone was not ideal in Chaos City. If something were to go wrong, he would most likely have to flee the city with Amy again.

"Did you encounter a goddess who healed your injuries and taught you to cook?" Louis turned to Mag with a skeptical look.

"I've only partially recovered. My body is currently comparable with a 3rd-tier knight's, but I should have no issues killing people." Mag shook his head in response.

“Alright, I’ll get the one that came after me, then come to help you.” Louis nodded in support of Mag’s decision.

Mag finally stopped in front of a large tree. They had arrived in a groove deep into the Aden Square. It was quite far away from the restaurant, and no one would come here on such a rainy night. Furthermore, the sound of the pouring rain and thunderclaps could drown out the sounds of the upcoming battle.

Mag lowered his umbrella, and when he raised it again, he was the only one left under it; Louis had disappeared.

Within the pitch-black forest, rainwater was still drumming on the umbrella.

Narson stopped and gave an almost undetectable whistle, like the cry of an indeterminate bug. The Black Falcons immediately stopped about a dozen meters away from Mag, awaiting the signal to attack with wary expressions on their faces.

This man appeared to be a completely different person compared to the man who had once reigned supreme over the Norland Continent, but everyone was still struck by an extreme sense of pressure in his presence.

Alex was an insurmountable benchmark for all knights on the Norland Continent, and was regarded as a man who had reached the pinnacle of human performance. That was why they had deployed so many 10th-tier magic casters, knights, and demons to assassinate him three years ago.

“I don’t care if you’re Alex or not; you have to die tonight.” Narson gripped tightly onto the hilt of his longsword as he gave two short sharp whistles. He then drew his longsword and rushed toward Mag soundlessly.

At the same time, five people emerged from different directions, all also charging at Mag with weapons in their hands. Meanwhile, the remaining two Black Falcons pulled out wands and began to chant spells in the darkness.

Chapter 594 Invincible Among Beings of the Same Tier

The rain seemed to be getting heavier and heavier. It very rarely rained during autumn in Chaos City, let alone when it came to such a heavy, pouring rain.

This made the customers in the restaurants even more concerned as they waited for the rain to stop. They didn’t want to sit around without ordering anything, so they could only order a pot of tea or some wine along with side dishes here and there. If they didn’t want to brave the rain, then they had to spend some money.

This was a very pleasing sight for all of the restaurant owners. Many of these customers were on their way home from Mag’s moon festival celebration, and were caught in the rain. The restaurants normally had next to no business at this time of day, but thanks to Mamy Restaurant, they were able to profit quite handsomely during what was supposed to be a dry patch.

A fat restaurant owner looked out at the rain with a joyful smile as he murmured to himself, “If only Mamy Restaurant could hold these celebrations on a more regular basis...”

Meanwhile, the notion of holding another celebration was the last thing on Mag's mind. Instead, he was appraising the six incoming assailants with a grave expression.

He could see two glimmers of light nearby, indicating that there were two magic casters preparing to cast spells. Thankfully, they were only elementary spells, which indicated that neither of them was an intermediate magic caster. This was the only silver lining for Mag in this situation. If he had to face so many enemies at once and there were intermediate magic casters among them, then he would be in an extremely dire situation.

This situation was rather similar to the incident that had taken place on a rainy night three years ago.

The 10th-tier magic casters remained further back, while the 10th-tier knights, cavalry, and demons charged toward him with all their might. Memories of that grueling battle were still imprinted deeply in Mag's mind.

His assailants on this occasion weren't great magic casters, 10th-tier knights, and 10th-tier demons, but he was also no longer the Mag Alex of the past who could slay giant dragons.

His enemies were clearly well prepared with six warriors and two long-range magic casters among their ranks. This was not a configuration that was often seen in the royal army, so they were most likely the second prince's subordinates. From the speed of their movement, Mag could determine that there were at least two 4th-tier knights among them, while the others were all at least at the 3rd-tier.

He had just recovered the strength of a 3rd-tier knight, and had perfected all of the sword forms accessible to him in the test field for the God of Cookery the night before. He was wielding the longsword that he had purchased from the system, a sword which was supposed to be the most suitable for his current power level.

Thus, he was plunged into a life-and-death situation again. If he were to be defeated again, no one would spare him this time.

Hence, he had to fight for his life.

Thankfully, the friend and comrade whom he trusted the most was fighting alongside him.

He suddenly let go of his umbrella and allowed it to clatter to the ground. At the same time, he sprang into action, shooting forth toward Narson like an arrow.

Mag still had the vast combat experience left behind by Alex in his mind, as well as countless different solutions to any perilous situations that he might encounter in battle.

Power alone was not enough to make someone the number one knight on the Norland Continent; brains were more important than brawn. Otherwise, he would have already perished back when he had been surrounded on Dragon Island. However, he forced himself to fight on through his severe injuries and slew the most powerful wicked dragons among the group, thereby dispelling his plight. None of the giant dragons dared to stop him as he left, as they didn't know whether he still had the power to kill them as well.

This group of eight assassins was very powerful. At the very least, it was a formidable force for him to deal with in his current state. Furthermore, two of them were 3rd-tier magic casters who had been given

an opportunity to accumulate power in order to unleash their most powerful spells. It would not be a simple matter for Mag to defend himself against 3rd-tier spells.

As such, he had to employ blitzkrieg tactics and kill their leader first. This was a tactic that was applicable whenever one was attacked by multiple assailants.

