

Her Seven LBG 411

Chapter 411

The waiter was warm and welcoming and observant enough to notice that they weren't local. His eyes lit up the moment he saw Hanson nodding. "These are all of our signature dishes. You wouldn't be able to find them elsewhere! Would you like to try these?" he said while flipping through the menu.

The dishes he recommended were extremely pricey—the regular consumer wouldn't have been able to afford such meals. After adding all the courses, the total bill would probably go up to 10,000. Of course, the waiter had his benefits—he'd earn more if his customers spent more. Hanson didn't hesitate even after seeing the prices on the menu. The total cost of the dishes was about the same as the price of one plate in Hammond, after all. "Sure," he replied.

"Great! Give me a minute, my dearest guests. I'll deliver the food to you in a while!" The waiter looked absolutely elated as he hurried off to prepare the food. He had been right—the customers who had just entered were rich folks! It's rare to get such customers around here. I'll have to suck them dry tonight, or else I might not find someone like them for the whole of next year! The commission from what they just ordered is already enough to pay my salary for half a year. I'll have to give them the best service I can afford. Perhaps I can earn a little more from them, the waiter thought. He was starstruck by the amount of money he was getting.

Right then, Larry started a conversation with a smile. "You guys seem to be doing well here. It's pretty rare to see so many people coming over for a singing performance, huh," he commented. The waiter chuckled as he continued the conversation with Larry. "You probably haven't heard about the legends in our area since you're from another town. The performer here, Master Gordon, is an extremely famous man. The only song he performs is the Legend of the Great Chemist. There are more than 10,000 people who visit every year just to watch this performance. Naturally, they would end up eating and staying in this building," the waiter explained. The waiter chatted with Larry as if they were old friends, and he was glad to do so—he figured that Hanson might spend more on food if he could hold a conversation with them.

"I see," Larry smiled as he replied politely. "Well, why don't you give us one of the best wines you have here? This is an interesting story, and I'd like to hear more of it," Larry continued after flipping through the menu. Did he just ask for the best wine? If I manage to sell this to them, I will get a higher commission than a year's worth of salary.

The waiter sent the wine to their table without informing them of the price. Then, he hastily popped the cork before they could change their minds. "Please try our signature wine. I promise this is the best wine you'd have tasted in a while." After he had poured the wine for his guests, he continued with the story earlier. "What else would you guys like to know?" he asked.

"This wine is delicious," Larry praised after taking a sip. Still, he didn't seem like he was in a rush to question the waiter about Gordon.

"Well, of course! This wine is what our store is known for. You wouldn't be able to find another place around here that serves wine as great as this!" The waiter sounded highly proud of his workplace. Yet, deep down, he was praying that these wealthy guests would buy a few more bottles of wine from him.

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The waiter continued in a rather cocky tone. "The Apothecary's Family is widely known for providing all sorts of miracle drugs, and they've been around for hundreds of years. It's said that the head of the family has the cure for every illness in this world."

"I see." Vania nodded to show that she understood. "But why would these people look for Master Gordon to ask about The Great Chemist?" she asked puzzledly.

"It's said that the head of the Apothecary's Family moved into one of the mountains after claiming his spot at the top. There have been countless people who went in search of The Great Chemist throughout the year, but no one managed to find anything," the waiter said while shaking his head and sighing. Some people had gone deep into the woods, and some never came out. Their bodies still couldn't be found up to this day.

"If that's the case, are you saying that Master Gordon knows of The Great Chemist's whereabouts?" Vania was starting to get rather excited. However, the waiter shook his head to indicate that her assumptions were wrong. "Everyone came to ask Master Gordon for insider information—they thought that he would know something since he wrote the Legend of the Great Chemist."

Vania nodded again, and she no longer questioned the waiter. However, she didn't entirely agree with the waiter's words—her gut feeling told her that Gordon had to know something everyone else didn't. Right then, Linda joined in the conversation. "It seems like those people are really eager to seek help. Master Gordon simply wrote a song, yet they're all going to him to ask about The Great Chemist's whereabouts."

"It's not as simple as that. Many of those people want to use The Great Chemist's name to gain profit in their businesses. Unfortunately, they can't earn much when they can't find The Great Chemist, and they end up sacrificing their lives in search of that person." Most of the people there to meet The Great Chemist would come up with a bunch of excuses, but they were all doing it for their own benefit. Only a few people were genuinely there to seek help.

