

Reincarnated as an Energy with a System

Chapter 391: City Of Beginnings

"A... dud?" Ning asked. "Meaning?"

"A dud, you know. Someone who isn't capable of using the Aether arts," Reeve explained. "Be glad that you can use it."

"Why would it be a problem if I can't use it? That doesn't mean I'm less of a human, right?" Ning asked.

"You sure are ignorant of the world for someone who wishes to roam it," Reeve said. "It doesn't matter to the Aether users what you think. Since they are stronger, they make the rules and hold the authority."

"So, do the people with no awakening get treated badly here?" Ning asked.

"Oh no, not in Xandria. You will be fine in Xandria since the Emperor doesn't allow diversity as a factor of bias in the citizens. Whether you have the ability to use Aether or not, you will be treated equally here."

"That's one of the reasons why Xandria is considered safe haven amongst the duds," Reeve said. "Unfortunately, the empire can only hold so many people. So the borders don't allow as much entry as it used to."

"Hmm, I guess I will see how they are treated when I leave Xandria. I should be able to stay here for a little while though," Ning said.

"Hm, how old are you by the way. You look awfully young for someone with medical knowledge," Reeve asked.

"Oh, yeah. I get that a lot. I'm 25 years old right now, but I look 18. My friends always called me out for looking too young. Something much is wrong with my body, but the other doctors found nothing," Ning casually lied.

"Well, at least you can keep looking young for a lot longer than us. Sigh, I wish I could be young again. With all the energy of the youth I was, who optimistically went to the Aether Tower to take the exam."

"I might've been doing something else if I didn't failback then," Reeve said as he recalled the bitter event from his past.

"Aether Tower? Is that a place where you learn the aether arts?" Ning asked.

"How do you not know what an Aether Tower is? All countries and empires have them. Brother Ning, have you been living under a rock?" Reeve asked.

"Uhh... something like that. My parents were extremely conservative and didn't let me learn about the world at all. That was one of the reasons why I decided to leave my practice as a medical professional and went out to roam the world."

"Unfortunately, I simply went straight down to the very bottom of the continent to start my way, so you could think of this as my beginning in the world," Ning said.

"You're a little weird, Brother Ning," Reeve said.

Ning simply smiled and said nothing. Suddenly, the scenery outside of the train changed and they were no longer in the desert, but at a place where Ning could see many trees and bushes all around. There was even a source of water, flowing like a river.

"Phew, finally," Reeve said as he stopped fanning himself and opened the window. The air that entered was still hot, but it was a lot cooler by comparison.

<script>ChapterMid();</script>

"Is it summer? Why is it so hot?" Ning asked.

"Yeah, it's summer, unfortunately. So we will have to suffer the sun for quite a while longer," Reeve said. "I can't wait to go back to the cool air of the city."

"Oh right," Reeve said as he remembered. "You're an invoker, right? Then you should be able to make some ice for us. I would really love to have some ice to play with. Just a tiny piece."

"You can make them too right? Just freeze the water you have," Ning said.

"I don't have aether to do that right now," Reeve said. "I will need to go eat some Aether tablets to do that."

"Hm, I guess I can try. I can't promise I can properly make ice though. This is my first time after all," Ning said.

"Oh, then be careful. Remember, ice is just water that's frozen. Just imagine cold water that's solid," Reeve said.

"Uh, I know what ice is," Ning said.

"Huh? Oh right, you came from way south. I forgot. I was just helping you with the imagination part, but I don't think you will need any help," Reeve said.

Ning took a deep breath and brought forth his arm.

He then closed his eyes and remembered back to the time he first came out of the treasury in the Southern Continent. That time when he was in Freya's sword. The moment he walked out of the room, everything around him was all white.

The massive amounts of Aether in his Sea of Aether started moving, bubbling as it evaporated and started doing what Ning thought of.

Ning remembered the coolness in the air, the fog in the air, the steam when people breathed, and finally, the white snow.

"Br.... Ni...."

Ning still remembered it all.

"Brother NING!" Reeve loudly called him.

Ning opened his eyes and looked in front of him. In between him and Reeve, there was a pile of snow that came up to his ankles.

"I said just a small piece, why are you making this many?" Reeve asked.

"Oh, sorry. I told you I don't have much talent in using the Aether arts. At least we have coolness now right?" Ning asked.

Reeve held his cold feet up on the seat. "Damn, you really do have a lot of potentials. But you need a lot of practice," he said as he looked down on the snow.

"Looking at this, you must be an Aether Master, right?" Reeve asked.

"Haha, I couldn't hide it from you, could I?" Ning said.

"Sigh, you really didn't. Also, you made a mess of this place. Let's quickly clear this or it will melt and cause a lot of problems," Reeve said and waved his hands to bring up as much snow as he could before throwing it far out of the window.

Ning got down as well and picked up the snow with his own hands and started throwing it out.

Once he was done, there was no more snow, but the place they were at was considerably cooler.

The rest of the journey would be much simpler now with this. The train moved through massive grassland and meadows with people and animals in it. They were getting closer and closer to civilization once again.

"Ah, we're finally here," Reeve said as he watched out of the window. Ning had seen houses nearby already, so he too knew he was close.

The train suddenly passed by another train and slowly came to a stop at another station. The whistles were loud and the steam released once more as it finally stopped.

"Let's go," Reeve said as he stood up from his seat and started walking to the door. Ning quickly followed and they both walked out.

"Oh yeah, your ticket, take it out. We will have to show them here," Reeve reminded and took out his own ticket.

Ning took his ticket out as well and stopped to look all around him. As he was finally in the city, he got to see what these modern people actually looked like.

The men and women all around him wore very similar clothes. The men mostly wore shirts and pants with a coat on top, while the women wore long gowns that flowed all the way to the floor.

The men all had top hats and some even had monocles. Some also wore purple-colored jewels on their fingers and wrists, while others did not.

The women on the other hand all wore jewelry on them. Some were purple in color, but most were not. The women also wore white gloves that came up to their elbows and a hat on their head of a similar color.

They had their hair in a bun and were also holding a parasol to stay away from the sun. Compared to the men, the women were the ones wearing the most vibrant of colors.

It seemed that the tradition of old didn't exactly go away despite the world getting modern. At least, there was less of a divide amongst people here, so that was something.

"Brother Ning?" Reeve shook him a little to get him to focus.

"Oh, sorry. I was just looking at the people. It seems that I would stand out a bit if I don't change very quickly," Ning said.

"Oh yeah, you should. Your clothes aren't exactly the most usual around here. You have money, right? I can introduce you to a tailor. They can make some clothes for you," Reeve said.

"Thank you, brother Reeve," Ning said.

They soon walked on as Ning hid his gaze from the many people that stared at him for how weirdly he was dressed.

'I should've known this would happen. I should prepare a lot of clothes for afterward,' he thought. Looking like a cultivator in a world of mortals wasn't the smartest idea Ning had up to now.

Ning and Reeve handed over their tickets and walked out of the inner section of the train station. Finally, going past many people, they appeared out in the open on a busy street full of people that walked around, doing their own thing in their own life.

Ning saw horse-drawn carriages getting people across the town. He could also see electricity poles going across the roads with light bulbs on them. This planet had truly gotten industrialized, way more than he could imagine.

"Welcome to the City of Beginnings, brother Ning."

Chapter 392: Date And Time

"Woah, I didn't expect the city to be this developed," Ning said silently as he looked at the almost modern city.

Ning could see people walking down the street, people in carriages, people in bicycles, all in their own little life.