Narson looked at the oncoming Mag, and his heart thumped wildly in his chest. The hint of fear in his eyes gradually turned into madness as his sword-wielding hand trembled. However, he was trembling from excitement rather than nerves.

Alex was clearly no longer the man he'd once been. Otherwise, he would only have to slash his sword at Narson from afar to put an end to his life. However, he had been reduced to such a state that he had to initiate an attack against Narson.

He was the supremely proud number one knight on the Norland Continent, but he was initiating an attack against Narson, and from the speed that he displayed, it appeared that his power level was only comparable to that of a 2nd-tier knight.

Narson didn't know how he had managed to recover from his injuries, which had been deemed impossible to recover from, but if this was the current extent of Alex's power, then it wouldn't be anywhere near enough. Narson had been a 4th-tier knight for close to 10 years. He held a crushing advantage over Alex in speed, power, and soul power, so how could he possibly not win?

A slightly insane smile appeared on Narson's face as he drew his longsword and stabbed it through the air directly toward Mags' heart. He could already envision Alex perishing by his sword. After that, news of his death would spread like wildfire throughout the entire Norland Continent. As a result, he would become the general of the Black Falcons, and truly become a prominent figure in the Roth Empire.

The other five Black Falcons were still converging toward Mag, while the two magic casters had finished preparing their spells, and were ready to cast them at any moment.

At the same time, Mag and Narson were about to clash.

Narson's sword was pure black, and the entire blade had been smeared with lethal poison. If the sword were to pierce Mag's heart, even a healer wouldn't be able to save him.

Meanwhile, Mag's sword was still in his scabbard. All of a sudden, he abruptly accelerated and drew his sword in one smooth motion.

Narson's eyes immediately widened as the golden light shimmered on his black longsword from the injection of his soul power. This was his most powerful sword strike, and he had slain many 4th-tier opponents with it in the past.

However, his heart was plunged into a glacial pit as Mag flicked his longsword upward in a seemingly casual motion.

The sword strike appeared to be rather light and lacking in power, but it was so fast that Narson was almost unable to even trace its trajectory with his eyes, let alone react to it.

This was definitely not a sword strike that a 2nd-tier knight could unleash. Its speed exceeded what was possible even for a 4th-tier knight.

This meant that he had intentionally hidden his true power!

Narson's heart sank, but his expression became even more insane as he injected all of his power and soul power into his sword. Even if Alex had hidden his true power, he most likely hadn't reached the 4th-tier yet. Otherwise, he wouldn't have to resort to such tactics.

Alex was invincible among beings of the same tier; that was a well-known fact.

A flash of silver light appeared on Mag's longsword. The light was very faint, and could easily be missed unless one was focusing on it.

"Ding!"

The two longswords finally clashed.

The golden longsword was cut off down the middle, and its tip fell to the ground...

Chapter 595 Mag Alex's Forte...

Narson saw many things. He experienced a vision that took him back to when he was 18 years old, when he had received his military uniform from his father and become an honorable knight. Not long after that, his father was killed while standing up for some people who were being harassed by a noble. However, those nobles were beyond reproach, and he couldn't do anything even as a knight. The hierarchical disparity plunged him into crushing despair, and he had even considered launching a suicide attack against them.

However, another nobleman helped him throw those nobles into prison, and the one who had killed his father even died in his jail cell while serving his sentence.

After that, Narson became a Black Falcon.

There were many other people just like him among the Black Falcons. They weren't pursuing riches or power, but they harbored absolute loyalty to the second prince, and would lay down their lives for him without batting their eyelids. The second prince had bestowed upon them their second lives, so they were eternally indebted to him.

For their second prince, they were even willing to set aside their fears to pursue the all-powerful Alex and attempt to kill him should they encounter him.

Alex had once been the brightest star in the royal army. His scintillating light illuminated the entire Roth Empire, and he was vastly renowned even in the scope of the entire Norland Continent.

He was a 10th-tier knight, a dragonslayer, the youngest general in the empire's history... He possessed countless glorious titles, and was regarded as the only man to have reached the peak of human performance.

Even after Alex had been completely disabled following an elaborate assassination attempt, Narson discovered that he was still no match for this legendary man.

He could sense that his opponent only possessed a 3rd-tier power level, but he was simply unable to defend himself from his attack.

Narson's eyes widened as he looked at his own longsword being severed by his opponent's.

A cold sensation glanced past his neck, and all feeling left his body. Blood gushed from his neck, and as his head fell to the ground, he saw his headless corpse also collapsing in the rain.

So he really is Mag Alex... One final thought flashed through Narson's mind before his consciousness was completely snuffed out.

After decapitating Narson, Mag didn't even take a single glance back at him before charging toward the next black-robed figure.

A pillar of blood erupted into the air as Narson's head thumped to the ground. He seemed to have been slain in the blink of an

eye.

All of the Black Falcons' eyes widened in shock and horror upon seeing that, but none of them retreated or uttered a single sound. Instead, they tightened their grip on their weapons and continued to charge toward Mag.

They had to complete this mission even if they were to die. Otherwise, they would suffer a fate worse than death if they were to flee.

Even though Narson had just been insta-killed, they could tell from Mag's attack that he hadn't yet recovered the power of the 4th-tier yet. He was only able to draw Narson into a false sense of complacency by hiding his true power before quickly accelerating to put an abrupt end to their battle.

They still had seven people left; there was no reason for them to panic.

Furthermore, if they were able to succeed in killing Alex, they would be rewarded with unimaginable riches and power. That was undoubtedly a very tempting prospect for them.

