

## Stay At home 731

### Chapter 731 Your Acting Skills are Rather Shoddy

The crowd parted once again to reveal a lavish unicorn-drawn carriage. There was a man in a set of luxurious blue and purple robes disembarking from the carriage, and he wore a cold expression on his face.

“It’s the second prince!”

A surprised yell erupted from within the crowd, creating quite stir among the bystanders.

“Did I hear that right? The prince is saying that this man is the most powerful spatial magic caster on the continent, and that that chef will be cooking for the king on his birthday?”

“Does that mean the roast beef we had today was cooked by a royal chef?! I can brag about this for an entire year!”

“Only a year? Heck, I’ll be bragging about this for the rest of my life!”

The entire crowd had erupted into a frenzy upon hearing Josh’s proclamation.

“W... W...” Sinclair stared at Mag with wide eyes, unable to articulate his emotions with his limited vocabulary. This was like if a man were living in a slum and someone asked to stay in their house for a night, only for them to wake up the next time morning and tell the owner of the house that he was the king.

For a chef like him, a man that could cook for the king was the king among all chefs.

He didn’t know how to react anymore.

This was truly a day that was filled with surprises.

After hearing Josh’s words, Ike’s face immediately paled as his legs gave out under him, and he collapsed to his knees.

He turned his gaze toward the calm and collected Mag, and couldn’t comprehend why a chef who was good enough to cook for the king would make a bet with him for the sake of these lowly commoners. Was he doing this as a practical joke?

This is bullying!

Ike was struck by the urge to burst into tears. He looked on as Josh approached him from his carriage, and a sense of horror began to well up in his heart.

There was a great magic caster present, as well as a chef who was going to cook for the king. These two were both countless times more important than him, and he couldn’t think of any way to weasel his way out of this situation.

Why is he here? A slightly urgent look appeared in Mag’s eyes as he turned his gaze toward Irina, only to find that she was already nowhere to be found, and he heaved an internal sigh of relief.

He didn't know whether Irina had already guessed his and Amy's identity, but he could tell from her actions that she didn't really trust Josh, either. From the information that he had gathered, he knew that Irina and Josh had once shared a close friendship, and he was glad to see that this was no longer the case.

Irina stood in front of the window of an obscure booth as she murmured to herself, "Josh, what have you done behind my back? If I find out that you played a role in that incident three years ago, I will kill you with my own two hands!"

Mag withdrew his gaze and turned to Josh, and then directed his attention to the trembling Ike. It appeared that this rotisserie most likely had something to do with Josh. Could it be that he was the true owner of the rotisserie?

"Your Highness..." Ike was sprawled to the ground, not daring to raise his head.

"Principal Novan, I didn't think that you'd have arrived in Rodu already. I was going to pay you a visit and ask you some questions about my magic, so I'm glad to see you here." Josh completely ignored Ike as he strode toward Novan and extended a student's salute. He then turned to Ike with a cold expression, and condemned, "For this filthy swine's display of insolence, I'm going to banish him from Rodu forever!"

Ike's expression changed drastically as he kowtowed over and over again while pleading, "Your Highness... Please forgive me, Your Highness..."

"There's no need for that, Your Highness. He did indeed overstep his boundaries, but his crimes aren't punishable by banishment. If you banish him from Rodu, he and his entire family would be cast into grave danger outside these city walls. That would be a tragedy." Novan looked at Ike and shook his head with a sympathetic expression as he said, "Boss Mag cooked roast meat for five hours straight here just so he could remove the sign plastered on the doors of this rotisserie. If you can get rid of all of the signs of this nature on the entire food street, you'll be vindicating Boss Mag's efforts, and I'm sure all of the commoners will thank you for it."

"You're as kind as always, Principal Nova. However, this swine has insulted Mr. Mag in an extremely atrocious manner; what would you like to do with him, Mr. Mag?" Josh turned his gaze toward Mag.

A hint of elation had just appeared in Ike's eyes, but it was instantly replaced by despair. He knew just how much he had offended Mag, so there was no way that Mag would let him off the hook.

"He is indeed quite a detestable character." Mag picked up a chair and swung it directly into Ike's face. The chair was cracked slightly by the impact amid before it was tossed aside. Mag then turned to Josh with a smile, and continued, "However, I've also vented my rage now. It's just as Principal Novan has suggested: if you can eradicate all of the signs on this entire food street, it'll obviously be much more effective than if I were to go around tearing signs off one by one."

As expected, striking someone with a chair really was very satisfying!

The woozy Ike's eyes immediately lit up as a spark of hope lit up in his heart once again. Even though his face was stinging with pain, his heart was filled with joy.

Josh glanced at the chair, which had remained largely unscathed, and he smiled as he said, "You're also quite a kind man, Mr. Mag. In that case, I'll make the decision here and now to eradicate the customer

restrictions imposed by the restaurants on this food street. From now on, noble-exclusive restaurants will cease to exist.”

“Long live the prince!”

A burst of cheers immediately erupted from the crowd.

This was a victory for all commoners!

Josh also wore a smile on his face. He had just won a lot of support from the citizens of Rodu without actually doing much at all.

“As for this swine, he doesn’t deserve to be a chef. Even if I don’t banish you from Rodu, you’re prohibited from working as a chef in a restaurant,” Josh said as he glared coldly at Ike.

“Thank you for your kindness, Your Highness...” Ike kowtowed once again. He was extremely fortunate to even be able to remain in Rodu.

“I’ve only just run off to the toilet for a bit, but it appears that many things have happened during that time. Did our second prince do something praiseworthy again?” A voice tinged with a hint of mockery sounded as Krassu approached with Amy from behind them. He turned to Novan with a smile, and asked, “Glad to see you here; care for a drink?”

“Master Krassu.” Josh extended a respectful salute before turning to Amy with a surprised smile as he remarked, “So Mr. Mag’s daughter is Master Krassu’s new disciple.”

“Do you really expect me to think that you didn’t know about this in advance? Your acting skills are rather shoddy, Josh. If you don’t have anything useful to say, I have to take everyone out for drinks now.” Krassu gave a dismissive wave before turning to leave.

“Looks like I still won’t get the opportunity to have a drink with Master Krassu and Principal Novan. I hope you all enjoy yourselves.” Josh was not enraged in the slightest by Krassu’s dismissal as he turned to Mag with a smile, and reminded, “I hope you won’t forget about the birthday banquet tomorrow, though, Mr. Mag.”

### **Chapter 732 Do You Think This Continent Should be United or Divided?**

The crowd in front of Cary’s Rotisserie gradually dispersed, while Josh’s orders to abolish the existence of noble-exclusive restaurants spread through the entire food street like wildfire.

It was said that a legendary chef had set up a small stall, defeating the entire Cary’s Rotisserie with his individual cooking prowess. This story had been sensationalized into many different editions, each one more spectacular and more thrilling than the previous one.

However, regardless of which edition was being told, the chef in the story had been cemented as a hero, one that fought for respect and equality for all commoners!

Thus, the name of a certain Mamy Restaurant began to circulate throughout the foodie circle of Rodu. Many people were simply unable to forget the delectable roast beef they had tasted, and were beginning to try and track down this restaurant.

However, no one was able to discover any information about this restaurant, let alone find out its address.

Thankfully, it was said that this mysterious chef was going to be cooking for the king during his birthday banquet coming up on the next day, so more information should be disclosed on that occasion.

After all, his roast beef had received glowing praise from Duke Abraham, so there was no way that he would disappear just like that.

The elation of the commoners was intermingled with a less than joyful reaction from the owners of the noble-exclusive restaurants.

The restaurants that had commoner prohibition signs plastered onto their doors were all restaurants that had no lack of customers. For restaurants like those, the noble-exclusive policy was very desirable as patronage exclusively from nobles could bring them additional benefits outside of monetary gain.

However, no one dared to oppose the prince's orders. After all, the head chef of Cary's Rotisserie had already been made into an example to intimidate everyone, so no restaurant owners dared to try their luck.