Linda smiled upon hearing the waiter's words. "Those people are really stubborn." I can't believe there are still so many people here to search for The Great Chemist when it's practically an impossible mission, she thought.

"Everyone's trying extra hard because it's such a tough challenge. If anyone is lucky enough to see The Great Chemist in person, that guy will no longer have to worry for the rest of his life," the waiter said

with a dreamy voice. Deep down, he had the hopes of meeting The Great Chemist someday.

Larry changed the topic of conversation after that. "The view here is amazing. It seems like there are a lot of people who come here to explore the place as well. We're interested in hiking, but we're not too familiar since it's our first time here. Do you have any recommendations?"

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"After a while, the fortune teller's words were taken as facts, and everyone here assumes that The Great Chemist lives in the mounters." The waiter pouted for a moment before continuing. "In my opinion, the fortune teller was just a scammer. The mountains are covered with old-growth forests—there's no reason for The Great Chemist to live there."

Larry agreed. "You're right. Otherwise, how could it be that no one has found The Great Chemist after they've all entered the forest? You're more rational than the rest—they sound like they've been poisoned by misinformation. They are all risking their lives to enter the forest just because that fortune teller claimed that The Great Chemist is there."

After that, the waiter smiled before he made an offhand comment. "Judging by the number of people who have visited the mountains in the past years, they've probably searched the whole place inside out. Yet, no one managed to find The Great Chemist. Perhaps The Great Chemist is already in the skies at this point!" Judging by their estimations, The Great Chemist was about the same age as Master Gordon. So, The Great Chemist could have passed on.

"I heard that the view at The Broad Peaks is magnificent at night—some people even say that it's heaven on earth. Why haven't people considered going there to search for The Great Chemist?" Vania threw out a random question. The waiter scratched his head before coming up with a baseless answer. "Well, that is a nice place, but the spiritual energy there isn't sufficient, so The Great Chemist wouldn't pick a spot like that."

Vania simply smiled as she was out of questions at that point. "Thank you for telling us all these interesting stories. I'd like to take away some of your signature desserts as I'd like to bring them back for my friends. I'm sure they'll love it," she said politely.

"Sure! Hold on." The waiter was overjoyed once more since his customers had just purchased more products from the restaurant. He would've loved to continue talking to them if they hadn't already finished their meal at that point—he was confident that he could manage to sell them more things if they stayed for a while longer. When the waiter saw the generous tip that Larry gave him, he took it before responding humbly. "Please travel safely, my dearest guests. If you guys are interested in The Great Chemist, perhaps you guys could pay a visit to the Bamboo Pavilion."

Bamboo Pavilion? All four of them were stunned for a moment. They hadn't heard of this place in the past. "Where's that?" Vania asked with a smile. "Bamboo Pavilion is another place where you'd get to experience great performances. Old Mr. Bamboo also gives a really great performance of the Legend of

the Great Chemist. Unfortunately, the place is rather far from town, so there are only a few people who visit that area. Old Mr. Bamboo is nowhere near as famous as Master Gordon, and he feels sad over it sometimes." It was like a dam was open again, and the waiter started going on and on about Old Mr. Bamboo.

Vania seemed especially interested in this. "We'll go ask around about it. Thank you," she uttered. "You're welcome. Have a safe trip!" the waiter shouted as his four customers left the place. Linda parted her lips to report her findings from earlier. "Old Mr. Bamboo and Master Gordon are about the same age, Boss. He wrote his version of the Legend of the Great Chemist," she shared.

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As they talked, another kid approached with a set of papers, pens, and a box. The kid held the stationery out to them in a polite manner. Vania was somewhat hesitant at first—this wasn't what she had expected. Hanson pulled his credit card out and tossed it into the box. "This box won't be able to fit the questions that we'd like to ask."

The child bowed before responding in a respectful tone. "Please wait for a moment, Sir and Madam." Our research was right—this fortune teller loves nothing more than money, Larry thought to himself. I bet he's just a huge scammer. As expected, the kid went in and came back out of the room in less than ten seconds after taking the credit card. "Sir, Madam, please follow me in. The boss would like you guys to take a seat inside."

The kid led them to a stand-alone tea pavilion that looked a hundred times more luxurious than the musty basement they had been waiting in earlier. It was evident that they were being treated like VIPs. Vania and the rest had just sat down when an old man with a beard walked toward them. He was dressed in the typical outfit of a fortune teller, and he walked around with a heavy aura of a wealthy man.