"Violent Wind Blades!"

One of the magic casters aimed his wand toward Mag, and a violent tornado swept through the air. Greenish-yellow blades of wind performed a lethal dance, sweeping up soil, leaves, and stones as they hurtled toward

Mag.

"Scorching Flame Slash!"

The other magic caster also unleashed his spell at almost the exact same time. A crescent-shaped blade of fire roughly three to four meters in length whistled through the air toward Mag at an even faster speed than the tornado.

The other black-robed figures were still converging toward Mag, creating an inescapable pocket that cut off all avenues of retreat.

Many trees were uprooted by the violent winds, while leaves that were drenched by rainwater a moment ago were scorched black by the blade of fire. A scorching heatwave hurtled forth while the black-robed figures closed in on their prey.

Mag's expression remained calm as he assessed his current situation. All of a sudden, he stomped with his foot into a nearby tree, thereby allowing himself to instantly change directions. He then used two more trees as his launching pads in quick succession before lashing out with his sword toward one of the black-robed figures.

A dagger sliced open Mag's sleeve and its poisoned edge glanced past, mere millimeters from slicing open the skin on his arm.

The Scorching Flame Slash and Violent Wind Blades clashed behind Mag with a dull thump as the flames were torn apart, but the tornado was also slashed in half.

Mag twisted his wrist, using his sword to shred the heart of the black-robed assailant in front of him before rushing toward the two magic casters nearby.

"Stop him!" The remaining 4th-tier deputy team leader could see what Mag was trying to do, and he immediately tried to rally his troops.

Having seen two of their comrades die in quick succession, the Black Falcons were under immense pressure. Furthermore, Mag had killed Narson, who was the most powerful among them, before killing the weakest member of their team. There was no rhyme or reason to his choice of victims, and no one knew who was going to be targeted next.

Mag's intention was very clear. He wanted to take out the two magic casters. The two long-range magic casters were absolutely useless in a melee, and relied solely on the protection of their comrades. However, these two were imperative to the function of their team, so they absolutely could not be allowed to die yet.

The two magic casters had also discovered Mag's intention, and despite their panic, they still had the presence of mind to unleash their disposable magic shields. At the same time, the tips of their wands lit up as they began to accumulate power for an even more powerful spell.

The fact that Mag was targeting them presented both an intense crisis as well as a fantastic opportunity. If they could hold on and tie Mag down for a while, their teammates would be able to tear him to shreds. The magic shields they had were designed for them by magic casters of the Magus Tower, and could withstand 5th-tier attacks. As such, they were confident that they would be able to defend themselves against Mag.

The other Black Falcons were also aware of this, and they all circulated their soul power to the maximal extent, awaiting the perfect opportunity to strike.

Mag looked at the golden magic shields encapsulating the two magic casters, and a disdainful sneer appeared on his face. It seemed that the people of this world had already forgotten that dragon-slaying was not actually Alex's main forte. Instead, it was...

Chapter 596 Josh Sent You After Me, Right?

A fortune teller had once told Bertley that he would live a very long life, and that it would be very difficult for him to die.

Bertley believed firmly in this. After all, those who were able to crawl out of the slums were normally very hard to kill as they would've died in the slums already without sufficient resourcefulness.

Hence, no matter what kind of situation he was in, he was always able to retain clarity of mind, and then make the decision that would secure the most benefits for him.

In his eyes, there was only eternal profit, so he was never going to incur losses.

People like him often lived very long.

However, only when the blade was slowly withdrawn from his chest did Bertley realize that everything the fortune teller had said was just to swindle him out of a gold coin.

His dagger had pierced the leg of the man behind him, but the latter didn't even wince. Bertley turned around, only to find a set of facial features that he was extremely familiar with as he had been looking at the same face for months on end.

The blade of the dagger had almost completely sunk into Louis' leg, but there was nothing on his face to suggest that he was in any pain. It was as if that leg didn't even belong to him.

"A knight must have integrity and moral compass; if not, then they don't deserve to be called a knight. A man like you does not deserve to be called a knight." Louis wore a cold expression on his face as he withdrew his long blade from Bertley's chest, and also extricated Bertley's dagger from his leg.

A strangled gurgling sound came out of Bertley's mouth as he fell to his knees. He stared up at Louis, and was still unable to comprehend how this man had managed to sneak up behind him unawares.

"Even if I'm lame now, I'm still the man who was once referred to as Lone Wolf. It's an honor for trash like you to die by my hands." Louis pursed his lips before departing toward the location where Mag was engaged in battle.

Bertley's eyes widened as he drew his final breath before the final spark of vitality left his body.

At the same time, Mag flicked his wrist, and the tip of his sword carved out a circle in the air. A faint glow lit up on the tip of his sword as he tapped it onto the magic shield of the fire-type magic caster.

The magic shield instantly began to churn, much like a pot of boiling oil would after being splashed with a drop of water. The tip of the sword was able to melt a hole into the magic shield in the blink of an eye, bypassing it with ease as the magic caster looked on with incredulity on his face. The magic shield had been torn apart as if it had been made from papier-mache, and the magic caster was slain on the spot.

ease

Blood gushed through the air, but Mag was already gone. He easily tore through the second magic shield before making short work of the final magic caster.

Mag Alex's forte was killing magic casters. Regardless of whether they were dark or evil magic casters, or magic casters who harbored enmity toward the empire and the general public, none of them could survive against his sword.