He was on the side of the street, in front of the train station looking at the changed world. A carriage rushed past him in a swift manner. It was close to hitting him, but the driver at the front seemed to know his limit.

"Oh, that carriage doesn't have a horse drawing it. Is there an engine in it?" Ning asked, wondering if this was the first of the cars that would soon become prevalent.

"Engine? No, those carriages are expensive ones that have Enchanters moving them. Only the rich ones use them," Reeve said.

"Are they better than horse-drawn carriage? I don't see the point," Ning asked.

"Well, for one the driver has more control than just having a horse drawing it. Other than that, it's just the rich people's way of showing off, saying they can even get aether art users to do things for them."

"But it pays well, so the drivers don't really mind, I guess," Reeve said.

"Hm, could you do that if you wanted to?" Ning asked.

"Uh, maybe. But I never had the interest to do it," Reeve said. "Anyway, let's go. I need to sell this stuff and go home."

"Ah, okay," Ning said and started following Reeve. They walked through the crowded streets along the sidewalk, walking past the many buildings that were selling something or offering something.

The buildings were so big that Ning couldn't see anything past his immediate vicinity and would have to fly in the air if he wanted to get a better view.

"The weather is a lot cooler here, isn't it?" Ning asked.

"Yeah, we're not in the desert anymore so it's a little cooler. But it's still quite hot," Reeve said. "You southerner must not be used to this much heat, right?"

"Yeah, it is always cool down there," Ning said, remembering the days when he lived with Famir and the rest.

"Haha, just wait for another 6 hours, you will get your cool air back," Reeve said.

"Oka— wait, 6 hours?" Ning asked as he looked up at the sun. From what he could tell, the sun was already way past noon.

"What's the time right now?" Ning asked.

Reeve reached into his pocket and brought out a pocket watch that he flipped open to look at the time.

"It's 5 in the afternoon, why?" Reeve asked.

"It's 5 and the sun is still going to be up for another 6 hours? How?" Ning asked.

"Sigh, you southerners must have it easy with your short and cool days. We here have to suffer nearly 24 hours of sunlight in a day, barely getting 12 hours of night time to cool off," Reeve said.

"But, don't worry. The insides of the buildings will be cooler, so you won't have to worry about heat at all. Some of them even stay cool for all 36 hours of the day. Sigh, I wish they ran that way for all 5 days of the week though," Reeve said.

<script>ChapterMid();</script>

Ning was flabbergasted. '36 hours a day, 5 days a week. Was it always like this?' he thought. From what he could remember, this was not the case the last time he was here.

At the very least, a week was 7 days long. However, it seemed that had changed over the last 2500 years that he was gone.

"System, give me the information about dates and times of this planet," Ning said, quickly trying to learn what he had missed.

The system gave him the information and he started to learn what it had said.

The planet of vilmore had a slow speed of rotation compared to earth. So, a day here lasted 35 hours, 59 minutes, and 55 seconds. A week consisted of 5 days, and none of the days were named at all.

Instead, the people of Vilmore referred to them by their number in the week. The first day was called the first day of the week, the second day was called the second day of the week, and so on.

The thing that shocked him the most was that there was no month in the Serian Calendar, which was established by the Serian Empire to the west.

Ning was a little confused at first as to why they wouldn't use months, but the answer came very soon which shocked him a little.

Planet Vilmore only took 100 days to go around its sun. Meaning, in a year there would only be 20 weeks at most. So, they didn't really need to implement a system for the month.

"Uhh, system?" Ning called, worried about something. "Now that the days are 36 hours long, does that mean my cap cooldown will also change to reflect the same?" he asked.

<No. The timer for your Cap is based on an average day for planets in the multiverse. Most planets tend to have 24 hours a day, so the cap reflects on that>

"Oh, phew! That's good. Still, 100 days around the sun, huh? I never knew that. I focused way too much on the Energy aspect of the planet, and not the others," Ning thought. "But why did they change? This... Serian Empire. Was there a need for it?"

Ning continued reading all the information that was available to him. Unfortunately, there was nothing like that available to him through the information he had just gotten. So, he instead asked the system.

"System, when exactly did this calendar system change? And why it changed too," Ning asked.

<The Calendar system changed about 285 years ago>

<The reasoning for the change was to remember the day when the planet faced destruction as it had never before when the Peak of Afterlife exploded>

Ning's eyes went wide as he said, "the Peak of Afterlife... exploded?"

"Wait, what? What do you mean the Peak of Afterlife exploded? How? When?" Ning asked... and the system answered.

The blood left his face and his face turned ghastly white as he listened to what the system said.

"... it happened... because of me?" Ning asked. When he had brought Hyesi up to the portal and he had exploded, the portal inside was destroyed as well. That let out shockwaves that made earthquakes and tsunamis all around the world.

Many weak houses and buildings fell, leaving people without homes. The majority of the desert was taken over by the ocean water. Many people died.

When Ning learned this information, he felt a chill go down his spine because of it. "How... how many people died?" He asked.

<23,144 in total died. Over 500 thousand were injured>

Ning had expected the number to be high, but not this high. For some reason, he didn't feel any sort of remorse or sadness over this death, despite them being his fault.

Due to the deaths being so high, they just looked like numbers to him instead of lives that were lost.

'Did not having amplified emotion make me callous?' he wondered. Just then, he remembered something and asked the system.

"Wait, if I killed that many people, all of whom were innocents... then why didn't I get punished? Did the system change?" Ning asked.

<No. The deaths that happened were not your intention when you did what you did. So the system does not punish you for things out of your power>

"Still, sigh. This sucks. The world changed calendar because I overlooked something in a hurry," Ning thought.

"I wonder if something terrible happened in Kumia too. Although, the explosion took place on this side of the portal so they should be okay," Ning said.

Ning wanted to talk to them right now, but unfortunately, he couldn't communicate with people out of the planet, unless he bought something specifically for that.

"Brother Ning? Brother Ning?" Reeve called out.

"Sorry, what?" Ning asked as he brought his attention back to the conversation.

"Where do you disappear from time to time? Do you really hate the sun so much that just having it for 6 more hours pains you?" Reeve asked. "Don't worry, the heat will start to get milder in just 2 to 3 hours. Besides, we will be in buildings with cool air soon, so you won't have to worry."

"Oh, that's... that's great," Ning said with a smile.

Reeve took him about 2 blocks of buildings over, where Ning saw a small market was set up on the side of the streets. The whole street was blocked off from vehicles going in and people set up vendors all over it.

"What are we doing here?" Ning asked.

"Oh, I'm going to sell the stuff I got from the village here. Hope you won't mind waiting around for a little longer. There is stuff here that I can't just sell in normal stores," Reeve said.

"Oh, okay. Please do so," Ning said and went along with him.

Reeve took out a large cloth and laid it on an open space that he seemed to have reserved beforehand. He brought out a few items from inside his storage bracelet and placed them all on the sheet.

Once everything was out in the sheet, he too sat down behind them and started shouting.

"Come on, Come on. Buy the best products handcrafted by the people of the sand. You will not find these masterpieces anywhere else. Buy them for yourself, buy them for your wife, buy them for your mistress."

"Buy it while you can, because after they are sold, you will not find these ever again."

Chapter 393: Profit

Ning stood a little behind, watching Reeve do his work. He kept on shouting, calling the customers towards him.

Many looked towards him and his items, but none came to buy any. Ning expected him to get hopeless at the situation, but somehow Reeve managed to keep his energy high, calling out more and more customers.