His voice had a slight accent, but his words made him sound like an influential person. "Did all of you travel such long distances just to search for The Great Chemist?" he asked. Hanson didn't bother to go around in circles—he was direct and honest with his reply. "Yes."

The fortune teller poured his guests some tea. Of course, the regular customer wouldn't receive the same treatment, but the four of them were the first customers who had ever offered a fee of 10 million just for their fortunes to be told. Before the fortune teller could say anything else, Hanson gave his assistant a look. Larry instantly pulled out another bank card before waving it around in front of the fortune teller.

The fortune teller eyed the card greedily, and he was about to reach out to grab it when Larry kept it away. "It isn't that easy to earn my boss' money." This was a strong statement, and it made the fortune teller's hands shudder a little. He figured that the 10 million he got earlier was the only sum that came easily for him.

Larry couldn't help but sneer to himself when he saw the look on the fortune teller's face. How dare he call himself a fortune teller? He's clearly a scammer. "You were right. We came here in search of The Great Chemist. The 10 million we gave you was just a welcome gift. We have another 10 million in this card if your predictions are right." Larry pushed the card closer to the fortune teller as he spoke.

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"Why don't you read your own fortune? Will you be able to get this money?" Larry didn't bother to hide the hostile look in his gaze. The fortune teller was utterly horrified at this point—he could no longer conceal his true colors as a scammer. Linda, who was sitting by the side, couldn't help but laugh to herself. Is he trying to fake his role as a fortune teller when he can barely contain his own emotions? Hah! What a joke.

"I... I..." The fortune teller couldn't say anything at all—he stuttered for a century before scrunching his face and turning to Hanson. Finally, he had to force himself to speak in the face of Hanson's stern glare. "I was a part of the backstage crew in Master Gordon's troupe 20 years ago. There was this one time when I overheard Master Gordon saying that The Great Chemist went into the mountains for his practice. When I noticed how all the rich people tended to come over in search of The Great Chemist, I came up with this scheme of pretending to be a fortune teller."

Vania was still mildly surprised after hearing the man's explanation. While they were on the way to the fortune teller's place, the two assistants had already researched the fortune teller's background, and they knew that he was a scammer. However, she hadn't expected him to be able to lie and survive for so many years as a fortune teller just after overhearing a single rumor. Vania couldn't believe that all of his past visitors had just blindly trusted him.

"So, did The Great Chemist really go into the mountains?" Larry felt the need to clarify things with the fortune teller since he was a scammer. The scammer nodded hastily. "I heard Master Gordon say this—I'm not making it up."

"Well, at least you're being honest for once." Larry held the gold card up once more. "I want you to be honest when you answer my next question. If you give us an honest answer, this card will belong to you."

The fortune teller was too afraid to tell another lie. "I'll tell you whatever I know," he replied. Money no longer mattered at that point—he just wanted to walk away alive. "In what context did you overhear Master Gordon saying that The Great Chemist was going to enter the mountains?" Larry asked. The fortune teller panicked for a moment, and his gaze turned shifty as he tried his best to recall what happened in the past.

"I want you to think about it properly before answering," Hanson uttered in an icy tone. The fortune teller was the most afraid of Hanson. Even though this was their first time meeting one another, the

fortune teller could tell that Hanson had the power to decide the course of one's life. "Yes. Yes. I remember now." The fortune teller gulped as he felt his throat dry under pressure before answering the question. "Back then, there was a woman who came and requested to meet Master Gordon. She wanted to ask about The Great Chemist's whereabouts. Then, Master Gordon told her that she shouldn't bother trying anymore. He told her that The Great Chemist had left into the mountains to practice his art and that no one would be able to find him anymore."

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The fortune teller heaved a sigh of relief when he saw that they were leaving. "Let me walk you out." He led Hanson and the rest of them out of the building. After they got into the car, Vania was still thinking about what the fortune teller had said earlier. "If we could find that woman, perhaps we'd figure out how we could talk to Master Gordon." Technically, the fortune teller did give them some helpful information.

At least, they were now sure that Gordon knew the truth and that The Great Chemist was staying somewhere in the mountains. These two pieces of information would reduce their effort spent on other useless things.