Magic casters were extremely confident in high-tier magic shields, thinking that as long as their magic shields were powerful enough, they would be untouchable in battle.

However, Mag was a special exception to this preconceived notion.

He had once been given an opportunity to enter the Magus Tower, and was going to be one of the brightest young prospects they had ever seen. His magic aptitude had been discovered during his first trip to Rodu, and several elders from the Magus Tower had fought to take him as their disciple, only for him to reject all of them.

He only wanted to become a knight, and becoming a magic caster would clearly contradict with that goal.

As a knight, particularly one who served on the empire's borders, he had to face all types of opponents and life-threatening hazards.

Among them, magic casters who carried many types of magic shields were especially troublesome to deal with. In a battle against a magic caster of the same tier, if they had a magic shield with power that exceeded their tier, then they were going to be very difficult to deal with.

Hence, Mag invented his own set of sword techniques where he injected his magic into his swordsmanship. Following extensive experimentation, he was able to devise a method to easily break through the vast majority of types of magic shields.

Not many people knew about this as most of them were dead.

After withdrawing his longsword from the second magic caster's chest, Mag was completely surrounded. Four swords pierced through the air toward him in unison, and they were all coming from different directions and angles, cutting off all avenues for evasion or retreat.

Mag swept his longsword behind him, addressing the sword that was aimed at his heart from behind first. In doing so, he pushed the sword off its original path and chopped off one of the wielder's fingers. He then brought his sword upward, slicing another oncoming long saber in half before immediately falling backward, upon which three miniature arrows barely glanced past his face. At the same time, he lashed out with his longsword again, piercing another black-robed assailant's abdomen.

In the blink of an eye, Mag had evaded all four lethal attacks and severely wounded one of his assailants.

However, he was not safe yet. A short sword was thrust toward his waist from behind, and even though he managed to evade it, a gash was still torn into his clothes.

Two flying knives hurtled past his ear, severing several strands of his hair. If he had dodged to the side any later, the knives would have penetrated his glabella.

The Black Falcon who had been stabbed in the abdomen was in extreme pain, but he had no intention of giving up, either, as he swung his short saber toward Mag.

Mag's longsword danced in the darkness, and sweat was already beading on his forehead. His body had only recovered to a 3rd-tier standard, and even though he had managed to kill four people in an extremely short time, he had also almost completely exhausted the soul power in his body.

Furthermore, he was walking on an extremely perilous tightrope where he could lose his life at any moment.

“Scum like you are always ganging up on people. Thankfully, I’m not too late this time.” Without anyone noticing, Louis had appeared beside the Black Falcon with the wounded abdomen. He thrust his long saber forward, and its tip ran through the Black Falcon’s back before emerging from the very same wound that Mag had inflicted earlier.

The remaining three Black Falcons’ hearts all jolted with shock upon seeing that. They had seen Mag walking together with a lame man earlier, but their attention had been entirely focused on Mag, so no one paid much heed to the latter. As such, it came as quite a surprise to them that he had re-emerged all of a sudden, and even killed one of their comrades.

Mag took advantage of their split-second long pause to slam his palm into a nearby tree, thereby propelling himself out of the pocket that the three Black Falcons had formed by surrounding him. Immediately thereafter, he threw himself at the final remaining 4th-tier knight.

A series of clashes erupted as the two of them engaged in battle, while Louis took on the two 3rd-tier knights.

10 minutes later, Mag laid the blade of his sword on the 4th-tier knight’s neck, and asked coldly, “Josh sent you after me, right?”

Chapter 597 That’s a Secret

“You never asked stupid questions like that in the past.” Louis looked at Mag with a peculiar expression before taking a glance at the final assassin to fall.

“Perhaps I’ve changed after becoming a father.” Mag shrugged as he stowed away his longsword. He tore a strip off his clothes to bandage up the wound on his arm, then tore off another large strip, and tied it around Louis’ bleeding leg.

“That’s true. Children really do have a way of transforming you.” Louis nodded in agreement. Even as his wound was being bandaged up, his brows never furrowed even in the slightest.

The rain was still falling, covering up all other sounds, and the blood from the battle was quickly washed away.

Mag bandaged up Louis’ wound before standing up, and they both smiled as they looked at each other.

Their clothes were in tatters, and both of them had received different wounds. Their hair had also been plastered to their scalps by the pouring rain, giving them a very disheveled appearance.

Only they knew just how perilous that battle had been. If their teamwork had even been slightly lacking, they would have been the ones to be killed. Either that, or one of the nine assassins would have escaped, and in that case, they would have been as good as dead.

Mag's chest was rising and falling drastically as a sense of complete exhaustion washed over him. He had killed six assassins in less than three minutes, completely overexerting his current body in the process.

After all, there were two 4th-tier knights as well as two 3rd-tier magic casters among them, and any other 3rd-tier knight wouldn't have stood a chance.

Of course, Louis had also performed an instrumental role during this process. He had killed that lurking Cheetah on his own, and also slain the final two Black Falcons.

Louis sheathed his long saber, and said, "You didn't have to take this risk."

"Didn't I say the same thing to you three years ago?" Louis also had children waiting for him at home.

"Your throat had been slit three years ago, so you couldn't say anything on the way here." Louis shook his head in response.

"You have to admit, though, that I'm still a better killer than you are." Mag chuckled.

"I'm a proper businessman now, so it's only normal that I'm not proficient in killing." Louis gave a justified response.

Mag looked at the bodies strewn all over the place, and said, "We need to clean up this place now so Josh and Sean's underlings won't be onto us."

