

Gourmet Gaming

Chapter 6: Garlic Bread and Soup

After preparing all of the things he needed, Minhyuk started cooking.

First, he grabbed the bread knife and cut the bread nicely. Then, he added some garlic, butter, honey, and condensed milk into a bowl and mixed them well. After mixing the ingredients together, Minhyuk spread the sauce on the bread evenly before gently sprinkling some parsley on top.

'What's after this? I finished all of the preparations I needed to do.'

Plenty of people enjoy the taste of garlic bread. It did not matter whether they were a child or an adult, the moment the bread was in their mouth, they would find the mixture of the sweet and salty flavor of garlic bread to be the best taste in the world.

Then, Minhyuk lined up the prepared bread on a large oven pan. The pan was large enough to accommodate a lot of garlic bread, so there were many that could go into the oven at one go. He quickly turned the oven on, set the timer, and watched the slices of garlic bread turn into a beautiful golden-brown. It had always been a joy for Minhyuk to wait for that ding! sound the oven would make whenever a dish was done cooking.

'I wonder how my cooking tastes?'

Minhyuk kept on munching on the hard bread.

Then, he turned around and started making soup. Unfortunately, the ingredients in Instructor Valen's house were not enough. He could only make do with instant cream soup powder. From what he heard from Changwook, this was considered a nasty and disgusting food in the army. However, even if other people found the taste of the instant soup nasty, Minhyuk still drooled over it.

This kind of soup was usually found as a side-dish in most tonkatsu restaurants. It was a very cheap, and easy-to-make dish. However, since he had not had a taste of this food for a long time, Minhyuk could not stop his mouth from watering.

'Just imagining the slightly salty flavor, with a soft, but thick texture... I can't help but drool.'

He lit up the stove and filled the pot with water according to the recipe. Then, he slowly poured the powder inside, making sure to stir continuously until it boiled.

'If you sprinkle a bit of salt on it, it would taste even better!'

Valen finished washing up just as the soup started to boil. The lingering smell in the house caused him to gasp out in admiration.

"Phew, it smells delicious?"

However, the scene inside the kitchen was so shocking that Instructor Valen unknowingly stopped in his tracks.

"B... boy..! What's happening?!"

"The soup is boiling!"

"...In that pot over there?"

"Yes!" Minhyuk answered confidently.

That was right! Minhyuk had used a pot large enough to accommodate at least fifty servings and was boiling ten bags worth of soup!

"...Uhhh," Instructor Valen groaned lightly.

Instructor Valen stared blankly at the boy sitting in front of him.

The boy, Minhyuk, had a bright smile filled with anticipation, while holding a spoon and fork in his hands. He was staring at the eighty-odd slices of garlic bread that were piled up like a mountain on the table.

"Uhh..."

Instructor Valen looked down at his small bowl filled with a plain-looking soup, before watching Minhyuk ladle out some soup from the larger pot below the table, into the small pot placed in front of him.

'Ah, what a soft and sweet smell.'

The aroma of the cream soup wafted towards Minhyuk's nose and stimulated his appetite, making his mouth water.

"Please! Eat to your heart's content. I've made as much as I respect you."

Minhyuk did not forget to butter Valen up with words of flattery.

Valen shook his head in amusement as he slowly picked up his spoon. He took a sip of the savory cream soup. At that moment...

Crunch!

Valen looked up at the loud, crunching sound and saw Minhyuk taking a huge bite of the garlic bread.

The garlic bread is crunchy on the outside but soft and warm on the inside, maybe it was because it was just freshly made. There's this sweet and salty taste that lingers in my mouth.

Minhyuk did not stop there. He quickly scooped a spoonful of soup and took a sip. The thick soup entered his mouth and melted the dry garlic bread, making it even more savory and flavorful.

'It's a feast for the tongue!'

The crunching sound of the garlic bread that accompanied Minhyuk's extremely happy expression seemed oddly cheerful too.

'This is bliss.'

Then...

"Phew..."

Instructor Valen brought his hand to his forehead at the sight. hen...

"Hahahahahahaha!"

He burst out into laughter at the situation.

Crunch!