All of them were lamenting their ill fortune and considering how they were going to respond to the displeasure of the nobles.

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"Congratulations on completing the mission; a stinky tofu recipe has already been delivered!"

The system's voice sounded within Mag's mind as he sat in a streetside booth, followed by the emergence of a shimmering golden experience bag.

"Stinky tofu, eh? That's a dish that everyone loves to hate." Mag fell into deep thought as he looked at the experience bag.

"I didn't think you'd have such strong tastes," the system mocked.

Mag ignored the system as he thought to himself, Stinky tofu is one of the kings of street food known for its distinct putrid aroma, so it's much more suited to being sold in an outdoor stall rather than in an enclosed restaurant.

Those who love stinky tofu swear by it, yet those who hate it are inclined to puke at the mere sight of it.

Such a polarizing dish with such a powerful and distinct aroma was not very suitable to be placed onto the restaurant's menu.

Even Mag himself wasn't sure that he would be able to handle staying in the kitchen if it smelled like stinky tofu all day long.

It would be a massive waste not to learn such a classic dish, but it's really not suited to be sold in the restaurant... It would be best to set up a roadside stall to sell it, Mag contemplated.

This was quite an interesting predicament for him to face.

“Father, Father, are you thinking about Big Sister Irina?” Amy swayed Mag’s arm from side to side.

“Hmm?” Mag returned to his senses as he turned his gaze toward Amy.

“I can tell that you’ve been thinking about something ever since Big Sister Irina left.” Amy looked at Mag with a knowing smile as she said, “It’s alright, Big Sister Irina told me that she would come back to see me. When she does, I’ll take you along with me, so you’ll have to work hard!”

“Er...” Mag didn’t know whether he should laugh or cry about Amy’s insistence on playing matchmaker for him and Irina.

“Big Sister Irina told me to keep an eye on you and get other women to stay away from you; that means she also likes you!” Amy whispered into Mag’s ear.

Mag’s eyelids twitched upon hearing this. He didn’t think that Irina would try to plant a spy right next to him like this. “So you’re on her side now?”

“Of course not! I’m on your side, Father.” Amy shook her head firmly.

Mag heaved a faint sigh of relief. Thankfully, Amy hadn’t completely crossed over to the dark side.

“However, Big Sister Irina is a good person, so you can’t hurt her, Father. That’s why I’ll be keeping an eye on you for her, and I’ll use fireballs to burn any woman who approaches you with bad intentions!” Amy said with a serious expression.

As expected of Amy’s mother; they’ve only been together for one afternoon, and she already has Amy wrapped around her finger. A resigned look appeared on Mag’s face as he nodded, “Alright, I’ll do as you say.”

“Yay!” Amy clapped her little hands together in a joyful manner. It would be great if Father and Big Sister Irina can live together. When Mother comes back, we’ll all be one big happy family!

Krassu and Novan had gone out for a while, and they only returned after all of the dishes had arrived onto the table.

Mag was rather curious what they had done while they were away, but he could sense that their short detour had been more meaningful than a simple trip to the toilet or something of such mundane nature.

The dishes they had ordered gave Mag a few pleasant surprises. This was the most renowned restaurant on the entire food street, and their signature roast chicken was quite exquisite—as were their other dishes. They were on an entirely different level compared to the restaurants in Chaos City.

Looks like it won’t be easy to become the God of Cookery of the Norland Continent. Mag picked up a dessert food that was as transparent as crystal, and held it up in front of his eyes for careful examination.

However, he was also filled with confidence at the same time.

He had been chosen by God, and failure was not an option for him.

As such, he had to walk down this path to the very end.

Novan put down his chopsticks, and turned to Mag with a smile as he asked, "Boss Mag, is this your first time in Rodu?"

Mag hesitated momentarily before nodding with a smile as he replied, "Kind of."

"What do you think of Rodu compared to Chaos City?" Novan asked.

Mag thought about this carefully before replying, "Chaos City epitomizes the concept of equality, a concept which is nothing more than a distant dream for the commoners of Rodu. That point alone makes me prefer Chaos City over Rodu."

A gratified smile appeared on Novan's face as he sighed. "The path to equality is just as grand as it is arduous. Even Chaos City is far away from reaching true equality."

"True equality doesn't exist so long as human nature remains. After all, who can truly be selfless enough to treat everyone else as equal to themselves?" Mag shook his head in response.

Novan's eyes lit up as he smiled, and said, "You really are an interesting man, Mr. Mag."

He then hesitated momentarily before adopting a serious expression as he continued, "Mr. Mag, do you think the continent should be united or divided?"

### **Chapter 733 That Really Scared Me!**

Are you serious, Principal Novan? You're asking a chef whether the continent should be divided or unified? Mag's eyelids twitched as he looked at Novan's serious expression. He felt as if here were a primary school student being scrutinized by the principal.

After carefully contemplating the question, Mag cleared his throat, and replied, "In my opinion, the continent will go through a constant cycle where unification will give way to division, and vice versa. Everything will follow the natural order and cannot be swayed by one man, let alone be predicted by a chef like me."

"A constant cycle, eh..." Novan repeated to himself before suddenly bursting into laughter as he said, "Haha, who would've thought that your insight would be much wiser than that of old men like me. Indeed, the natural order is not something that can be defied by any single man."

"Looks like the continent is going to be plunged into turmoil soon." Krassu heaved a faint sigh as he took a sip of wine, seemingly in rather low spirits.

Mag looked at the two of them, and didn't say anything further. He also had a feeling that a major event was going to take place soon. Could it have something to do with the king's birthday banquet scheduled for the next day?

Only Amy was joyfully enjoying the dishes on her table, stuffing food relentlessly down her mouth as if her little stomach could hold an entire elephant.

Following the conclusion of the meal, Krassu and Novan departed, while Mag and Amy returned to the second prince's manor on the horse-drawn carriage.

Along the way, the coach driver who had been knocked out by Irina earlier in the day carefully inquired Mag about what had happened.

Mag naturally blamed it on Sean and his rhinoceros-drawn carriage, thereby diverting the center of attention away from Irina and pinning the blame on Sean.

Josh and Sean were already sworn enemies, and this latest incident would serve to stoke the flames of their mutual enmity. However, that was not something for Mag to be concerned about. All he had to worry about was cooking for the king the next day.

Mag knew that the king was a fan of sweet foods, so aside from the grilled fish, steak, and braised chicken, he had also prepared a final trump card: his ice cream cake.

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After brushing her teeth, Amy lay down on her bed with her head resting on Mag's arm. She looked up at Mag with her large bright eyes, and whispered, "Father, Big Sister Irina told me that she knew Mother, and that Mother was the most beautiful elf in the entire elven race, is that true?"

She sure is modest... Mag rolled his eyes internally, but he nodded with a gentle smile as she replied, "That's right, your mother is the most beautiful elf in the entire world, just as beautiful as Irina."

"Hehe, you told me you didn't like Big Sister Irina, but you were lying, weren't you?" A smug smile appeared on Amy's face.

Mag smiled, and answered her question with one of his own. "Do you like her, Amy?"

"Of course I do!" Amy immediately nodded with a smile on her face as she said, "When she hugged me, I felt like I was being hugged by Mother. It was so warm and comfortable; completely different from when I'm being hugged by Teacher Luna or Big Sister Yabemiya."

A sweet smile appeared on Amy's little face, and she slowly closed her eyes before falling asleep.

"That's because she really is your mother." Mag gently planted a kiss on her forehead before also closing his eyes.

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"Xiao Mi... Amy... She's such an adorable and thoughtful little girl, but I've never had a child before; how should I live with her in the future?"

"I heard that there are many people abducting children nowadays; should I tie her on a leash?"

"I heard all little kids are really picky with their food; will she dislike my cooking?"

"I heard..."

Within an intricately crafted room, a gorgeous figure sat on the windowsill, murmuring to herself with a concerned look on her face.

...

On the border of the Wind Forest.