"I'll take care of that." Louis pulled out a small earthen bottle from his pocket. He shielded it from the rain with his hand as he took off the lid before tipping some brown powder onto the bodies. As soon as the powder came into contact with blood, green flames erupted and burned the bodies into dust in the blink of an eye. The dust was then washed away by the rain, and it was as if nothing had ever been there.

"So you're telling me you're a proper businessman when you constantly carry something like that with you? You're not the type of 'businessman' who goes around looting houses and committing murder, are you?" Mag took a couple of steps backward with his hand over his nose. Necroincineration powder was not a very common type of magic powder; it was ideal for getting rid of bodies.

After such a torrential storm, even if someone could tell that a fierce battle had taken place here, it would be impossible for them trace who had been involved in the battle.

"It's not easy being a businessman nowadays, so I have to carry some things to protect myself." Louis slowly dragged his wounded leg behind him as he strode over to the next body and applied the same powder again. Soon, all nine bodies were gone.

The torrential rain washed away any trace of their existence. Without a professional magic caster on the scene, it would be very difficult to completely wipe away all signs of battle. However, it was unlikely that no one would have noticed this battle taking place. Perhaps someone would notice the aftermath tomorrow and alert the Gray Temple to this, but there shouldn't be any way for them to link this battle to Mag.

"I'll fix you up when we get back. It'd be bad if you ended up becoming lame in both legs." Mag made his way over to Louis and carried him on his back as he made his way back to Mamy Restaurant.

“Was Sean involved in the incident three years ago?” Louis asked.

Mag shook his head, and replied, “I’m not sure if he was, but seeing as he sent someone to spy on you, that indicates that he wants to get involved now. He doesn’t want me to reappear and present a volatile factor in his and Josh’s battle for the throne.”

“But if Josh orchestrated everything three years ago, and he wasn’t involved at all, then why would he be concerned that you would appear again? In any case, you wouldn’t side with Josh no matter what, so this should be good news to him.” Louis was still confused.

“That’s because Sean knows that I won’t side with him, either. I knew we were destined to walk different paths from the moment he disclosed his desire to start a second war among species to me. I’ve always advocated for world peace,” Mag explained.

“Tch, world peace? Who was it that was running all over the world and causing trouble everywhere?” Louis chuckled before a serious look appeared on his face as he continued, “You won’t choose Josh, nor will you choose Sean, so who are you going to choose? That carpenter third prince?”

“This is not a choice that I have to make, is it? I’m no longer the Alex I once was; I’m merely the owner of Mamy Restaurant in Chaos City. Besides, if I really did have to choose, don’t you think that carpenter third prince is the best choice among the three?” Mag asked with a smile.

Louis faltered momentarily before nodding in response. “I think you’re right.”

The two of them returned to Mamy Restaurant and escaped detection the entire way back as there was no one else braving the rain outside. Mag closed the blinds and asked the system to get him a professional-grade first-aid kit. After cleaning up Louis’ wound, he stitched it up before applying some ointment and bandages.

In a magical world like this, there were clearly better ways to heal a wound, but this was the best option that they currently had. After a period of rest and recuperation, the wound should heal quite quickly, and his leg should be back to full health.

“Who would have thought that you would learn to cook and treat wounds? I’m really curious about just what happened to you in the past three years.” Louis aimed a curious glance at Mag.

“That’s a secret.” Mag gave a mysterious response before pouring himself a glass of beer. He took a massive sip before letting loose a sigh of satisfaction.

...

In the Moreton Manor, Jeffree sat on a chair, and asked, “How is the Blue Suede Textiles Shop doing?”

Chapter 598 You’ll Really Die if You’re Not Careful

Manard stood beside Jeffree’s desk with a respectful expression on his face as he replied, “After you agreed for Mars to join Young Mistress Gloria at the Blue Suede Textiles Shop, the shop’s sales have not shown any marked improvements. They’re still incurring losses, but they’ve hired a lot of staff to sort out the textiles left over from past years.”

“Sorting out textiles from past years?” Jeffree’s brows furrowed upon hearing that as he said, “They can’t even sell the textiles from this year; what’s the point in sorting through textiles from the past years? Is Mars also becoming a child from interacting with one?”

Manard stood respectfully off to the side and didn’t say anything. He had no right to state any opinions on his young predecessor. In any case, Jeffree was only musing to himself rather than asking for his opinion anyway.

“There are still over 20 days left. If she can’t even manage a textiles shop well, then she has no right to become a candidate to the heirloom.” Jeffree turned back to the book he was reading and didn’t say any more on the matter.

“Will clothing like this... really be popular?”

In the back room in the Blue Suede Textiles Shop, there were three clothes designs laid out on the table in front of Mars and Gloria, and both of them were looking at the designs with uncertain expressions.

Among the three designs, one was a strapless long dress, one was a V neck open back dress, and the final one was a chiffon dress.

The first two dresses were simply too revealing for Gloria’s tastes. In the past, she had been extremely conservative with her dress code, and it was already a huge step for her to be able to wear a dress that could reveal her forearms now. Asking her to wear a dress that would expose her shoulders, collarbone, and even large sections of her back was simply unimaginable.

Furthermore, even the other women in Chaos City would most likely find it difficult to accept such bold dresses.

However, that open back V neck dress was simply far too luxurious to miss out on. There was a veil draped over the dress, lending it a sense of mystery and enigma. If one were to wear it to a ball, they would definitely become the center of attention.