Ning fully expected to have to wait for quite a while, but in just a few moments, Reeve had his first customer.

A girl wearing a blue gown walked up to him. He held a parasol in her hands that seemed to have about the same number of frills as her gown.

"Oh my god. These are so beautiful," the woman said as he looked at the pottery and trinkets that were laid on the sheet.

Reeve gave a wide smile. "Do you like it miss?" he asked.

"Oh yes, very much. These are gorgeous," she said and was starting to get a little teary-eyed. "My father was a potter and woodworker. I remember him making stuff like this for me when I was a child. These remind me of exactly that," the girl said.

Reeve took the opportunity and loudly said, "These are the best of the best items, miss. Handcrafted by the master workers in the north, these are one of a kind and you will likely not see these for a very long time."

"Oh, is that so?" the girl asked excitedly. "Let me buy some then. Give me that earring and that bracelet please."

"This and this? These two will be 9 coins in total. 3 for the earrings and 6 for the bracelet," Reeve said.

"Oh my god, so cheap. Here you go," the woman took some coins out from her purse and handed it to Reeve. Reeve handed her the two items and loudly expressed his thankfulness.

During these times, a small crowd had formed around Reeve, who were all curiously looking at the items he was selling.

Reeve once again started saying out loud how good the items were and how glorious their origin was.

Ning watched in shock as in just 5 minutes, all but a few of Reeve's items had been fully sold. 'And he even sold them at a 2-3 times higher price from what he bought it at,' Ning thought.

Reeve continued to bring out items from his storage and in the next half an hour, managed to sell almost all of it.

"I think that's the most I should be able to sell. I will have to keep the rest for next time," Reeve said.

From what Ning could tell, Reeve had made close to 600 Sils in profit just today.

"What's the average salary around here?" Ning asked.

"Average salary? Hmm, maybe around 300 coins every 5 weeks? 100 coins are minimum wage, so 300 sounds about average. I'm sorry, brother Ning, I don't work a salary job so I don't exactly know it," Reeve said.

'My god! This man-made double of what everyone else makes 5 weeks in just a day,' Ning thought.

"Alright, let's go sell the rest," Reeve said as he stood up and took back the sheet and the few items in it.

"What will you do for these ones you couldn't sell?" Ning asked.

Reeve smiled and said, "Next time."

They walked out of the small street and walked some more before they reached a building a block away. The building was completely grey, with no color on it whatsoever, the same as all the rest of the buildings around the neighborhood.

"Is color a commodity here?" Ning asked.

"Kind of, yes," Reeve said. "Since we are the furthest from the Serian empire, it's hard to find any sort of color that isn't for the clothes."

"I see," Ning said. 'The plants I introduced, could Famir and the rest not keep it going? Hmm, it must've been destroyed during the Peak's explosion. It was the closest place after all.'

Reeve entered the building and Ning followed behind. As soon as he entered, Ning felt a slight shiver from the temperature difference between the outside and the inside.

"Oh, it's really cool in here," Ning said as he rubbed his arms a bit.

"See? I told you the heat would go away soon," Reeve said with a chuckle. "Come on, let me sell this stuff, and then we can go to the tailor I told you about. It's only 2 buildings away."

Ning nodded and followed. The inside of the building wasn't any grand-looking. However, since it was made up of concrete, it certainly gave the modern feel that Kumia never had.

Reeve reached a food shop and spoke to the owner before selling the dates he had acquired, which were apparently considered exotic in this place.

Ning watched Reeve get 5 paper money for those dates and was quite a bit shocked. 5 Gols were equal to 500 Sils, which were 200 Sils more than the average salary, and he had just made them by selling the dates at 3 times the price he had bought them in.

Reeve thanked the owner and walked out with a massive smile on his face.

"How many bags of date was that?" Ning asked.

"Hmm, about 40 bags," Reeve said.

"Wow, 500 Sils for 40 bags. You really hit the jackpot with your job," Ning said. "But I'm confused about one thing. Why are these dates considered exotic? Can't these people just go to the desert and get them?"

"Oh, they can. But will they? You have to know that the dates grow far to the north where no human civilization exists. Even the villagers around there have to walk for a really long time to get to these."

"Since they don't know these fruit's value, they don't really get them as much. And so, it's now considered exotic," Reeve said.

"I see," Ning said. "And you don't tell them to get more because that would lower its market value here, I assume?"

"Obviously," Reeve said. "Come, let's change your outfit to match the people.. Everyone keeps staring at you wherever you go."

Chapter 394: The Boss

The two walked into another building of the same design and same gloomy aesthetic. As soon as they entered, Ning could see a fancy clothing shop with gowns and suits in mannequins on display.

People went in and out of the store that held a lot of employees.

Reeve walked in first and Ning behind him. Reeve looked around a bit and saw someone.

"Hey, boss! I brought you a customer," he shouted from one end of the store to the another.

On the other side of the store was a tall, bulky man that if anything looked like a body cultivator to Ning. He was wearing a rough-looking suit that tightly fit his body, but wore no hat like most others did.

He had a short stubble on his chin as well as some light mustache. However, his head held no hair.

For some reason, this made him look more threatening than his job would make him be.

The man turned around and saw Reeve. "One moment," he said in a deep voice and got back to helping the customer he currently had.

Reeve walked up to the boss and Ning followed behind him. The boss was just done with the customer when they arrived and turned around, "I haven't seen you in a while, kid. You doing good?" he asked.

"Absolutely, boss," Reeve said. "How's business going? Very well, I hope."

"Ahh, it's the same old. Isn't good, isn't bad; just like I want it to be," the boss said.

"You might be the only person in this city that does not want their business to grow at all, boss," Reeve said.

"I'm just looking to live the rest of my life without any worries at all," the Boss said. "Anyway, why did you come here? And... who's he?" the boss looked up and down at Ning, confused at what exactly he was wearing

"Right, this is someone I met today. His name is Ning and he's from the south. He seems to be traveling and wants clothes so that he doesn't stand out in what he's wearing here," Reeve said.

"Hmm," the boss looked at the cloth and asked, "what type of cloth is that even, anyway? I've never seen or heard of something like that. It looks more like a bathrobe than anything."

"It's... it's a robe alright. It's something the people wear where I come from," Ning said.

"And where would that be?" the boss asked curiously.

"Somewhere very far away," Ning said.

"He said he was from around the Peak of Afterlife," Reeve said.

"Peak of Afterlife? I don't remember those people wearing these sort of clothes," the boss said. "Did they start doing that recently perhaps?"

"Uh, I've been wearing this ever since I was born, I guess," Ning said.

"Hmm, maybe. You don't look that old. Alright, what exactly do you want? A pair of suits and pants?" the boss asked.

"Uh, let's make that 3 pair please," Ning said.

"Alright, come over here. Let me take your measurements," the boss said.

Ning walked up to him and stood in front of him. The boss was a hulking tower in front of him with his massive body.

'He looks more like a butcher than a tailor,' Ning thought. The boss grabbed a measuring tape and started taking measurements. Ning waited until all of his dimensions were recorded.

"Alright, now come choose the fabric," the boss said. Ning nodded and walked with him to look at the different types of fabric there were.

Ning ended up choosing 2 different types of fabric, one very smooth, and one just slightly rough. He also chose some white fabric for shirts to wear underneath as well.

As for a hat, Ning didn't want to use it at all.

"Ok, let's see 3 suits, 4 shirts, 3 pants. Altogether, they will cost you around 120 Sils. 50 Sils for the cloth, and 70 for the labor," the boss said.