A beautiful elf emerged from a bush with her hands on her hips. She had a rather cross expression on her face as she murmured to herself, "It's been 16 days... Have those bastards really canceled the deal?"

There were leaves all over her hair and body, and her dress was rather dirty and in disarray. She also had a pair of dark circles around her eyes, and the exhaustion on her face was quite apparent.

"Tomorrow will be the king's birthday, and Princess Irina has already gone to Rodu. If they haven't canceled the deal, then it'll most likely be taking place soon." The elf took a glance in the direction of the Wind Forest, and a determined look reappeared on her face as she turned and disappeared into the dense forestry.

...

In the study of the second prince's manner.

Josh stood behind his desk with his brows furrowed as he mused, "Looks like Sean is also suspecting Mag's identity, which is why he deliberately crashed into my manor's horse-drawn carriage. I bet he wasn't expecting Irina and Krassu to be on the carriage, though."

Seuss had already returned to Rodu. In his coarse voice, he replied, "Your Highness, we are still unable to verify that man's identity, and he really is very suspicious. Could it be that he truly is Alex in disguise?"

"Do you think that Alex would sell roast meat at a roadside stall for an entire afternoon just so he could rip a sign off a restaurant? Do you think Alex could possibly be such an exceptional chef?"

"That... That's indeed rather implausible."

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The next day, Mag woke up bright and early. After dressing Amy and helping her brush her teeth, he heard the sound of knocking on the door.

He opened the door to find the butler from the day before standing outside, looking at him with a smile as he said, "Are you ready, Mr. Mag? I'm here to take you and your daughter to the royal palace."

"Amy as well?" Mag was rather surprised to hear this. He was only a chef, after all, and it was clearly inappropriate for a chef to bring a family member along with them into the royal palace. He had already made preparations to leave Amy behind in the second prince's manor for a day.

The butler's expression became even more respectful as he explained, "His Highness told me that Master Krassu is insisting on taking Young Mistress Amy to the palace as his disciple."

The second prince was very close with the Magus Tower, so he was naturally already aware that Amy had defeated Kola and was a four-year-old 5th-tier magic caster. A child of her extraordinary talent was sure to become a legendary figure one day.

Mag nodded as an enlightened look appeared on his face. Indeed, it certainly wouldn't be an issue for a man of Krassu's prestige to take his disciple to attend the king's birthday banquet.

On the horse-drawn carriage, Amy turned to Mag, and whispered, "Father, will we be seeing Big Sister Irina today?"

“We probably will.” Mag nodded before whispering, “Little Amy, make sure you pretend not to know Big Sister Irina all that well when we get to the palace.”

“Don’t worry, Father, I know what to do. Big Sister Irina is so beautiful, so there must be a lot of people who want to marry her. If they know that Father also wants to marry her, they’ll be very angry at Father, so we both have to pretend not to know Big Sister Irina,” Amy analyzed with her bizarre logic.

“Good girl.”

Mag patted Amy’s little head with a rather peculiar expression.

After the horse-drawn carriage stopped within the grand royal palace, Mag and Amy opened the carriage’s curtain, only to be immediately greeted by the sight of a statue of a birdman that was about as tall as a grown man.

“What an ugly bird! That really scared me!”

Amy reflexively kicked the wooden statue flying.

### **Chapter 734 You Little Idio**

The wooden statue was sent flying for over three meters by Amy’s kick, crashing to the ground where it crushed a large patch of flowers and made a large crater in the garden.

“Your Highness!”

“Are you alright, Your Highness!?”

“Hurry up and get His Highness out of that thing!”

A bunch of people rushed forward and scurried around, trying to prise off the birdman’s head.

Mag and Amy looked on with dumbstruck expressions at the sight of the birdman statue on the ground. Its golden wings had been carved in an extremely vivid and lifelike manner, with each and every feather completely independent of each other, and all of them were shimmering with a faint metallic hue under the sunlight.

The bird’s beak and eyes had also been exquisitely carved, and the craftsmanship really was quite exceptional.

However, it was indeed quite a jarring sight to see such a massive bird standing at the center of the royal palace in a completely stationary manner, so it was no wonder that Amy had been startled to the point of kicking it flying.

If Mag had been the one to emerge from the carriage first, then he would also most likely have done the same thing.

However, Mag suddenly realized something upon seeing the panicked guards running around like headless chickens. Your Highness? Could it be... that the carpenter third prince is in that wooden statue?

Alex had very few memories of this third prince as the latter was completely obsessed with carpentry and woodwork, and had absolutely zero interest in inheriting the throne.

In fact, he never attended any events unless his attendance was strictly mandatory.

There were even many people who had already forgotten that the Roth Empire even had a third prince.

His talent is extraordinary. As expected, he really isn't cut out to be a prince, Mag praised internally at the sight of the exquisitely crafted wooden statue.

"Stop! Stop! Which idiot is trying to tear my head off? I'm going to be decapitated if you keep that up!" A slightly tender and youthful voice sounded.

There were two people currently in the process of pulling at the head of the wooden statue, and they hurriedly stopped what they were doing, allowing the bird's head to clunk onto the ground.

"Ugh..."

A pained groan sounded from within the bird.

"Your Highness!"

The two men hurriedly picked up the bird's head again.

"That's enough! Just help me up first, you idiots!" A resigned voice sounded from within the bird's head.

The guards hurriedly helped the birdman to his feet.

Amy hadn't held back at all with that kick, and several of the feathers on the birdman's chest had been cracked, along with a few feathers on his back. Some parts had also been stained by the grass and mud, making it appear like a ruined artistic masterpiece.

"Capture them at once!"

The leader of the guards waved a hand, and several saber-wielding guards surrounded Mag's carriage to detain them.

The butler who had brought Mag to the royal palace wore a tense expression as he said, "This is the chef that His Highness, the second prince, invited from Chaos City to cook for His Majesty. Please forgive them for this unfortunate accident."

The butler had clearly also already realized that the man inside the birdman statue could only be the third prince, and was feeling very flustered as a result.

The second prince was quite powerful, and was heavily favored by the king, but the fact of the matter was that Amy had attacked the third prince, and that was a crime punishable by death.

Furthermore, the second prince would definitely completely detach himself from the incident and cut all ties with Mag and his daughter in order to uphold his image.

That could spell trouble for him as well.

The leader of the guards strode forward and glared at the butler as he said, "Do you know whom you just attacked? Even if you're from the second prince's manor, all of you must be detained today! Let me see just who has the guts to attack His Highness, the third prince!"

“B-but...”The butler was at a loss for what to do.

“Capture them at once!” the leader of the guards repeated in a cold voice.

All of the guards converged around the carriage, having already drawn their sabers. However, all of them were looking at Mag and Amy with cautious expressions on their faces. To be able to send the third prince flying with a single kick despite the fact that he was wearing his heavy wooden costume indicated that she possessed strength that was at least comparable to that of a 2nd-tier knight.

I should’ve checked the horoscope before coming out today. Mag sighed internally as he shielded Amy with his body. He was contemplating whether he should bring up Krassu to intimidate these guards, but he didn’t know if that would work in the royal palace.

“Stand down, you idiots!”

A grumpy voice sounded from within the bird’s head. The birdman flapped his wings toward his belly a few times, looking like a maladroit penguin as he did so. He seemed to be trying to press something, but was unable to reach it, and was putting on a rather adorkable display.

The leader of the guards hesitated momentarily before indicating for the guards to get back for now.

“Meow~”

Ugly Duckling looked on for while before bursting into laughter in Amy’s arms.

“Look, Father, that birdman is really ugly, but it’s so funny!”

Amy also faltered momentarily before bursting into laughter.

Mag also wore a rather peculiar expression on his face. The previously grand and imposing bird was now looking like an uncoordinated penguin, and it really was quite a hilarious sight to behold.

Even the guards’ faces were flushed as they struggled to suppress their mirth.

The birdman skipped on the spot in a frustrated manner as he yelled, “What are you idiots looking at? Hurry up and get over here! Smooth down that feather that’s jutting out on my stomach, and adjust my wings so they’re straight again; I can’t reach them!”