Minhyuk looked at Valen in confusion but he did not stop eating his bread and soup.

The sight was so comical that Instructor Valen could not stop laughing. He even doubled over.

"Whenever you eat, you look like you're the happiest person in the world! You look really pleased!"

Minhyuk nodded strongly in response.

"Nothing in this world can make me happier than eating!"

Sometimes, what made some people the happiest were not expensive cars, a nice house, or even beautiful women. Some people could be the happiest even when eating. Just like the current Valen and Minhyuk.

"Me too, I'm really enjoying the food today."

However, Valen's wide smile turned bitter in an instant.

"Everyday, my routine is the same. I go to work and then come home to an empty house. There's nothing more lonely than coming home to an empty house."

Minhyuk continued to eat his food while he listened to Valen attentively. This would usually have been considered rude, but Valen already had a favorable impression of him, so he did not mind.

"Regardless of your intentions, this is the first time that someone asked me to have a meal together."

Valen stared blankly in front of him.

"I've been alone all along. I never imagined that I would hear the sound of someone moving and making food in this house. Somebody..." Valen chuckled bitterly, "Dining together with me."

Minhyuk stopped eating for a moment. He was aware that a simple meal would appear different for everyone.

"I will keep this meal in my memories, forever."

Those words struck a chord deep within Minhyuk.

There was always some food that was a treasured memory for everybody. For some, it could be the Choco Pie that they ate in the army. Another would say that it was the ramyeon that they ate when they were truly famished, while others might say that it was the seaweed soup that their mothers made for them, before passing away. All in all, everybody had a food that touched them deeply and remained ingrained in their memories.

'Was it really that praiseworthy?'

"So it's delicious.?Ah, I'm so glad to hear that."

"Let's eat! How can we let such delicious food turn cold?"

"You're absolutely right, Instructor!"

Both Minhyuk and Valen resumed eating with happy expressions on their faces, enjoying the wonderful meal together.

Minhyuk finished all of the soup and garlic bread he made in one sitting. Valen clicked his tongue in surprise. However, Minhyuk even asked if he could eat the hard bread lying around in Valen's house.

'I wonder if the figure after the fullness stat changed again?'

'I don't know exactly how the rule for that works.'

He did not know much, but Minhyuk was sure that the figure would increase if he ate more even after his fullness had reached 100%.

Curious, Minhyuk opened his stats window.

"Stats Window."

(Minhyuk)

Level: 1

Class: None

HP: 114?MP: 100

STR: 9+5?AGI: 5+5?STM: 5+5

WIS: 5+5?INT: 5+5?Rep: 1

Fullness: 100%/3

Bonus Point: 0

'It changed into three?'

The figure beside the?stat?was originally only at two, this meant that it had now increased by another point.

'Are there really no side effects?'

No one knew exactly how the system in?Athenae?worked. Learning or finding out about hidden things would usually add thrill and joy to the game. However, dealing with

something unknown like this still brought some anxiety and restlessness to Minhyuk. Even so, it would not stop him from eating well.

Eating addiction patients usually eat at least 20,000 calories per day. If left uncontrolled, they could even eat up to 50,000 calories.

'I must have already reached that amount yesterday, and today as well.'

Valen shook his head and smiled at Minhyuk as he stood up to go to his room. When he came out, there was a well-kept sword in his hands.

"Boy," Valen gently called out to Minhyuk.

Seeing Minhyuk turn to look at him, Valen held out the sword with a light smile on his face.

Lee Minhwa, the new employee, was very surprised at the scene she saw on her monitor.

"Kyaa!"

[Ardo's Valen presents the Sword of Rebellion to Player Minhyuk as a gift.]

These notifications were specifically designed to inform the employees of the department whenever a special player received something special or reached a milestone.

After Minhyuk received the common title 'This Zone's Strong Guy', Minhyuk was tagged as a?Lv. 5 Special Player?and came under monitoring. And it only happened just yesterday.

"What the... What did he even do to make Valen give him his weapon?"

Team Leader Park was already rushing over when he heard Lee Minhwa's shouts.

"Instructor Valen is famous for being very strict and difficult to get along with!"