These two dresses really are quite beautiful, though. I feel like I would look really good if I were to wear it for myself or wear it... for him to see, Gloria thought to herself as a blush appeared on her face. She quickly turned her attention to the final dress design.

This dress was comparatively a lot more conservative. The sleeves were loose and hung around halfway up the arms, and there was beautiful embroidery around the collar. There was also a golden chrysanthemum embroidered on the chest to the left, which seemed to instill a soul into the design, making it difficult for one to look away.

The dress wasn’t very different from the styles that commonly appeared on the market, but the intricate details on the upper half of the dress made it stand out.

Mars turned to Gloria with a serious expression, and said, “The third one should be a hit. As long as we promote it well, we should sell a lot of that dress. As for the first and second dress designs, I would advise you to discuss them further with Mr. Mag, Young Mistress. Perhaps he can alter the designs a little. Once we go into the mass production phase, there will be no turning back. We only have about 20 days left, so three designs is already our limit.”

Gloria contemplated the suggestion for a moment before nodding as she replied, "Alright, I'll make a trip to Mamy Restaurant tomorrow morning. In the meantime, find the best seamstress and begin production of the third dress design. The seamstress doesn't have to be the most renowned one, but she must have the best skills, and be able to create the perfect dress completely in accordance with these designs with no alterations made.

"Alright, I'll get started on that right away." Mars nodded before exiting the room. As he departed, a smile appeared on his face as he thought to himself, She may be a little girl, but you certainly can't underestimate her. If this plan succeeds, she'll be sure to secure her position as a candidate to the heirloom.

Outside the restaurant, Mag, who had changed into a clean set of clothes, helped Louis onto a horse-drawn carriage. He handed him a large box of mooncakes as he did so, and turned to the coach driver before instructing, "Please take this drunk customer back to the tavern. Remember to help him up the stairs; he has a little difficulty when walking."

"I... I'm not drunk! I... I... can still drink..." Louis slurred as he sat in the carriage.

"Alright. Rest assured, I'll get him to the tavern safe and sound." The coach driver nodded in response. He normally wouldn't be taking on jobs on such a rainy day, but he was offered a lot of money, so he decided to accept the job in the end.

Mag looked on until the horse-drawn carriage disappeared into the rain. The peaceful nature of his life was going to undergo a change following the events that had just taken place.

Josh and Sean had been after him for three years. Louis' appearance was simply a catalyst that set some things into motion in advance. Thankfully, they were able to contain the situation.

They had left no evidence behind, but the deaths of the Cheetah and the Black Falcons were enough to tell Josh and Sean that he was in Chaos City. That was not good news.

Even this team of assassins had almost managed to kill him. If even more powerful enemies appeared in the future, his luck might not be so good.

Recovering his strength was very important, but even if he reached his former peak, the end result would only be a repeat of what had happened three years ago.

As such, he had to accumulate power in different ways rather than solely focus on strengthening himself. He had to surround himself with allies that would make him a force to be reckoned with even in the face of Josh and Sean rather than be forced to fight on his own as he did three years ago.

In the end, Mag wasn't Alex. He was more of a businessman than a warrior, and he knew what to do at what times in order to secure the most benefits for himself.

Money isn't omnipotent, but it can make countless powerful beings lay down their lives for you. As such, earning more money is imperative, Mag thought to himself. Take the Buffett Family as an example: they had no powerful beings among them, but there weren't many people on the Norland Continent who dared to mess with them, as they had the support of rulers from all races, and there were countless powerful beings in their employment, creating a force that was very much to be reckoned with.

Looks like it's time I approached the city lord's castle and Young Mistress Scheer. I may be able to become the wealthiest person in the world just from selling clothes, but money without power is not going to be enough, either. Mag entered the restaurant and locked the door.

He stood beside Amy's little bed and watched her adorable sleeping face for a long time. He leaned down and kissed her on the forehead, tweaking the wound on his left arm, which throbbed with acute pain, in the process. He furrowed his brows and winced slightly before quietly lying down in his bed.

In this world, you could really die if you weren't careful.

Chapter 599 Do You Know What It Feels Like to Be Ostracized?

The light of a new sun shone down on Chaos City, applying a golden sheen to all of the buildings. The heavy rain from the night prior had washed the entire city clean, making the tiles on the roofs glisten under the sunlight. There were still water droplets hanging off the branches and leaves of the trees, and the air was very clean and refreshing.

The final traces of summer had been completely washed away by the pouring storm, and autumn had officially announced its arrival. All of the people on the streets wore vibrant smiles as if their moods had improved due to the weather.

Mag opened his blinds, and a smile also appeared on his face as the sunlight shone on his chef's suit through the window.

His exceptional regenerative abilities ensured that the wound on his left arm was almost fully healed in just one night. He had applied some new bandages to the wound after getting up in the morning, and it was completely unnoticeable under his chef's suit.

Right at that moment, the system's voice suddenly sounded. "Ding! New mission: open a branch within five days irrespective of location or scale, but it must be a food-themed shop. After the mission is completed, you will receive the opportunity to spin the God of Cookery upgrade wheel again with a guaranteed chance of receiving a prize."

"Opening a branch?" Mag raised an eyebrow, and contemplated momentarily before asking, "Isn't it a bit too early? I can open a branch, but shouldn't the required facilities also be included in the prize? I need to renovate the place, and I need all kinds of kitchenware. Otherwise, what am I going to be able to do in just five days? Open a kebab shop?"