“Hahaha, this is hilarious!” Amy was laughing so vigorously that she almost flung Ugly Duckling into the air.

Meanwhile, all of the guards rushed toward the birdman to smooth down his feathers and adjust his wings.

“Crack! Crack!”

Following two loud cracks, a slit opened up between the body and the head of the birdman, and a young man with a large head jumped out from within while clasping his hand over his bright red nose.

The leader of the guards strode over with a concerned look, and asked, “Are you alright, Your Highness?”

“Why wouldn’t I be alright, you idiot? I only fell on my nose.” The young man removed his hand from his nose and gave the guard a dismissive wave, only for blood to begin dripping down from his nostrils.

“His Highness is bleeding!”

“Hurry up and get a doctor!”

All of the guards were instantly thrown into a panicked frenzy again.

“You really are a bunch of idiots; it’s not like I’m going to die from a nosebleed.” The young man pulled out a white handkerchief from his pocket and stuffed one of its corners up his nose. He then turned to Mag and Amy with furrowed brows and an intrigued look in his eyes as he said, “I don’t recognize you two idiots; is this your first time here in the royal palace?”

He then turned to Amy with a curious look, and asked, “And you there, you little idiot, you’re not very old, but you sure have a keen eye. Why do you say my statue is ugly?”

Amy shook her head as she looked at the young man, and said, “Little Mushroom Head, your head is really big, but your eyesight is really bad!”

### **Chapter 735 Big Sister Irina Told Me**

This young man appeared to be around 14 to 15 years old, and there were a few freckles on his nose. His head was almost twice as big as that of a normal person of his height, yet his body was quite frail and delicate. He really did resemble a large mushroom, and Mag had to pretend to cough into his hand in order to hide his amusement.

This young man was none other than the third prince of the Roth Empire, Yuri.

Even though Alex had only met him on a few brief occasions, his peculiar appearance ensured that he remained clear in Alex’s memories.

Compared to three years ago, he had grown slightly taller, but his head was just as eye-catching and unforgettable as ever.

There weren’t that many people in this world who could leave such a strong and lasting first impression like he did.

“Insolence!! How dare you invent such a rude nickname for His Highness!!” the guard leader scolded.

Yuri raised a hand to silence him, and he didn’t appear to have been irked by Amy’s words at all. Instead, a curious look appeared on his face as he asked, “Little Mushroom Head? Do you know Big Sister Irina?”

Mag raised his eyebrows, and he was suddenly struck by an ominous premonition.

Amy glanced at Mag before shaking her head as she replied, “No.”

“You two look quite similar. Both of you have silver hair and pointy ears.” Yuri stroked his chin as he appraised Amy, and mused, “Big Sister Irina told me that if she ever had a daughter, she’d offer her daughter’s hand to me in marriage.”

Before Amy had a chance to say anything, a dangerous look had appeared in Mag's eyes as he blurted out, "No, she didn't, don't spout nonsense!"

Any man who dared to lust after Amy was his enemy, even if it were just a young man raising a hypothetical scenario. If they were situated somewhere other than the royal palace, Mag might have drawn his sword already.

"Hmm?"

Amy and Yuri both turned to Mag in unison.

"Are you alright, Father?" Amy asked with a perplexed look.

"Are you rejecting me, Big Idiot?" Yuri was also rather befuddled.

"Nothing of the sort. I just think that she was most likely only making a joke and never took it seriously." Mag concealed the dangerous light in his eyes. This was the royal palace, after all. However, he had made a mental note to himself to bring up this issue with Irina once they revealed their identities to her.

Amy was still very young, so he absolutely refused to even consider marrying her off to anyone.

If Yuri was going to force the issue, then he wouldn't mind making it so that there was one less prince in the Roth Empire.

"Really?! That's great!" Yuri's eyes lit up as he patted his chest with a joyful expression, and said, "That promise has been constantly weighing down on me like a nightmare this entire time. Big Sister Irina is so violent and unreasonable; what kind of big idiot would want to marry her? Her daughter is probably just like her, so it would be great if she wasn't serious. In any case, woodworking is much more interesting than women!"

Mag was slightly taken aback by Yuri's reaction before a relieved and gratified look appeared on his face. "I'm glad you're so dedicated to your craft, Your Highness."

"Looks like we'll be meeting again soon. I have to go and prepare another present for Father now. See you later, Big Idiot, Little Idiot!" Yuri waved at Mag and Amy before rushing away.

The guard leader glared at Mag, clearly unwilling to let him off the hook. However, he still hurriedly caught up to Yuri, and asked, "Your Highness, you prepared that bird statue for so long, but it's broken now; what do we do?"

"You bunch of idiots, I told you that the bird was really ugly, but you all tried to convince me otherwise. That little idiot finally told me the truth. Do you think it's appropriate that I give Father a present that's ugly and only good for frightening people?" Yuri asked with a displeased look.

"This..."

The guards carrying the bird statue didn't dare to say anything, but all of them still wore concerned expressions.

However, Yuri himself wasn't concerned in the slightest as he smiled, and murmured to himself, "It's already too late to make something else from scratch, so it looks like I'll have to bring out my trump card."

The guard leader's expression immediately became even more concerned as he whispered, "Your Highness, that thing still hasn't been tested. If something goes wrong..."

"What could go wrong, you idiot? Hurry up and come with me! We have to give it a quick paint job!" Yuri quickened his pace, and all of the guards could only jog after him.

...

Mag disembarked from the horse-drawn carriage and looked at Amy with a serious expression as he said, "Amy, we can't go around attacking people in the royal palace, understood?"

Amy couldn't enter the kitchen, so the butler was going to take her to look for Krassu.

"Alright." Amy nodded obediently.

"Good girl." Mag patted Amy's little head with a smile before turning to the butler as he said, "I'll have to trouble you to take Amy to Master Krassu."

"Leave it to me." The butler hurriedly nodded as he wiped the cold sweat off his forehead before continuing onward with Amy in his horse-drawn carriage.

The one sitting in the carriage was a baby-faced demon who dared to kick the third prince and give him such a derogatory nickname. That kick had almost ended his career, and potentially even his life.

She was not someone he could mess with!

Mag wasn't worried about Amy at all, seeing as she was going to be with Krassu. There weren't many people in this world who could hurt Amy right under Krassu's nose, and the fact that Novan was with them added an extra layer of security.

He looked on as the horse-drawn carriage disappeared around the corner before turning his attention to the grand palace before him.

As compared to looking at it from afar, seeing the royal palace up close presented an even more awe-inspiring visual stimulus.

The palace buildings were constructed from massive stones and semi-transparent golden tiles that shimmered with a dazzling light under the sun. The people in front of the main palace were as tiny as ants in comparison, and it wouldn't be a surprise to anyone if this was actually a palace for giant dragons.

Even though Mag had seen the Forbidden City in his past life. While that structure was also very spectacular, he was still awestruck by the sight of this grand palace in this alternate world.

"Please come with me, Mr. Mag." A carriage filled with all types of kitchenware and pre-marinated ingredients had been following their carriage this entire time. The driver disembarked before extending a respectful salute toward Mag.

Mag withdrew his gaze and turned to the massive building with a huge plaque that read "Royal Kitchen" hanging above its doors. A smile appeared on his face, and he nodded as he replied, "Sure."

As he made his way toward the doors of the kitchen, Mag heard the sound of clanging kitchen utensils coming from inside the kitchen, and he could already imagine the bustling scenes within.

This occasion was a competition between all of the top chefs of the Norland Continent. Everyone was trying to earn the approval of the king, and the one who did so would be the winner of this unofficial contest.

The guards at the entrance of the kitchen verified Mag's identity before pulling open the heavy doors, upon which the commotion within grew even louder.

### **Chapter 736 We Have to be Accepting of Him**

Outside the royal palace, within a dimly lit room, three tall and broad figures were seated together.

"The warriors of the orc race have already spilled much blood on the border between the orc tribe and the Roth Empire. I hope your demon race and forest troll race can actually show some sincerity this time rather than simply make empty promises," a green-skinned orc said in a solemn voice.