"Should I pay you now or later?" Ning asked.

"Hmm, pay me half now if you can. I can't have the product go to waste in case you decide to never come to pick it up," the boss said.

"Ok," Ning said and brought out 60 Sils from his storage. The boss nodded as he recognized Ning as an Aether user.

"Alright, come back in a week. They should all be ready by then," the boss said.

"Thank you," Ning replied.

"I'll leave now, boss. Take care," Reeve said.

"Okay, you take care of yourself too. Take care of the little girl too. Don't let her work too hard. You already make enough money," the boss said.

"Haha, I will, I will," Reeve said as he waved his hands and walked out of the door. Ning followed behind wondering what he should do next.

"Have you planned anything for what you will be doing next, brother Ning?" Reeve asked.

"Hmm, I think I will go find myself a tavern, or a hotel to stay at before it gets dark," Ning said.

"Uh, we have time. Don't worry, there are plenty of hotels around here," Reeve said. Just then, Ning's stomach growled a bit. It had been years since he had eaten anything in the forest.

Due to him going in and out of the spear to collect energy, it had been just a few days for him that he hadn't eaten. Still, since he wasn't a cultivator anymore, the hunger and fatigue that came with a human body accumulated very quickly for him.

"Oh, have you not eaten anything today?" Reeve asked. "You must be hungry. Come, I know just the right place for you."

"Oh, then I will have to thank you once more, brother Reeve," Ning said. The two walked out of the building and started walking towards the east.

After going past a few blocks, Reeve finally came to stop in front of a shop. Ning could smell the scent of freshly baked bread coming from inside the store. Even without looking at it, he had realized that it was a bakery.

Reeve walked into the said bakery, and Ning followed behind.

Chapter 395: Golden Flour; Lisa

'GOLDEN FLOUR'

That was the name of the bakery Ning had just walked into. The freshly baked bread's scent wafted on his nose, and his stomach growled once again reminding him of his hunger.

It was late afternoon right now, but the number of people was quite high. 'I thought bakeries only got this many people during the morning,' Ning thought.

"Sigh, look at them," Reeve said referring to the many men and women getting in line to buy some bread. "They work hard and don't even have time to cook for themselves. If only they knew how tasty a homemade meal was."

"Well, I can't complain since this just helps her business even more," Reeve said. "Although, it seems we arrived during the busy hours, brother Ning. We will have to wait for a little while before we get some food for ourselves."

Ning didn't mind. He had already waited this long. Just a few more minutes was nothing.

He looked around at the staff that was selling the bread in what looked like bags made up of rags. They were all females and wore an apron over their white shirt, and wore a hat on their heads.

Slowly, but surely, the number of people lessened by a lot. Then, a woman came out from the back of the bakery and walked directly towards them.

Ning looked at the girl that felt very familiar to him. She came up to the table where they were seated and pouted. "What took you so long? I waited forever. The soups went cold. Do you want cold soup?" she asked with a fake angry face.

Reever laughed and said, "Honestly, a cold soup might not be a bad idea in this hot climate."

"No, just wait. I'm reheating it. It will be done in a few minutes," the girl said.

Ning looked at the girl, still wondering where he had seen her. Her apron and shirt gave nothing away. Even her black hair in a bun behind her hat looked like everyone else. Still, the face...

"Ah, it's you," he said in surprise. "The one who bought his first item."

"Ah right, I forgot to introduce you. This is someone I met out in the desert today. He's called Ning," Reever introduced him. Then he turned towards Ning and said,

"This is my wife, Lisa."

"Oh, I remember now. I saw you today too. Your clothes were unique so it caught my eyes. Hello," Lisa said.

"Hello," Ning said, clearly embarrassed for randomly shouting out loud.

"Right, can you get some food for him too?" Reever asked.

"Sure. Wait a few minutes, I'll be right back," she said and left.

Ning looked back towards Reever and asked, "You got your wife to buy your items?"

"Oh yeah, she acts like she knows a lot about what I bring and the people naturally start believing her. Before you know it, they all end up buying my items," Reever said.

"Well, she certainly can act well. I didn't even notice anything wrong when she said the things she said back then," Ning said.

"Right? Sometimes even I get caught up in her lies and end up believing them. I tell her that she can become an actress in the theater if she wanted to, but she never agrees at all," Reeve said.

<script>ChapterMid();</script>

"Oh, there are theaters here? I should go visit some soon," Ning said.

"Yes, yes, there's one quite close from here, you can go watch it every 5th day of the week," Reeve said.

In just a few minutes, Lisa walked out from the back with a plate full of bread and 3 bowls of soup.

She placed the soup in front of Ning and Reeve, and sat down next to Reeve before putting the final soup in front of her.

As for the bread, she put it at the center so that everyone could reach for it.

"Dig in, brother," Reeve said and picked up one of the big bread before ripping it into two and handing one half to his wife.

Ning did the same and took the bread and ripped it in half. He placed the half back onto the plate and was about to chew on the bread in his hand when he saw the two tear off a small piece of it and plunged it into the soup in front of them.

'What the hell?' he thought. 'Is this tea?' he looked down at the soup and clearly saw the onions floating inside. But even so, he saw the two of them eat the bread that was soaked in the soup.

Reeve was even making faces like he was enjoying the food. 'Break dipped in soup? I've never eaten anything like that, have I?' he thought.

He didn't have many memories from the time when he wasn't an Energy. His times before reincarnation was vague and he only knew tidbits at most.

It had come to the point where he had completely forgotten even his parent's own faces. So, he assumed that he might have seen something like this before, but just forgot about it.

'Let's try it before I judge it,' he thought and did the same as they did. He ripped a piece of the bread and dipped it in the soup. He hesitated for a bit, but still took a deep breath and ate it.

The moment he ate it, the salty soup and the sweet bread intermingled into becoming something that was of great delight. It wasn't the tastiest food he had eaten by a long

shot. That belonged to a meal he had in the southern continent of Planet Kumia during the 300 years he wandered there.

Still, this was very tasty for it was his first meal in this new body. "This is really good," He said to the two.

"Of course it is. My wife made it after all," Reeever said.

"Stop, you're making me embarrassed," Lisa said. She then turned to Ning and said, "Eat up. You'll need to eat more if you want to grow healthy."

Reeever stopped eating and turned to look at his wife. "Um... dear. He might look like an 18-year old, but he's actually 25," he said.

"Huh? What?" Lisa said with surprise. "He's the same age as me?"

"Uh, yeah. I'm 25," Ning said.

"Oh my god! I'm so sorry. I thought you were much younger. How do you manage to look so young?" she asked.

"Uhh, I don't know. Genetics, I guess?" Ning said without giving it much thought.

Reeever and Lisa both looked at each other with confused expressions. "What's Ge-Genetics, Brother Ning?" Reeever asked. "Does that mean luck?"

"Huh? Genetics it's... ah, sorry. It means something like passed on through my family. Hereditary or bloodline even," Ning said.

"Ah, I see. That's a word I've never heard before," Reeever said.

"Yes. So I'm saying that my youthfulness isn't uncommon in my family," Ning said.

They continued talking as they ate the rest of the food. Finally, once they were done, Lisa stood up. "Alright, I need to go back to finishing up the work. I will be out in half an hour or so," she said and picked up the plates.

"Thank you for the food, miss Lisa. Uhh... how much will I have to pay you?" Ning asked.