"The roast kebab is a very important late-night meal option in China, and it can support an independent restaurant. I think there are no issues with that suggestion." The system gave a serious reply.

Mag furrowed his brows, and said, "System, I feel like you're holding some sort of misconception about what it means to open a branch. A restaurant would only open a branch when business is very good and they have superfluous resources that would allow them to open a branch. Our business is indeed booming and warrants the opening of a new branch, but I'm the one who makes all of the dishes, especially the roast beef kebab. Without long periods of training and practice, there's no way that anyone can make kebabs that are as tasty as mine. If you ask me to open a kebab shop now, it would

have to be at the expense of this main restaurant. In that case, we'd be incurring losses rather than making further profits."

"That is indeed a problem, but as a system, what would be the point of my existence if I only released missions that aren't challenging? I'll be embarrassed to be in the company of other systems and become their laughingstock. Do you know what it feels like to be ostracized?" The system's enraged and grief-stricken voice sounded.

"I do sympathize with you, but I can't help you. Also, whether you're an embarrassment or not doesn't hinge on whether you release difficult missions. Some people were simply born to be an embarrassment... like you, system." Mag shrugged.

"Nonsense! The system was created by God and is well-versed in all Earthly food recipes created in the past 3,000 years. At the same time, the system excels in fields such as history, science, maths, physics... There is nothing that the system isn't capable of, so what's this about being an embarrassment? If the system were an embarrassment, then what would that make everything else?" The system gave an indignant response.

"System, how much for a lollipop?" Mag suddenly asked.

"Half a copper coin each, with two as a minimum purchase. The system also offers a buy 10 get two free deal," the system instantly replied.

"You see, this is why you're an embarrassment among other systems." Mag rolled his eyes. "I've never seen a system that sells lollipops."

"..." The system fell into an extended period of silence.

Mag broke the silence, and said, "Alright, let's talk about the renovation now. I can supply the storefront, but you have to provide the renovations service to maintain a high standard in the environment of the restaurant. I'm willing to pay a renovation fee for that purpose."

"What's your budget?" the system immediately asked.

"1,000 gold coin at most," Mag replied

The system immediately began to rattle off questions. "What kind of shop front would you like to create? How much area does it take up? How much kitchenware do you need? I can only give a specific quote after an evaluation. If it's only 1,000 gold coins, then I can only offer a simple renovation service without any kitchenware included in the package."

"1,000 gold coins is all I can afford right now, and that's the upper limit. If it's going to be a branch, then it has to have kitchenware to reach acceptable operations standards. Otherwise, it can't even qualify as a branch." Mag wasn't going to budge. He continued, "I'll set up a 30-square-meter ice cream with two ice cream machines. As for the renovations, I'll go with an ice and snow theme. I won't pay if it ends up being too ugly."

"1,000 gold coins isn't enough. Can you add a bit more?" the system asked.

"Don't try to play me for a fool. Mobai's forge was rebuilt entirely from scratch, and it only cost him 1,000 gold coins. I'm only asking for renovations on a tiny 30-square-meter ice cream shop. 1,000 gold

coins will be more than enough for me to hire dwarven artisans for renovations and then purchase two ice cream machines,” Mag replied firmly.

“Alright, 1,000 gold coins for all of the renovations in the ice cream shop as well as two fully automatic ice cream machines,” the system spat through gritted teeth after a brief silence.

“Great. Aside from the renovations, I also want to discuss the matter of the ice cream combo with you. Four flavors is already plenty for the current restaurant, but if we’re opening a specialized ice cream shop, then four flavors won’t be enough. Hence, can you allow me to access the recipes for the other ice cream flavors?” Mag asked earnestly.

“The system can list that as one of the prizes for the Good of Cookery prize wheel. If you complete the mission, you’ll have a chance to receive that prize,” the system replied.

“Alright.” Mag nodded and entered the kitchen to prepare the ingredients for the morning service.

“Um... Would you still like some lollipops?” Buy 10 get two free; it’s an absolute bargain!” the system promoted feebly.

“Piss off!” Mag scoffed. The system was going to be an embarrassment for the rest of its life!

A horse-drawn carriage stopped in front of the restaurant, and Gloria disembarked with a paper bag in her hands. As she did so, she thought to herself, Will Mr. Mag be unhappy if I ask him to alter the designs?

Chapter 600 I Hope This Basket of Eggs Grows More Quickly

Mag didn’t even turn his head as he heard the burst of knocking on the door. He said, “The restaurant isn’t open yet; please come back later.”

“Mr. Mag, it’s me. I have some things that I want to consult you about.” Gloria’s voice sounded outside.

“Ms. Gloria?” Mag opened the door and looked at Gloria with a hint of surprise and puzzlement on his face.

“Sorry for disturbing you so early.” Gloria looked at Mag with an apologetic expression before offering up the designs in her hands as she said, “I had some questions about the dress designs, and I knew you’d be busy once the restaurant opened for business, so I came early. Do you have some free time now?”

“Come on in. We’re partners collaborating on the same project, so you can ask me anything.” Mag nodded with a smile as he stepped aside to allow Gloria into the restaurant.

“Thank you.” A relieved and joyful look appeared on Gloria’s face. The warm smile on Mag’s face soothed her nerves significantly, and she made her way into the restaurant with the designs in her arms.

“What would you like to ask about the designs, Ms. Gloria? Were the annotations unclear, or was the seamstress unable to understand something?” Mag asked with a smile.