The forest troll cracked the joints in its necks as it replied in an extremely coarse voice, "Don't worry, the most powerful troops of our forest troll race have already arrived at Rodu. This time, we'll make sure that Irina stays here forever."

A cold light flashed through the spatial demon's crimson eyes as it chuckled. "Our three races will dictate the direction this world progresses in. The elves, humans, and goblins should know their place and resign themselves to acting as our food. They don't deserve to own territories, nor do they deserve to treat us as equals. Let's break them down from the inside..."

...

Mag carried his box of knives into the massive kitchen that was around as large as a soccer field. Despite the enormity of the kitchen, the entire place was almost completely stacked as there were over 1,000 chefs present.

These were the most exceptional chefs on the Norland Continent, and all of them had gathered here to offer up their most delicious dishes to the king.

It's more spectacular here than I imagined, Mag thought to himself. He glanced at a demon chef who was swinging three chef's knives through the air like the wind, then at a forest troll who had a pot sitting above the flames burning on his head, and then at an elven chef who was cooking as gracefully as if he were casting magic spells.

Chefs from different races displayed unique and incredible cooking styles as all manners of delectable aromas wafted through the air. The sound of clanging kitchenware created a symphony that was music to every chef's ears.

Mag looked around with an intrigued expression. This was the first time he had seen so many colleagues from so many diverse backgrounds, and he felt as if he were a small child in a candy shop.

“Mr. Mag, this is your cooking station. The dishes will be brought out to the king in two hours; we hope you’ll be ready by then.” The guard that led Mag into the kitchen pointed at a cooking station before asking, “Are you here with anyone else?”

Mag placed his box of knives onto the cooking bench before shaking his head with a hint of confusion on his face. “No, I’m alone. Why do you ask?”

“I’m just a little surprised; even dessert chefs have a few helpers with them, so I thought you’d at least have an assistant sous chef with you.” The guard smiled as he said, “In any case, I wish you the best of luck.”

“Thank you.” Mag nodded in response. Indeed, all of the chefs here appeared to have assistants with them, so he stuck out like a sore thumb as he stood alone at his cooking station.

“Kalulu, you’re only making a cucumber salad, and even you have two assistant chefs with you; what could this guy be cooking?”

“Maybe he’s here to mix some drinks?”

“Shh, don’t badmouth people.”

The people at the neighboring cooking station were discussing quietly among themselves.

Mag turned around, and discovered a rather portly man in a white chef’s suit standing beside him. The man had a set of bashful features, and as their eyes met, he gave Mag a polite smile.

The man bore a strong resemblance to Baymax, and his appearance made him appear quite amicable.

There were two little fatsos beside him, both of who appeared to be around 15 to 16 years of age. The three of them all bore an uncanny resemblance, and it was quite clear that those two were the chef’s sons.

The chef wore a curious look as he asked, “Hello, my name is Kalulu. These are my sons, Kakalu and Lukaka. What are you cooking today, Brother? Why are you alone?”

The two little fatsos were also looking at Mag with curious expressions.

They were already considered to be rather understaffed compared to the other groups of chefs, and that had struck them with a sense of inferiority. As such, they were feeling a little better after seeing a man who was cooking all by himself.

Kalulu, Kakalu, and Lukaka... Mag felt as if just saying their names was a tongue twister. He smiled as he replied, “I’m Mag. I won’t be cooking much today, so I don’t need any assistance.”

According to Josh’s requirements, he only had to make enough food for about a 10-person portion. That was a piece of cake for him, so he didn’t require any assistance.

“I understand.” Kalulu nodded with a knowing expression. Even though it was quite an honor to cook for the king during his birthday banquet, it was quite embarrassing that he had only been tasked with making a salad. As such, he thought that he could empathize with Mag.

"It's alright, Brother Mag, we may not have enough people as them, and the dishes we make may or may not be presented to His Majesty, but our job is a lot easier than everyone else's. Look at that forest troll with the massive pot above his head. His entire head must be burning right now," Kalulu consoled with a smile.

"Indeed." Mag didn't quite understand why he was saying this, but he still nodded in response. It appeared that Kalulu had misunderstood something, but Mag couldn't be bothered to clear up the potential misunderstanding. As such, he turned to the guard beside him, and instructed, "Please place this over there, give the condiments to me..."

"Father, why is he using so much kitchenware when he's cooking one dish like us?" Lukaka asked with a confused look.

"He must've brought his entire kitchen here. Even though he can only make one dish, he still has to pretend like he was tasked with making many dishes. That's a really good idea; why didn't we think of it?" Kakalu mused as he stroked his chin.

Kalulu wore a serious expression as he scolded, "Every chef has his own pride, and I can really understand Brother Mag's feelings here. Back when I came here to cook in the royal kitchen for the first time, I even brought my massive earthenware jar for pickling cucumbers to make myself look more important. Looking at him really reminds me of my younger self. We have to be accepting of him and try to protect him rather than insult him to further wound his ego."

"You're right, Father." The two brothers nodded in unison.

### **Chapter 737 The World of Chefs**

Within the massive kitchen, there were cooking stations of different sizes for different chefs. Chefs who were massive in size and had a large team with them were assigned cooking stations that were several dozens or even over 100 square meters. In contrast, chefs like Mag and Kalulu who weren't very big and didn't have large teams were only assigned cooking stations that were around 10 square meters.

Mag's cooking station was in the very corner of the kitchen, and all of his kitchenware had just been laid out onto the cooking bench by the guard that had accompanied him. Mag glanced down at his watch, only to find that it was still quite early, so he wasn't in a hurry to start cooking.

He didn't really care about how big his cooking station was. As long as it was large enough, he was content.

Kalulu and his two sons weren't in a hurry to begin, either. Their cucumbers had already been pickled, and all they had to do was slice and plate them—a process that wouldn't take very long at all.

As such, none of them had much to do, so they continued to chat with each other.

All of the smallest cooking stations were located in the northwestern corner of the royal kitchen. When the chefs from other parts of the kitchen glanced toward this corner, all of them wore rather disdainful looks.

The chefs in this kitchen that had small teams were predominantly looked down on as insignificant chefs who were only there to make up the numbers.

Kalulu was very glad to find a brother who could empathize with his pain, so he was also very happy to speak with Mag. Being spoken to as an equal in the royal kitchen was a very refreshing and comfortable feeling for him.

“Brother Mag, have a look at the largest cooking station over there in the north. The chef there is the number one chef in the entire Roth Empire, Bellmann. He’s the number one head chef of the royal palace, and he’s responsible for cooking for His Majesty every day. He’ll also be cooking 70% of all of the dishes on the birthday banquet today, while the other 30% of dishes will be chosen from the other chefs,” Kalulu said with a hint of envy in his eyes.

“Will your pickles be selected?”

“The menu hasn’t been decided yet, but having your dish selected is like winning the lottery; we shouldn’t pin our hopes on it. There are so many chefs here, and any of them will be able brag for the rest of their lives if their dishes were to be chosen by His Majesty.” Kalulu shook his head with a forlorn sigh.

After a brief pause, Kalulu looked up at Mag, and consoled, “But don’t get frustrated or depressed. You’re still young, so the future is yours. Maybe His Majesty will suddenly want to eat a salad during one of his future birthdays and your dish will be chosen. In that case, you’d become the best salad chef on the entire continent.”

I haven’t even learned how to make salad yet... Mag thought to himself rather speechlessly.

The world of chefs was also like an empire of sorts, and Bellmann was the king of the empire, standing on a pedestal that could not be shaken.

In contrast, all of the chefs whose dishes were assured to have a place on the king’s table were like the royalty of the empire of chefs.

Those who were not yet established stalwarts yet had a good chance of having their dishes chosen by the king were like the promising generals of the empire. Even though there was no royal blood flowing in their veins, they could gain recognition and power for themselves through their splendid skills.