"It's alright. You don't have to pay anything," Lisa said.

"But... won't the bakery's boss get mad if they find out you gave us food without permission?" he asked.

"Oh, don't worry about that, brother Ning. Lisa owns half of the bakery. The other half is owned by the woman who owns this building. They were an amicable relationship, and she lets Lisa do whatever she wants with the bakery as long as it's bringing in results," Reeve said.

"I'll see you, boys, later," Lisa picked up the plates and walked away.

"Thank you," Ning said as he looked in her direction as she was entering the room to the back.

Just then, he noticed something about Lisa that he hadn't before. From the back, he could see that her hair was blond at the roots around her neck. 'People already dye their hair here, huh?' he thought.

"Let me go show you a hotel, brother Ning," Reeve said.

"Ah, okay. Let's go," Ning said and stood up. They walked out of the Golden Flour and walked a few blocks down towards the west.

Along the way, Ning noticed a building with words written on a whiteboard on top. "Oh, is that the theater?" he asked.

"Hmm, ah yes. This is the one. I wish my wife worked here, but she likes working in the bakery so it's fine I guess," Reeve said.

Just a few minutes later, the two of them reached in front of a hotel. "Alright, brother Ning. This is the hotel. You can stay here," Reeve said. "I will take my leave for now. Go in and rest. If you ever want to find me, just come to the bakery. 9 times out of 10, I will be in there just sitting around."

"Thank you, brother Reeve. For everything, you've done for me today. I will surely return this favor sometime soon," Ning said.

"Ah, don't fret it. Anyone would do such simple things. You didn't even get in my way at all. Just go in and rest. I will talk to you later," Reeve said.

"Thank you again," Ning said and walked inside.

He then met with the registrar at the front desk and got himself a room in the hotel. He didn't know how long he was going to stay around for, so he decided to buy it for 2 weeks for now.

Chapter 396: Closed Theater

"Your room is on the 3rd floor. Thank you for choosing our hotel," the Registrar said to Ning.

Ning nodded and took his keys before walking towards the stair he saw over at the corner. Before he reached there, however, he heard a sound from over to his left and saw a chain gate open.

When it opened, it revealed a small metal compartment behind it, with three people in it. One of them was a staff member who seemed to work in there, and the other two were a man and a woman.

The man had a well-built body and was wearing the regular suit and pants, but for some reason, he had his head on a bow in front of the young lady.

"Honestly, why does my father even employ you when you can't do one simple job," she sounded angry. There was an annoyed pout on her face that didn't do anything for her pretty little face.

The girl was wearing a sky blue gown, where the frill touched the ground, but he kept pulling it a little up as she walked. Her wide hat covered all of her head, but the black bangs still flowed down her left temple.

"I'm so sorry miss, but you don't have to go. I will make sure to get the ticket right now," the person who seemed to be her servant said.

"And what? Sit amongst the peasants? No, I refuse. I will go there myself and find myself a nice little seat," the girl said.

"Miss, you don't have to go. We can do it ourselves," the servant said.

"No, I don't trust you guys at all. Unless I go there myself, I won't be satisfied. Now hurry up," she said and walked past Ning.

Ning stepped to the side and let the two walk away. He then turned back to the elevator they had just come out of and said, "so, even Elevators are already made, huh?"

He walked in, completely forgetting the girl and the man he had just seen, and told the staff, "third floor please."

"Yes, sir," the staff said, side-eyeing his clothes.

'Damn, I really need to get changed soon,' he thought. Once he walked out of the elevator, he made his way to his room down the hall.

He opened the door to his room and found out that his room wasn't as simple as he had previously imagined. From what he could see, there were pipes going up the side of the wall on the inside, maintaining the temperature of the room.

There was even a way to turn off the temperature regulation from what he could see but didn't know exactly how it worked.

On the left side of the room was a bed fit for 2 people, and on the right was a night table that was also a closet to keep their clothes.

Ning didn't really have anything, so he didn't even take an eye towards it. The air in the room was slightly chilly and he was more than tired, so as soon as he hit the bed, he pulled up his blanket in went the sleep.

Within minutes, he slept like that was the best sleep he had ever had. No system, no timer, he slept through the night and even more.

<script>ChapterMid();</script>

When he woke up the next morning, the time was already noon from the shadows his window made in his room.

He woke up feeling refreshed like he hadn't in a long while. "Geez, what's the time, system?" Ning asked.

<It is 1 in the afternoon>

"Ah, I see. So I slept for like what? 18 hours?" as soon as he asked, he realized he was mistaken. The days in this world were around 36 hours long. So, if he went to sleep at around 6 in the afternoon, he would have been asleep for nearly 30 hours.

"Holy shit! I didn't realize I was that tired," he thought. "Being an Aether user, I thought I would have at least some form of resistance to sleep as a cultivator would."

"The only time I've slept longer was back then after the incident at the Kanon house, wasn't it?" he thought. That was also on this same planet.

"Sigh, I will need to keep my fatigue in check. At least until I get stronger as an Aether user," he thought.

He could feel his stomach slightly rumbling, so he decided to go out and eat. "Wait, not in these clothes," he thought.

He wanted to make cloth by himself, but that would cause problems with Reeve and the boss if they found him wearing suits and pants without ever buying them.

"Eh, I guess I should just wear a black robe and hope I can mingle enough that I don't get noticed as much," he thought and bought a black robe with white inside.

The difference was obvious, but not very noticeable, so he gave it a pass.

"I wonder if the hotel takes care of my meals or I will have to go out to eat? I forgot to ask that," Ning thought.

He walked out of the room and locked the door behind him. He then made his way to the elevator once more and waited for it to open.

The chain gates opened once more and Ning noticed a different staff in there. "To the ground floor please," Ning said.

"Sure, sir," the man said and pressed the button for the ground floor. Ning stood in the rattling elevator, waiting for it to reach the ground floor.

No one in the 2nd walked in, so he reached directly to the ground floor.

The elevator gate opened and Ning was about to walk out when he saw the two from yesterday walk in.

The girl seemed to be angry for some reason and the servant behind her was consoling her.

"Hello," Ning passively said as he stepped to the side for the two and walked on. As he was going out, he could hear the servant explaining.

"It happens, young miss. They just have to shut down sometimes for no reason. If the entire staff had an illness at the same time, there is nothing we can do about it," he explained. "Besides, they told us they would make the next booking free, right? We can go in next week."

"I come all the way from..." Ning walked too far away and the gates shut down, so he couldn't hear the rest of her words.

He walked to the registrar and asked, "Hello, do you have a meal system around here for your guests?"

"Yes, we do sir. There will be supper in about 2 hours and dinner at around 8 in the evening. We will also have a night meal at around 14 if you would like that," he said.

'Ughh, I'm hungry right now. Maybe I could go to Lisa's place and buy some food,' he thought.

"It's fine," he said to the registrar and walked out of the door. He remembered his way back and noticed that people weren't looking at him anymore. Now that he was simply wearing black and white, no one was interested in looking towards him.

"It's such a shame," a man said to his wife as he walked right past Ning.

"I hope they're alright," the woman said.

'What's going on?' he wondered and kept walking. On the way to the Golden Flour, he saw a major group of people staying outside the Theatre, demanding their money back.

The theatre people were trying to console the crowd, but most weren't having it. They just wanted their money back since the theatre was canceled at the last second.

Ning lingered for just long enough to recognize that this was the reason why that girl back at the hotel was angry. 'I would be angry too if they didn't return my money back and instead said they would make that the ticket for the next week's one,' he thought.