"R-right... So why would he do that, then?"

Minhwa almost burst into tears when she saw Team Leader Park hurrying over. Thankfully, there was a look of excitement on his face so her thumping heart finally settled down. She heaved a sigh of relief.

"The Sword of Rebellion is way too good for novices," Team Leader Park said with a wide smile on his face.

"This is what makes this job fun, watching these NPCs acting so much like normal humans and doing unpredictable things. This player is also strangely interesting. Continue keeping an eye on him."

"Ah, wait, there's still something else I want to report," Lee Minhwa said after pondering for a moment.

Team Leader Park was about to look at the other employees' monitors, but he stopped in his tracks and turned his attention back to Lee Minhwa.

"What is it?"

'Was there something else that this player did that needed to be reported to me?'

"User Minhyuk has a /3 in his fullness stat."

"...It's not one?" ÚpTodated *novels* on *no(v)el(.)bin(.)com*

"I checked it. It's definitely three."

"Isn't he just a new player? Didn't he just log in to Athenae for the first time a few days ago?"

"Yes, it has only been three days."

"...Did he only eat during that period of time?! No, is that even something that a normal person would do?! A normal person won't be..."

"He was really eating all day."

Team Leader Park gaped at Minhwa.

"Did the top mukbang streamer BJ Binz come out and play this game?"

Mukbang BJ Binz was the talk of the town when it came to eating. He could eat ten bowls of black bean sauce noodles and ten bowls of spicy seafood noodle soup in one sitting.

Team Leader Park pondered deeply.

"You're telling me that he ate approximately 40,000~50,000 calories a day? Are you sure he's still a human being?"

The figure right next to the 100% in the fullness stat was something hard to achieve. The condition to get an increase of /1 next to the fullness stats was to eat 10,000 calories. That was equivalent to eating an additional 4,000 to 5,000 calories after getting a 100% fullness stat, which was like eating 120~150 bowls of rice in a day.

"That player really just eats all day long?"

"He doesn't eat when he sleeps."

"This crazy fellow... He really eats 40,000-50,000 calories per day? How can that be? The character will also feel full once the fullness stat reaches 100%. Does he not feel full at all?!" Team Leader Park asked incredulously.

Seeing his expression, Lee Minhwa asked, "Once he reaches seven, he will be able to challenge a God Class, right?"

"That's right," Team Leader Park nodded in agreement.

God Class. It was one of the classifications of job classes that users could get in Athena. Classes were classified as follows: General class, Hidden class, Secret class, Legendary class and God class. Special players would usually get either the Hidden or Secret classes, and there have been no cases of a Legendary class being weak. In other words, receiving any class higher than the General class was a guaranteed pass to become strong. And then there was the God class. As of the moment, only a few of them had been released.

"The God class that Player Minhyuk is approaching is supposed to be unattainable..."

That was right. Receiving a God class was already a tedious process, but even among the God classes, there were still those that had the most demanding and nonsensical conditions. And Minhyuk was getting close to one of those God classes right now.

"He's crazy... One has to eat 40,000 calories for ten consecutive days to get that class. Are you telling me that he can do it?"

Even if the world was really flipped upside down, it still would not make sense.

'Unless, he's really trying to eat in the game!'

"Just in case, raise that player to level four and keep a strict eye on him. Let me know if the number increases to six."

"Yes, I understand."

Team Leader Park turned around after giving his orders.

"Oh my god. It doesn't even make sense to eat 40,000 calories for ten days in a row. Right? It definitely won't happen! It's totally impossible for a person to do that. But... he's been going at it for three days already," Team Leader Park mumbled to himself.

Lee Minhwa dragged her eyes back to her monitor, mumbling to herself unconsciously.

"Why do I think that he can do it...?"

Strangely enough, this thought continued to linger in her head.

"This..."

Minhyuk looked at his instructor curiously. Valen had handed a sharp and well-kept sword to him. Then, the notifications rang.

[You have acquired the Sword of Rebellion.]

[You can now travel freely between Ardo's novice hunting training grounds and the scarecrow training grounds.]

[You have gained 2 reputation points.]