As for people like Kalulu, they were like ordinary footmen. They had a place in the empire of chefs, but it was not a very significant one at all.

It didn’t really matter to them what the state of the empire was like, and they were only mere bystanders spectating the battle for supremacy in the cooking world.

“Brother Mag, I really regret not meeting you sooner. If I had met you earlier, I wouldn’t have been so bored in the royal kitchen during these past few years.” Kalulu patted Mag’s shoulder with an amicable expression.

“Look like the pickle guy finally graduated from the last cooking bench. Who’s that guy that replaced him, though? He appears to be by himself. Could it be that there’s an even simpler dish than sliced pickles?”

“Sure there is! You can serve unsliced pickles! Hahaha!”

Mag and Kalulue were just conversing with each other when a loud burst of derisive laughter erupted from the nearby cooking stations.

An enraged look appeared on Kalulu's face. "Those bastards! They're also just salad chefs, yet they think they're better than everyone else!"

"Their salad is nowhere near as delicious as Father's pickles! They only get a slightly larger cooking station because they have a larger team of chefs!" Lukaka was also quite angry.

"Alright, let's not stoop to their level." Kalulu waved a hand before turning to Mag as he said, "Don't be sad, Brother Mag. You're still young and full of potential. I'm sure you'll be able to outstrip them soon! Nandel and Vasir are just a pair of old men who don't know how to do anything other than bad-mouthing others."

"Don't worry, I'm fine." Mag nodded in response. He was quite touched by Kalulu's thoughtful words, even though they weren't really applicable to him.

Nandel and Vasir's jeers had drawn a lot of attention to Mag. Everyone gathered here in the royal kitchen was a renowned chef, and it was the first time they had ever seen someone cook alone during the king's birthday banquet.

However, all of them quickly lost interest after realizing that the taunts had been aimed at the chef in the northeastern corner of the kitchen. Even a chef who was serving pickles was positioned ahead of him, so what could he possibly be cooking? He was most likely just trying to show off by bringing along so much kitchenware with him.

In the face of the deriding glances being aimed at him, Mag remained completely unfazed. He didn't require the acknowledgment of chefs that were inferior to him, anyway.

Kalulu was greatly relieved to see Mag's tranquil expression. In the past, there had been instances of chefs being crushed by this oppressive pressure, leading them to cooking horrible dishes far below their skill level, thereby ruining their whole careers. He glanced at the time before smiling as he said, "Alright, Brother Mag, we have to start preparing our pickles now. Make sure to keep an eye on the time so you don't end up missing the deadline."

"Alright, I'm going to begin as well now." Mag nodded with a smile.

"Uncle Mag, what kind of salad are you serving? Is it going to be a sweet or a sour one?" Luluka asked with a curious expression.

Mag shook his head with a smile as he replied, "I don't make salad."

"That's enough, you little rascal! Hurry up and start preparing the pickles; we have to make 200 plates." Kalulu gently swatted Luluka on the head before getting to work.

Mag took a curious glance at the dishes they were preparing. He was greeted by the sight of the father and son trio expertly slicing pickles lengthwise, and then positioning them onto plates in a clean and organized manner. A golden sauce was drizzled over the pickles with a pinch of coriander on each of the plates acting as a garnish. The salad looked quite refreshing and appetizing, and it would surely be very delicious when eaten with some porridge.

Mag withdrew his gaze before instructing the servant next to him to kill the fire chicken that had been procured in advance. Meanwhile, he picked up one of his knives and began to prepare the secondary ingredients.

Braised chicken took quite a long while to cook, so he had to prepare it first.

“Father, look! Uncle Mag looks like he’s going to cook chicken!”

Lukaka looked on with wonder in his eyes at the sight of the fire chicken being carried over by a pair of servants.

### **Chapter 738 He’s a Chef Today, Not a Mathematician**

The Roth Empire had been in existence for 102 years, and this day was the 45th birthday of the fourth king of the Roth Empire, Andre Edward.

Compared to his three predecessors, Andre had held the throne for far longer than them. He had ascended to the throne at just 15 years old, and his exceptional political ability allowed the Roth Empire to become more and more powerful, earning it a higher status in the context of the entire Norland Continent.

Even the powerful and populous orc race hadn’t been able to gain the upper hand in their battles on the border of the empire. On the contrary, they had even lost territory on the border during Andre’s reign thus far. Even though countless warriors of the Roth Empire had given their lives during those battles, the king received widespread support from all of the officials and citizens under his rule.

The humans no longer needed to bow their heads in the face of trolls and demons now, and the warriors were more than happy to give their lives to ensure that this remained the case.

As such, Andre was most definitely going to earn himself a place in the history books of the Roth Empire as one of the greatest kings who ever lived.

He was only 60 years old—still an infant in the eyes of the other races, whose members enjoyed far longer lifespans than humans. However, his 60th birthday was very much an event that was worthy of celebration in the eyes of the entire empire.

There had been rumors that the king’s health had been on the wane recently, and he might not be able to make it to his 70th birthday. As such, this birthday banquet had been organized to be an especially grand and prestigious occasion.

The palace was spotlessly clean and glimmering under the sunlight. Guests from all races were present, each sitting alone with a small table placed in front of them.

The king sat on his throne with his head of gray hair draped over his shoulders. The countless wrinkles all over his face made him appear older than his actual age, but his brown eyes were still bright and piercing. He was like a keen-eyed hunter appraising his prey, giving off a sense of majesty and prestige that set him apart from the average old man.

Sitting on either side of him were Josh and Sean, who were wearing blue and golden robes, respectively. Beside them were Irina and Richard.

Richard's expression was quite strained as he appraised Irina, who was sitting across him. Irina's assault on Brent had spread panic and horror throughout the entire Magus Tower, yet they had no choice but to pretend as if they were oblivious to the identity of the culprit.

Josh was also most definitely aware of what Irina had done. The incident from three years ago had taken place as the child she had birthed with Alex had completely pushed Josh over the edge, thereby leading him to do something so deranged and drastic.

Irina was eating sunflower seeds with a calm expression, and she didn't even take as much as a single glance at Richard. Instead, she was peeking at Amy out of the corner of her eye. Amy was joyfully munching on some small pastries, eating like an adorable little squirrel. Irina felt as if her heart were about to melt at the sight of her adorable display.

Is he really cooking for the king today? He's not going to have his cover blown, is he? A hint of concern appeared in Irina's eyes.

Josh was also sitting beside Richard diagonally across from Irina, and he also wore a rather complex expression.

He was the first one to have been made aware of the fact that Irina had arrived in Rodu. However, she deliberately skirted around him to travel to the Magus Tower and interrogate Brent instead of asking him about what had happened three years ago. Her actions suggested that she no longer trusted Josh, and that she had been alerted to certain details regarding the incident that had taken place three years ago.

Josh set aside his complex emotions as he withdrew his gaze from Irina and turned toward Sean.

Sean just so happened to be turning his gaze toward him as well, and their eyes met. Both of them smiled and nodded at each other before looking away again.

It's about time Father chose a final heir after this birthday banquet. Sean, it's time for us to settle this once and for all. Josh clenched his fists before relaxing them again, maintaining a carefree smile the entire time.

The rest of the guests present were all representative ambassadors from different races. During the king's past birthdays, only the ambassadors that were stationed at the Roth Empire attended his birthday banquet. However, on this occasion, all of the races seemed to have sensed that this birthday was more meaningful than others, and they had all sent extremely important figures to attend the banquet.

The elven race had sent their only princess, the orc race had sent the second elder of their tribal alliance... All of these guests were extremely renowned throughout the entire continent, and it was a great gesture of respect toward the king of the Roth Empire that they had been deployed to attend his birthday banquet.

Krassu and Novan sat behind the representatives of all of the races. Principal Novan was the representative of Chaos City, and he was also a powerful 10th-tier great magic caster, so he was naturally held in high regard.

As for Krassu, even Richard could sit across from Irina, so there was certainly no one who was going to begrudge his seat in the royal palace.