He walked past them and made his way to the Golden flour. Immediately he noticed that there were a significantly low number of people in the bakery.

'Is it because it's mid-day,' Ning thought. He walked in and was genuinely surprised to see no one there except for the staff and Reeve who was whispering with his wife on the side with him.

Ning walked up to them and they noticed him coming. They immediately stopped whispering and Reeve spoke, "Brother Ning, what are you doing here?"

"Um, I just woke up and was incredibly hungry, so I came to grab something to eat," he said. He then looked around the store and asked regarding the noticeably low number of people.

"What's going on? Is the store closed for tonight?" he asked.

"Um... haven't you heard?" Reeve asked.

"About what?" Ning asked.

"About the theatre of course," Reeve said.

"Oh yeah, I heard," Ning said. "Poor people, getting sick right before it was time for their performance. That much suck quite a lot."

"But, what does that have to do anything with you guys? Are you concerned about the theatre too?" he asked.

"Of course not," Lisa said loudly. "We are more concerned about ourselves."

"... sorry, I don't follow," Ning asked with a confused face.

"Look, brother Ning. The Golden Flour is responsible for making food for the theater actors right before their performance. Unfortunately, this time for some reason, the people who ate our food got terribly sick, and could do anything."

"From what I hear, they keep on vomiting and having diarrhea. And the city had come to learn that it was from this shop, so no one is coming here anymore."

Chapter 397: Poison Ryegrass

"Oh god, that sounds terrible," Ning said. "Do you have any idea why that is happening? Are you sure that your bread is the cause?"

"No, we have no idea what this could be happening," Lisa said with her eyes full of years. "All we know is that the bread is definitely the cause."

"A few of our staff members ate some of the bread and they too have come down with the same illness as those actors, brother Ning," Reeve said.

The door opened once more and an old man with a mustache and a top hat walked in, supported by a black cane.

"Mr. Hendor," Lisa immediately stood up and wiped away her tears.

"Mr. Hendor, we are so sorry for the..." Reeve stood up to speak, but the old man put up his hand to get them to stop speaking.

"You don't have to explain anything young lad, I know it was not you people's intention to cause problems for us. If possible, I would love to just let all of these problems be swept under the rug."

"However, the higher-ups are mad, and we can't let the incident go without some sort of compensation for the loss we suffered today," the old man said.

"Mr. Hendor, but we..." Reeve spoke. "We don't have the sort of money to compensate a theatre."

"I'm sorry, son. This is not up to me. Please do something about it by tomorrow, or we will have to take you all to court."

The old man left just as soon as he came, but the damage he left behind was catastrophic to the two couples.

Lisa started sobbing even more, and Reeve hugged her to console her. "It's okay. I will find a way," he said.

Ning watched the two of them cry and didn't know what to do. So, he walked up to one of the staff behind the counter and asked, "do you still have some of the bread?"

"Uh, bread? There aren't any right now, sir. We will make fresh bread in about an hour. You can come back at that time if you can," the girl said.

"Eh, did you throw away the bad ones already?" Ning asked.

"Um, no. But we are going to throw them soon enough," the girl said.

"Ah, then it's fine. Just give me the bad one," Ning said.

"Sir?" the girl asked in confusion.

"I'm not joking. Give me one of the bad bread please," he asked.

"Um, I'm not sure I can do that," the girl said.

"Brother Ning, what are you doing?" Reeve walked up to him after hearing the staff's worried voices.

"Oh, Brother Reeve. I was just asking for one of those bad bread that got everyone sick," Ning said. "I would like to see what the problem truly is."

"How will you find out?" Reeve asked.

"I will eat it of course. That's the easiest way," Ning said.

"I can't let you do that, brother Ning. As we said, the bread is definitely the problem. You won't have to test for that," Reeve said.

"And do you know why they are the problem?" Ning asked.

"Uh... no," Reeve said.

<script>ChapterMid();</script>

"And I heard that they are making the bread again. What if the problem was in the flour and not the cooking process. You will just cause more problems," Ning said.

"I... we didn't think about that," Reeve said.

"You need to think these things through, brother Reeve. Let me have that bread. As I said, I'm a medical professional, so I can treat myself if I do in fact get ill," Ning said.

Reeve thought for a bit, and said, "if you say so." Reeve asked the staff to bring out one of the bad bread and handed it to Ning.

"Please be absolutely sure before you do this, brother Ning," Reeve said.

Ning nodded, but there was no need for him to worry at all. With his enhanced body, there was a very low chance of him ever getting ill. Even normal venoms and poisons didn't hard him as much since he could simply regenerate.

Ning sat down on a desk and bit onto the bread without any hesitation. In just a couple of bites, he completely devoured the bread thanks to his hunger.

Now, he just had to wait for a few minutes.

Soon, he could hear his stomach growl a little, but that was the extent of that. He didn't even have to do anything, and it was okay on its own.

'Hm, so the bread really was the bad part, huh?' Ning thought. 'System, what is wrong with the bread exactly?'

<The bread is made using flour that includes wheat and a poisonous weed called Darnel Ryegrass.>

"Darnel Ryegrass? Give me some information on those," he asked.

Soon, information entered his mind and he knew things he didn't know previously. From what he understood, Darnel Ryegrass was a wheat-like plant, that was easy to mix up with Wheat.

They were poisonous weeds that if eaten caused a lot of different illnesses including painful limbs, stomach ache, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.

'Hm? But these people should know by now what's bad and what's not, right?' Ning thought.

"Brother Reeve, can you come here for a moment," he asked.

Reeve came up to him and looked at his hands. "You really ate the bread?" he asked.

"Hm? Oh yeah. And it really was the problem too. Thankfully, I'm hard to make ill, so I'm fine," Ning said. "Anyway, tell the staff to not make any more bread for now. If I'm not wrong, the problem is with the flour you guys have."

"Brother Ning, you know about bread and flour?" Reeve asked.

"A little. If I'm not wrong, the flour your wife used has poisonous flour mixed into it. While it's not lethal, it can cause a lot of problems to the person who eats it," Ning said.

"Um, if that is true, then I will have them stop right now," Reeve said and stood up to go to the back room.

Lisa didn't know what was happening, but she soon learned about it when Reeve told her the problem after coming out from the kitchen.

"What? The problem is with the flour? But we've never had any sort of problems," Lisa said.

"Um, miss Lisa, do you know anything about Darnel Ryegrass?" Ning asked.

Lisa's eyes went wide. "Poison Ryegrass? Is that it? Is that what's causing the illness?" she asked.

"Oh, you know about it. That makes it easier. Yes, if I'm not wrong, it's the ryegrass that's the problem," Ning said.

"But that should be impossible. Our suppliers would never make such a simple mistake," she said.

"Are you sure? Who are your suppliers?" Ning asked.

"Uh, they're the Miller and Miller grain house, from the riverbank area. If what you said is true, then I should go talk to them," Lisa said.

Lisa took off the apron she was wearing and got herself a parasol. Reeve also goes his coat and hat.

"Can I come with you guys?" Ning asked.

"Sure, brother Ning. You've been quite helpful," Reeve said.

The three walked out of the store and made their way east towards the river. The river was what separated the main city from the suburban area with a lot of farmland.

On the other side of the river was where the mill that produced their flour was located at. They crossed the bridge and walked to the mill.

Ning could see a huge water wheel to the side of the mill that was likely running the grinder that ground-up grains into flour.

Lisa didn't stop for anything and directly went to the owner of the mill to explain everything to him.