“No, no, your annotations are impeccable, and the seamstress can understand everything. It’s just that these two designs...” Gloria pulled out the two dress designs, and a faint blush appeared on her face as

she looked at Mag. She bit down on her lower lip, and didn't know how to explain the situation euphemistically.

Mag looked at the designs for the strapless dress and the open back dress, and a smile appeared on his face as he said, "Your concern is that the two dresses are too revealing, right?"

"No, in my opinion, both dresses are very luxurious and beautiful. I've never seen such beautiful dresses before, but..." Gloria hurriedly waved her hands, and hesitated momentarily before continuing, "It's just that these two dresses might be difficult to accept for the majority of women out there. In that case, they may not sell very well... We only have about 20 days left, and these dress designs are my only hope."

"So what you want me to do is alter the designs and make them more common and normal, is that right?" Mag asked calmly.

"I respect your designs, Mr. Mag, but I also have to be responsible for all of the Blue Suede Textiles Shop's employees." Gloria looked into Mag's eyes and was a little flustered, but she still stood her ground.

"Ms. Gloria, I really admire your imagination and creativity. In my opinion, selling ready-made clothes will be a business model that will reap you resounding success on the Norland Continent." Mag looked at Gloria with a smile, and asked, "But I have to ask you a question now. Let's say you had the choice of getting an item of clothing custom-made for you so everything fits perfectly, or you could get the same item of clothing ready-made, but it only has a few sizes to choose from, one of which will be slightly too large, while the next size down will be slightly too small. Which one will you choose?"

Gloria contemplated the choices for a moment before replying, "I'd choose the custom-made one."

"In that case, what makes you think everyone would storm to your shop to buy your clothes if you release the same designs that they can get elsewhere? What makes you think they'll throw their money to you and make your business a profitable one in 20 days when they can get the same product that is a better fit from a seamstress?" Mag asked.

Gloria's eyes immediately widened upon hearing that. Mag's question was like a clap of thunder exploding in her mind.

"For the open back dress, I suggest you make it a limited edition item with four dresses per color and per size at most. The targeted demographic for this dress will be noble young mistresses like you, and they want only the best for themselves. To them, price is merely a number, so the price of this dress has to be very expensive. Only then would they feel like it's worthy to be worn by them.

"The best way to advertise the dress and draw interest to it would be for someone to wear it in front of them. For example, if a beautiful young woman were to turn up to a certain ball in that dress, all of the women at that ball would be curious where she had gotten such a stunning dress from," Mag continued

Gloria's eyes slowly lit up as she listened.

"As for the strapless dress, the target demographic will be closer to the middle-class population, but don't set the price too low, either. Set it at a price where the middle-class husbands would only buy it after an internal struggle; don't make it too affordable, but also don't make it so far beyond their budget

that they wouldn't even consider it. This is a very fine balancing act which you'll have to get right. This dress will be very popular and somewhat affordable, so don't put a limit on the number of dresses of this style released, and make sure to prepare sufficient stock. The middle-class women won't be attending as many balls and parties, so they won't have to worry about other women wearing the same dress as them during the events they attend, yet the dress will ensure that they'll stand out," Mag continued as he pointed to the other design.

Gloria nodded eagerly, and it was as if stars were twinkling in her eyes as she stared at Mag.

She had thought that Mag was an exceptional chef who just so happened to design clothes as a hobby, but only now did she realize that he was also a brilliant market analyst. He was extremely well-versed in consumer psychology, and could explain the concepts in a very eloquent way, making the information easy for Gloria to absorb. This was an eye-opening feeling that she didn't even get from Mars. The only person in her mind that could compare was her grandfather, the legendary man who had revolutionized the business sector in Chaos City.

She could sense that Mag's words were going to effect a very profound change within her, and that a door was slowly being opened up in front of her.

"Lastly, that chiffon dress will be the cheapest of the three, the kind that women can buy for themselves if they just saved up for a while. This will be something that they can wear when going out or attending events. Even though the price will be lower than that of the other two, you have to make sure that the quality does not slip, as the demographic being targeted here will be the most important one for your business in the future. However, this dress is not very different from the dresses commonly seen on the market, so the most important thing is to make your business known through the use of the other two dresses as advertisement. When that time comes, the concept of forging a brand will be very important," Mag continued.

"A brand?" Gloria was perplexed.

"A brand is a rather abstract concept. Put it this way: when we refer to a bank, the first thing we think of is Buffett Banks. That's what a brand is, in essence. After a brand is established, brand loyalty can slowly be forged, which will draw more and more customers to you, just like how virtually all people looking to store money would go to Buffett Banks," Mag explained.

"So what you're saying is, we should forge a brand for the Blue Suede Textiles Shop, and people will buy from us for our renowned brand even though the clothing we sell may not be too different from the other styles of clothing out there. Is that right?" Gloria's eyes lit up even further as she looked at Mag.

"You can interpret it that way. I personally would suggest getting rid of the 'textiles shop' part of the name. Blue Suede sounds like a very elegant and high-class brand, whereas 'Blue Suede Textiles Shop' sounds a lot more lackluster." Mag was very pleased with Gloria's ability to absorb information, but he still had to offer some advice in specific areas.

"I understand now. Thank you, Mr. Mag." Gloria bowed deeply to Mag before packing up her designs and departing.

Perhaps she can become the queen of the fashion industry in the future. I hope this basket of eggs grows more quickly. Mag looked on at Gloria's departing figure until she disappeared into the square before entering the kitchen.