In fact, the king had even invited him to sit beside Richard as equals, but Krassu had turned down the offer. As such, it could be seen that Krassu's position in the king's heart was not inferior to Richard's.

Further behind Krassu and Novan were the dukes and officials of the Roth Empire. Many of them had brought their family members along with them, so the entire cavernous palace had been filled with tables and chairs, creating an extremely lively and bustling scene.

The king raised his hand, and all of the chatter within the palace quickly died down. He looked around at all of the guests with an almost stern expression as he said, "I've very glad that everyone was able to come here and attend my birthday banquet today. During the past century, our Roth Empire has coexisted in harmony with all races..."

Everyone listened in silence to the address delivered by the most powerful king on the Norland Continent. The power of the humans had propelled them to the very pinnacle of the Norland Continent, and their massive population coupled with their unmatched intelligence gave them limitless potential.

All of the other races had to admit that the human race was no longer the feeble force it had been many years ago.

Among their ranks, there was an insanely powerful human magic caster who was capable of bludgeoning a giant dragon to death with a single swing of his staff. At the very least, no one present in the royal palace dared to claim that they could defeat him in a one-on-one battle.

As for Amy, she was happily enjoying the little pastries on the table in front of her, and she was surreptitiously making faces at Irina from time to time.

Huh? Teacher Luna is also here! This is really bad! Who is Father going to choose now? Amy suddenly caught sight of Luna sitting nearby, and her little hand froze just as she was about to place a bean paste cake into her mouth.

Luna was also looking at her with an amused smile on her face. Amy really was a little foodie; she was always eating wherever she went.

Thinking back to two years ago, when Luna had first met Amy, she had been wearing old and ragged clothes, and could barely even walk properly. Now, she was wearing a gorgeous little purple dress with her hair tied up into a pair of pretty little braids, sitting in the royal palace of the Roth Empire. Her transformation had been quite a staggering one.

Just what had happened to Mag during these past few months? Even she was stunned by the transformation that he and Amy had undergone during this time.

Luna's smile widened even further as she thought to herself, Mr. Mag is a really fantastic person, and Amy is also a good little girl; they deserve all the happiness in the world.

Teacher Luna looks so beautiful when she smiles, and she's so good to me, but Big Sister Irina is also really good... I don't know which one to choose anymore. Amy took a bite of the cake in her hand before stuffing the rest into Ugly Duckling's mouth with a conflicted expression on her face.

“Luna, you told me that Mr. Mag will also be attending His Majesty’s birthday banquet today; where is he right now?” the elderly man sitting beside Luna asked with a smile.

“He should be in the palace already, but we might not be able to see him today.” Luna shook her head with a smile as she said, “He’s a chef today, not a mathematician.”

### **Chapter 739 Please Present the First Dish to His Majesty**

Lukaka had truly been stunned by the sight of the fire chicken, even to the extent that he forgot to keep his voice down, and received many displeased glances as a result.

Everyone turned their attention to Mag’s cooking station, just in time to see a servant handing the drumstick of a freshly slain fire chicken to him. Mag’s long and thin blade sliced through the skin on the drumstick in an expert manner before the meat was sliced into cubes of identical size.

The large chicken drumstick was reduced to a pile of cubes and a spotlessly clean bone in what seemed like the blink of an eye.

Exceptional knife skills were a mandatory foundation for all chefs, and there were many chefs present who could slice food into strands as thin as hair, so they weren’t overly surprised by his superb knife skills.

Instead, they were stunned by the fact that Mag was using a fire chicken drumstick.

He didn’t even have a single assistant chef with him, so how could he have the right to cook a meat dish?

Nandel was in the process of barking instructions at his student chefs when he turned to Mag with furrowed brows, and murmured to himself, “Did this guy get his ingredients mixed up? Why is he requesting a fire chicken drumstick? Isn’t he making a salad?”

A disdainful sneer appeared on Vasir’s face as he scoffed, “Making the incorrect dish will get him kicked out of the palace. I reckon he’s been completely overwhelmed by the occasion and forgotten what he’s supposed to cook. Isn’t he afraid that he’ll get his head chopped off for making such a grave error?”

Many of the other chefs also chimed in with insults of their own.

All of them were of the opinion that Mag had either gone insane or was trying to show off to everyone by cooking a dish that hadn’t been designated to him.

None of the top chefs present said anything in response to what Mag was doing, but all of the chefs lower down the hierarchy were quite eager to insult Mag in order to make themselves more important and mask their own insecurities.

Mag was a man who had been insulted countless times and dished out just as many insults in his past life, so this level of abuse was completely trivial to him.

Kalulu was also looking at Mag with a concerned expression as he asked, “What are you doing, Brother Mag? Are you trying to make chicken into salad?”

“Chicken salad is indeed quite tasty, but I’m making braised chicken today.” Mag shook his head with a smile as he placed the cubes of chicken into his pot, then turned to the servant beside him, and instructed, “Please get me 10 freshly killed kirin carps and the beef tenderloin I requested.”

“Yes.” The servant hurriedly departed to do Mag’s bidding. Even though the latter was only one person, he had been invited to Rodu by none other than the second prince himself, so the servant naturally didn’t dare to express disdain for him as the other chefs did.

“Uncle Mag’s cooking fish and beef as well?” The surprise on Luluka’s face became even more pronounced.

Their restaurant was renowned for its pickles, but that wasn’t the only dish they served. However, they were only permitted to make their signature pickle dish every year when they were invited to the king’s birthday banquets.

“That’s impossible!” Nandel stared at Mag with incredulity etched on his face. He had been cooking during the king’s birthday banquets for over 20 years, and it had taken an entire decade to progress from being able to make one salad to being permitted to make two salads. As for making a third dish, he had already pinned those hopes on his son and given up on himself.

However, Mag was only one person, and it was his first time here, yet he was making three dishes, all of which were meat dishes?

Nandel felt as if he had been given a headstart of over 20 years in a race, only for Mag to speed past him in the blink of an eye and attain an unassailable lead in the process.

A thought suddenly occurred to Nandel, and he chuckled coldly. “Hmph! You’re planning to make three dishes on your own? You’ll have to make at least 30 portions in that case. It’s impossible for anyone to make so many portions alone! You’re just biting off more than you can chew!”

Kalulu turned to Mag with a concerned look, and said, “Brother Mag, will you be able to make three dishes on your own? This is His Majesty’s birthday banquet, so we have to ensure that we offer the best dishes we’re capable of cooking. If you screw this up, you could die!”

“It’s alright, I’ve always cooked by myself in my restaurant as well,” Mag replied with a smile. 30 portions was a piece of cake for him.

Kalulue was slightly relieved by Mag’s calm display, but he still said, “Alright, but you have to make haste. If you need some help, I can get my two sons to give you a hand.”

“Sure.” Mag nodded in response.

10 kirin carps with their scales and internal organs removed were soon handed over to Mag. He insisted on removing the small bones in person, and refused to let anyone else undertake that duty in his stead.

All of the guests gathered at the palace today were very important figures on the continent. If they were to choke on a small fishbone due to an oversight on his part, he would most certainly be held accountable.

Mag quickly extracted a series of small fishbones from all 10 kirin carps in an extremely rehearsed and expertly manner before setting them aside to marinate. The fresh beef tenderloin had also been sliced into steaks of even thickness before being tenderized with a small wooden mallet.

I really don't want to waste such premium ingredients on those bastards. Mag pulled out a bottle of wine from a crate as he shook his head in a forlorn manner. However, he then realized that Irina and Amy were also going to be tasting his dishes during the banquet, and his mood was lifted significantly.

“Pop~”

The cork on the bottle of wine was pulled out amid an audible pop.

The wine within the bottle was poured into a container that was filled with steaks, and the rich aroma of the wine instantly overwhelmed all of the other aromas wafting throughout the kitchen, forcing its way up everyone's nostrils.

“That wine smells amazing!”

“Is someone using premium wine from the Buffett Winery to cook their dish?”

“No, this wine smells even more aromatic than the premium wine from the Buffett Winery! Could it be that someone got their hands on the Buffet Winery's V-grade wine? That's cheating!”