The owner was an old guy that profusely apologized after realizing what had happened. "I am so sorry, young miss. I didn't know something like that had happened to you. If I had known the poison grain was mixed in, we would have never sold it to you."

"I don't know if apologies are going to cut—"

"It's alright, Mr. Miller," Lisa said, cutting off Reeve mid-speech. "I just hope you don't make the same mistake again."

She turned around to walk away.

"Sigh, Lisa. You can't let everyone off the hook all the time," Reeve said. "He's just as responsible for all of it as we are. And if the theatre really does take us to court over this, then we will have to do the same to them."

"It's a mistake. If every mistake came with such a harsh punishment, then the world wouldn't be a fun place to live in. Let them be, we can handle the punishment for now," Lisa said and walked away.

"Come on, Lisa. We have to—" suddenly Reeve stopped speaking. "Lisa!" he called her.

Lisa stopped, clearly annoyed, "What? We don't need to talk about this anymore."

"No, not that," Reeve said. He then whispered something into her ear that made the color in her face drain away.

She immediately opened her parasol and used it to shade away the sun.

"I'm sorry, Brother Ning. Something urgent has come up. I will see you later," Reeve said.

He then turned around and walked in fast paces, leaving the area before Ning could even realize it.

"What's up with them?" he thought. He then turned around to look at the mill once more.

"The entire city knew about the problem with Golden Flour to the point that no customers are coming in anymore, and they don't? Also, how exactly did the news about the cause of the illness being the bakery spread so soon?" Ning wondered.

There was something wrong with the events that had taken place today, and Ning was going to find out what was wrong.

Chapter 398: Culprit

"Hello," Ning greeted the owner of the mill, the man called Miller. He had decided to find out if his hunch was correct or not.

"Hello. Do you need something?" the old man asked.

"Yes, just some answers," Ning said. "Is your mill incapable of separating the ryegrass from the wheat?"

The old man was taken aback for a moment and finally realized that he had seen Ning just a few minutes ago.

"You were with that little miss from the Golden Flour, weren't you? What do you want? Do you want to drag our name down? It was an honest mistake," the old man said.

Ning walked up to the old man and put his arms around his shoulder. he asked, "Was it?"

The old man's eyes changed and he replied, "No, it wasn't a mistake."

Ning's eyes brightened; his hunch was right.

"Then you did it knowingly?" he asked.

"Yes, master. I personally added the ryegrass flour to the wheat this morning," the old man said with no hesitation.

"And why did you do it? Did you have some problems with them? Did they not pay in time? What was the reason?" Ning asked.

"Nothing of that sort, Master. I was just paid to do it," the old man said.

"Huh? Paid to? By who?" Ning asked.

"I do not know. A man came to me at the crack of dawn and told me that if I did what he said, he would pay me handsomely," the old man said.

"And you did? Shame on you. Was it worth it? How much did you earn?" Ning asked.

"That man gave me 10 Gols, master," the old man said.

"10 Gols to betray the trust of a loyal customer. Quite the businessman you are. Where are the 10 Gols?" Ning asked.

"Right here, master," the old man brought out an old necklace from his chest pocket.

"Bring it out," Ning said.

The old man nodded and brought out the 10 Gols. Ning took the money and kept it for himself. "Tell me, what did this man look like? Have you ever seen him before?"

"I don't know. The man was wearing a scarf around his face and his eyes were hidden by his top hat. His voice wasn't the most recognizable either, so it could've been anyone," the old man said.

"Any guesses?" Ning asked.

"Hmm, maybe it was the theater company from the west end of the city? They always come second to the one from the city center, so it could be that," the old man said.

"Sigh, I guess I will have to find out on my own," Ning said. "Go back to what you were doing. I will call you if I ever need you again."

"Yes, master," the old man said and walked back into the mill.

It was still a hot day with the sun up high in the sky, but Ning didn't seem to care for the heat as much.

'A rival theater company huh? Could it be that?' he wondered. Those could certainly be the culprit, seeing as how much of a loss the theater had suffered from this debacle.

But something didn't sit straight with Ning, so he decided to find the answer without wasting any more time.

"System, who was the person the old man was talking about?" Ning asked. As easily as that, Ning found the exact information he was looking for.

"Oh," he said in surprise when he found out the identity of the person behind this whole thing.

"Give me more information, like current location," Ning asked. Soon, he got what he wanted and from what he learned of the person, he could see where the motivation to do what they did came from.

Ning felt his stomach growl once more. "Damn, was that single bread, not enough? I should have known. Well, let's go kill two birds at once," he said and walked away.

Just after a few minutes of walk, he came across a bakery that was not that far away from the Golden Flour bakery. The number of people walking in and out of the bakery was an astounding many.

With one of the nearby bakeries closed down, the other was suffering from the workload. Even as he walked in, Ning could see a long line of people waiting for their turn to get their bread.

It was going to take a while to get his bread, but he could wait. After nearly 15 minutes, it was his turn to order.

"Hello, can I get 2 pieces of bread please," Ning said.

"2 pieces of bread. Here you go," the lady at the counter wrapped up two loaves of bread in a paper bag and handed it to Ning.

"Oh, and this one doesn't have Ryegrass in it right?" Ning asked as he paid for the bread.

"Sorry?" the lady looked confused. "I don't know what you mean sir."

"I was asking if this bread had Ryegrass mixed in it. My body can't handle that poisonous weed very well," Ning said.

"Sir, we never make bread from Ryegrass flour," the lady said.

"Ah, I see," Ning said. "So you only put them in your rival's bread huh?"

The lady looked really surprised and tried hard to find her cool. "Um, s-sir, you are blocking the line. Please let the other customers get their food,"

"Oh sure. I have nothing to do, so I will wait by the table until it isn't as crowded anymore," Ning said with a smile that said he knew about it all.

Ning did as he said and sat down at the table close to the counter. He was genuinely hungry so he started eating his bread without anything else but the water that was available at every table.

From time to time, he looked towards the girl and smiled as he waved his hands towards her.

Soon the number of people coming into the shop lowered to almost none and Ning finally stood up from his seat.

The lady saw that and quickly ran to the back.. Before Ning could do anything, 2 buff men walked out from the kitchen with dough rollers in their hands.

Chapter 399: Mystery Solved

The lady was hiding behind those two men and was saying something to them. The two men slowly slammed their rollers on their hands threateningly.

"Come on guys, there's no need for violence. I just want your guys to own up to the truth and that will be all," Ning said.

"What truth?" one of the men asked.

"That you guys were behind the bad bread incident today at Golden Flour," Ning said. "Look, I already know that this lady dressed up as a man and went to the mill at the riverbank to ask them to poison their flour supply for the day."

"I also know that you were all in on it, so you can't make a single person a scapegoat here either," Ning said. "So, put down the rollers, and let's just talk."

The 2 men's eyes shook from learning that their secret had gone out. If others found out, they would be in a lot of trouble.

"What do we do?" one of the men asked.

"I don't know," the other man said. He thought for a while and asked, "Who else knows about this?"

"Right now? It's only me. But I'll soon tell the people from the Golden Flour, and hopefully, more people in the city will come to realize that it wasn't their fault for today's happening," Ning said. "Speaking of which, were you guys behind the rumors too? The information about the bread being the culprit for the illness spread real fast. Faster than it normally should."

"He knows too much," the man said. He looked around to see if there were any customers in the store yet. Unfortunately, there were still some.

"What? Looking to see if you can find me while I'm alone? Sure, let's go to your kitchen. We can talk there privately," Ning said with a smile.

The two men felt lost at the suggestion. Why would anyone want to be out of public vision at a time like this?

"Okay, come," one of the men said and showed the way. Ning nodded and walked in without any care in the world.

He saw the other bakers in the kitchen and nodded towards them. The other 2 men walked in and closed off his exit. The other bakers seemed to have realized what had happened and came surrounding him too.

"Tell us what you want? Money? We can pay you handsomely if you will stay quiet," the man said.

"Hmm, how much?" Ning asked.

The man thought for a bit and said, "how about 300 Sils? That should be enough right?"

Ning chuckled a bit when he heard that. "You can't be serious right? You paid the miller fellow 10 Gols, and you are going to skimp out on money right now?" he asked.

The men's eyes went wide in surprise. "That miller guy actually ratted us out? Wait, how did he even know it was us?" the man asked.

"He didn't. I just found out on my own," Ning said. "Also, I was just joking with you all. I'm not going to accept any payment to keep quiet or anything. You will have to just suffer the consequences of your own action."

"You... are you sure that's what you want to do?" the man asked, with the others slowly converging towards Ning.

"Oh, absolutely," Ning said as he brought a single finger forward and moved it a little. Before anyone knew what had happened, all the various weapons in their hands flew out of their hand.

"Huh?"

"Oh my god!"

"Careful, he's an Enchanter."

Ning slowly walked up to the girl that was the face of this whole operation. The others tried to move but they couldn't do anything at all. Their bodies were frozen solid as they couldn't move at all.

Ning patted the girl on the shoulder and said, "they will come to ask you some questions. Answer all of them truthfully."

"Yes," the girl said.

"Alright, I'm leaving now," Ning said and left the kitchen. Only then could the people begin to move.

"No, we're finished," one of the men said.

"Not yet. He needs to be able to prove that it was us. As long as we deny all accusations, it will be fine," another man said.

"Ok, let's do that. Everyone, make sure to keep your mouths quiet okay?"

The people there didn't know that no matter how much they planned, they had already lost the fight.

Ning left the bakery and went over the Golden Flour. He walked in to see the empty place with the few women in their finishing their cleanup for the day. The bakery was going to close very early today.

"Hello, do you know where brother Reeve and Lisa are?" Ning asked.

"I'm afraid they're not here, sir. Madam and Sir already left for the day. Was there something you needed?" she asked.

"Hmm, here's the thing."

Ning went on to explain the whole thing to the girl there. "Tell them when they come tomorrow morning what I just said to you. They can talk to the miller guy or the girl at the bakery, both of them will answer them," Ning said.

The girl looked dumbfounded at the information Ning had brought back. She couldn't believe that what happened today was a targeted attack by another bakery to destroy their business and enhance their own.

"I will let them know the first thing, sir. If you don't mind, can you tell me how you found out this information? What should I tell my Madam?" the girl asked.

"I have my ways. You can tell her that," Ning said. "I will leave now, goodbye."

Ning left the Golden Flour and went back to his hotel. Along the way, he could see that the theater sign had changed to next week's performance instead of today's.

'Using something popular like a theater to piggyback on the disaster and use that to ruin another bakery's business. These people sure are shrewd with how they can come up with ideas,' Ning thought.

Finally, he reached the hotel, and with nothing else to do, he directly went to his room to rest for the day.

Chapter 400: Aether Tower

Ning had 4 fist-sized rocks in his hands that he was constantly juggling as well as he could. He himself wasn't very good at juggling, but he had a little help from elsewhere.

The rocks jumped around in his hands unnaturally because they were being manipulated using Aether. He was training his Aether usage before going to sleep so that he could get better at it.

While he still didn't have the talent for it, the practice was helping him get there.

The 4 rocks stopped juggling and dropped onto his hands. That was enough training for today. He threw away the rocks and went to bed.

He slept for as long as he could, but when he woke up, it was still very dark outside. 'Damn this planet and its long nights,' he thought. He would rather go stay at the south where it was perpetually bright, compared to this place where days were so long.

Ning wanted to go out today as well, but he needed a guide, and without Reeve, he didn't feel like going out on his own. So, he spent the whole day in his room, practicing his Aether arts.

From time to time, he left his room to go have some meal, but that was all. Soon, that day was over as well and he went to bed once more.

He woke up the next morning and decided he wanted to see more of the city this time. So, after having his lunch, he left the hotel to go roam the city.

The industrialized city was great and all, but due to everyone being so focused on their work all the time, Ning didn't feel the same level of friendliness from the residents as he would from any town or city in Kumia.

There were not only adult men and women but also children as young as 8 years old working to earn money in the stores and the streets. Ning felt disappointed when he saw that, but there was nothing he could do. He also understood that these people likely needed this work to keep themselves afloat.

'Sigh, everyone is out for their own self here,' he thought. He went around the city for a few more hours to look at the different landmarks and sceneries, and while he did like some of them, most of them left him feeling disappointed.

'Doesn't look like there is anything worth staying around here for,' he thought. Ning turned around to walk away from the south of the city he was currently in.

Just then, he heard a commotion from someplace close by. He could see a few amongst the masses walking at a faster pace towards a certain location and got curious.

He too decided to go and see what was happening. The place he was going to was an under construction building with a large compound that was empty of any equipment or stuff required in the construction.

There were however a large number of people gathered at the compound for some reason.

What surprised Ning the most was that the number of children that were here in the field was an astounding lot, and most of them looked to be younger than 10 too.

Due to the crowd in front of him, he couldn't really see what was happening, so he asked someone to his left as to what was going on right now.

"It's the people from the Aether Tower. They are here to see if any of the children are worthy to go to the Aether tower," the man told Ning.

"I see," Ning said. He understood the reason for the current crowd. 'Aether Tower... that's the place Reeve wanted to go, right? It must be similar to a big sect back in Kumia. No wonder everyone is so excited. If their children get to go there, their life would be set.'

A middle-aged man with a thick mustache, and a bluish-black coat walked to the center and started speaking. "Alright, I don't have much time. All the adults, please move away from this space in front of me. Children, come line up," the man said.

The man didn't seem to hold respect for anyone in there and seemed to want to leave as soon as he could.

The people however weren't offended by his tone at all and did what he said. They all stepped aside and let the children line up.

"Over 400, from the looks of it. Well, I suppose a city at the edge of civilization wouldn't really have that many people anyway," the man said.

He then brought out something from his storage. The device, from what Ning could see, was a crystal ball, not unlike a fortune teller's crystal ball that Ning had a vague memory of.

Only, this one was entirely purple. Ning couldn't even see anything properly from this far away, so he had to use his new vision magnification skill he had very recently bought.

"Oh, is something glowing in there?" he wondered.

The man decided to waste no time and called out the children and made them put their hands on the crystal.

One by one, the children did as told and not a single one of them could elicit a single change in the crystal.

It wasn't until after 200 children when finally there was some change in the crystal. A small white light emitted from deep within the crystal that only the child who was touching the crystal, Ning, and the man could see.

It wasn't until a few seconds later that the light became more pronounced and the regular people started noticing it.

"Woah, he did it!"

"That child is going to have a great future now."

"We can now boast that someone from our city went to the Aether Tower as well."

The rest of the children tested, but not another one with the same results could be found. So, the middle-aged man was going to have to only take this one child back to the tower to train.

Once everything was done, people started leaving, and Ning standing alone couldn't help but wonder exactly what had happened.