All of the nearby chefs glanced around with bewildered expressions, trying to locate the wine that was giving off this delectable aroma. Their eyes then focused on Mag in unison, upon which their expressions immediately stiffened.

The northwestern corner was essentially the salad corner; could it be that he was using wine to make salad?

Who is he and what is he cooking? The same question appeared in everyone's mind. If it weren't for the fact that they were busy preparing their own dishes, they would be approaching Mag and asking him in person.

Of course, most of the chefs simply regarded Mag as a court jester. It was an extremely rare opportunity to be selected to cook during the king's birthday banquet, and it was a tragedy that he was squandering such a valuable opportunity.

Kalulu's concern only deepened as he glanced at Mag. He's using wine to cook his dishes? Will His Majesty and all the guests really appreciate that? I hope Brother Mag isn't being serious; he's playing with fire here!

At this moment, Mag had was already in his own bubble of intense focus, basking in the world of cooking. His expression was completely serious, and his movements were fast yet unhurried. Watching him cook was like watching a graceful artist at work as he juggled all three dishes in an expert manner.

Some of the chefs had already finished preparing their dishes at this point. In particular, most of the salads were ready for presentation.

Nandel, Vasir, and their student chefs had nothing left to do, and all of them were appraising Mag with undisguised disdain, even to the extent that they were making bets whether Mag was actually cooking for the palace's servants rather than the king.

Kalulu and his sons had also finished their dishes, and all three of them were looking at Mag with concerned expressions.

Right at this moment, 10 extremely beautiful female servants were led by an attendant over to Mag, and the attendant gave him a respectful smile as he said, "Mr. Mag, please present the first dish to His Majesty!"

#### **Chapter 740 The Chef Invited by the Second Prince Will Now be Offering His Dish to His Majesty!**

The entire kitchen suddenly fell silent.

All of the chefs had put down their kitchenware and were staring at Mag in unison, wondering if they had misheard what the attendant had said.

Nandel and Vasir's smiles had completely stiffened on their faces. They stared at the female servants standing at Mag's cooking station, and their mouths were wide agape as if they had just been slapped in the face.

He was only one chef, and it was his first time cooking during the king's banquet, yet his dish had been selected to be the first one to be offered to the king? How was this possible?!

The same thought appeared in everyone's mind. They were even suspecting whether the attendant had accidentally approached the wrong chef.

"Father, I think I just misheard what was being said."

"I think I also misheard."

Kalulu and his sons were just stunned as everyone else.

In reality, even the attendant was feeling rather uneasy. He had been working at the royal kitchen for over a decade, and this was the first time something like this had ever happened.

He had previously confirmed over and over again that this was indeed the chef that had been recommended by the second prince, and only then did he dare to approach Mag.

The fact that he had been recommended by the second prince to cook for the king clearly indicated that he had to be an exceptional chef, but the attendant was very perplexed by the strange kitchenware strewn all over Mag's cooking bench. He didn't even know whether Mag had finished preparing the dishes that were to be presented to the king. If Mag wasn't prepared in time, even the attendant would be held partially accountable, so he was feeling very nervous.

"The first dish is ready, please wait for a moment." Mag nodded calmly as he turned off the magic stove that the braised chicken was sitting on, and then removed the lid of the pot.

A plume of white steam rose up into the air as the delectable aromas of shiitake mushrooms and chicken wafted throughout the entire kitchen.

The countless aromas in the kitchen had formed a vortex that was quite convoluted and overwhelming, yet the aroma from Mag's dish was like a sharp blade that pierced directly through this vortex, standing out among the countless aromas as one that was completely unique and refreshing.

What a unique aroma! My mouth is watering just from smelling it! The attendant's eyes immediately lit up. During his dozen or so years at the royal kitchen, there were very few dishes that had been able to appeal to him so strongly just through their aromas alone. Furthermore, all of those dishes had received glowing praise from the king.

As expected of the chef that was recommended by the second prince! The attendant was feeling a lot more relieved now. Having already prepared such an exceptional dish, it wouldn't matter all that much even if Mag's other two dishes were a bit more mediocre.

"That smells so good! I really want to drink chicken soup now." Luluka closed his eyes as he inhaled deeply.

Kalulu looked at Mag with an admiring expression, and praised, "You really are an extraordinary chef, Brother Mag. The aroma of your dish is already comparable to Bellmann's dishes."

H-how could this be... He's only one person; how could he cook such a delicious dish... Nandel stared at Mag in disbelief, and his face stung with embarrassment as if he had just been slapped.

Vasir wore a bitter expression as he scoffed, "It may smell good, but the flavor is what's important. A delicious dish requires input from many chefs. Look at Bellmann: he's got so many assistant chefs responsible for every single aspect of his dishes, yet this guy's doing everything by himself. There's no way that he can cook a delicious dish like that."

Vasir's student chefs all began to suck up to him upon hearing his analysis. This was a dish that was going to be presented to the king, and he was going to receive a severe punishment if it wasn't to the king's liking.

All of the other chefs were looking at Mag with complex expressions on their faces. They felt as if this rookie had suddenly overtaken all of the veteran chefs and scaled to the top of the royal kitchen hierarchy.

This was an extremely bad feeling, just as if someone had suddenly torn up the rulebook and pulled the rug out from under their feet, leaving them completely stunned and reeling.

Mag calmly filled 10 intricately crafted bowls with braised chicken and rice, and then placed a bowl onto each of the platters that the 10 female servants were holding. He then smiled, and said, "This is braised chicken and rice; the best way to consume it would be to pour the broth over the rice."

"Alright, I'll be sure to pass on the message." The attendant nodded before departing with the female servants.

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Within the grand palace, all types of wines and dishes had already been placed onto the tables of the guests present. The orc representative was munching on a massive bone, the forest troll representative

was drinking a large barrel of fruit wine using a long straw, and the goblin representative had already downed 10 cups of wine, but was hiding two more cups up his sleeve with a sly look on his face.

Amy was holding a chicken drumstick in one hand and a fish cake in the other. Her cheeks were bulging with food as she slurred, "Even though the food here isn't as good as Father's, I still had a lot of delicious food today."

Meanwhile, Krassu's chopsticks remained untouched as he shook his head in reply. "The food here isn't just not as good as Mag's; the difference is night and day. After eating Boss Mag's cooking, I can't bear to stomach this food anymore. I should save my appetite for Boss Mag's dishes later."

"Boss Mag is indeed a genius." Novan nodded as he took a sip of tea. He hadn't eaten anything, either.

In contrast, Irina had taken a small bite out of every dish on the table before her. At this moment, she wore a troubled expression on her face as she thought to herself, Which dish was made by him? The dishes aren't presented with the chefs' names on them, so how am I supposed to know who cooked them? I've tasted every dish, and they're all pretty ordinary. But then again, Alex's cooking surely isn't anything out of the ordinary.

Could it be that he's planning to cook roast beef again? I feel like his roast beef is better than all of these dishes, but it doesn't really fit the occasion. Irina shook her head. She didn't know whether she had already tasted Alex's cooking or if his dishes had yet to come.

As one of 10 dukes of the Roth Empire, Duke Abraham's seat was quite close to the king's. However, he hadn't eaten much, either. He put down his chopsticks before shaking his head with a slightly disappointed expression. "Bellmann's dishes are just as delicious as ever, but they're exactly the same as they were last year; there's no element of freshness or surprise. In comparison, those cubes of beef that I had for lunch yesterday gave me a very pleasant surprise. I have to take more people with me tomorrow so I can buy more cubes of beef; three was nowhere near enough!"

The king hadn't eaten much, either, and the borderline stern expression on his face struck everyone with a sense of awe and veneration.

Right at this moment, Sean turned to Josh with a smile, and said, "I heard that you invited a chef to cook for Father's birthday today; is his dish among these ones?"

Right at this moment, the attendant led the 10 female servants into the palace. "The chef invited by the second prince will now be offering his dish to His Majesty!"