"Let's go take another look around Bamboo Pavilion, Boss," Linda suggested. To find a woman from 20 years ago was like searching for a needle in the haystack—they were most likely going to fail. However, Linda didn't want to trigger Vania's emotions. So, she figured they might gain more information if they visited Old Mr. Bamboo in the Bamboo Pavilion.

"What did the little masters say?" Vania had sent all of the names they got to her little masters, and she had ordered them to do some research on these names. She figured that this would make things easier for them. They had used the same tactics with the fortune teller earlier, so they managed to target his weak spot and get the answers they needed within a short period of time.

"They have yet to respond to us," Linda replied.

"Let's not wait any longer. We can make a move first," Vania said. James had gotten back to them about the fortune teller almost immediately. Still, it seemed like both Old Mr. Bamboo and Gordon weren't just regular people—that was why it took longer for the little masters to gather information about them.

"No. Let's return to the hotel and wait for them to get back to us." Hanson offered his own opinion. If they were going to head over without having any information in their hands, he was worried that things would turn out the way they did with Gordon. He didn't want them to come home empty-handed. On the other hand, he knew that they couldn't waste any opportunity to meet these individuals, as they might not be able to meet them a second time.

Vania thought about what he said. "Alright, then. Let's return to the hotel and get some rest while we wait for the little masters' responses." Linda was the one who chose the lodging, and it was one of the

most luxurious resorts in that area—Chemist Dungeon. The hotel's self-introduction claimed that The Great Chemist had once stayed in their place more than ten years ago. Nevertheless, Vania and the rest weren't too bothered by this description—after all, half the hotels in Gondalwelt made the same claims.

Linda had booked a suite with two rooms—one for Hanson and Vania and another for herself and Larry. Even though the place was considered luxurious in the area, its environment was still much shabbier compared to Hammond. Vania pulled out a disposable bed sheet she had prepared for the trip. "We'll have to settle with what we have, I guess."

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"Hello, esteemed client. We are attendants from the hotel." Two beautiful ladies spoke in unison, their voices gentle and lovely.

For an instant, Vania misunderstood them and thought that they were here for a particular service. Noticing Vania's expression, Hanson scratched her nose. "What are you thinking about?"

She felt a little embarrassed after being seen through. Just then, the attendants at the door spoke again. "Our hotel offers a special physiotherapy service based on the ointment made by The Great Chemist. Would you like to try?"

Larry was about to decline when he heard Vania speak up. "Let them in."

She didn't want any physiotherapy, but when she knew it had something to do with The Great Chemist, she was immediately intrigued to learn more. She might even get some unexpected information.

He instantly opened the door. "Come in."

The two attendants walked in while pushing a cart filled with ointment as Vania examined their attire. They were all covered up and looked very professional. I suppose I've over-thought this situation.

Faced with Hanson's half-smile, she sounded a little embarrassed when she addressed the staff. "Can you show us what you have?"

The attendants were extremely courteous. "Of course."

Then they showed Vania the contents of the cart. "These are all ointments developed by The Great Chemist, paired with his exclusive technique. It works wonders for removing fatigue."

Then, they retrieved the ointment and talked about its ingredients and effects. The medical terms they used were quite unique. The presentation by the attendants was very professional, and it took almost 20 minutes.

Vania didn't understand a word of the complicated terms, but still, she smiled and said, "Let's start now, then?"

There were two attendants present, but there were four clients, including Vania. "Who's going first?"

As they spoke, they even glanced especially at Hanson.

This man is quite handsome, they thought. So, even though their work wasn't anything indecent, they still felt that everything was worth it if they could get in contact with men like him.

The attendant, who had superior looks, spoke up boldly, "Sir, our hotel offers a unique way of massage. Would you like to try?"

When Hanson was dealing with any woman other than Vania, he always wore the same expression.

Larry knew that Hanson was quite particular about hygiene, so he could only offer himself in Hanson's stead. "It's been a tiring day, so let me have a try first."

Larry had a bright and firm appearance, and he was considered handsome in his own right. However, due to him following Hanson around all day, his good looks were overshadowed..

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Soon, this unique massage session ended. By then, Vania's babies at home had already sent her information on the boss of this hotel. Vania looked at the message. "The boss of this hotel is a woman."

Suddenly, something odd seemed to burst into her mind. "Could she be that woman from 20 years ago?"

Even though Vania had no proof to support her suspicions, this thought still lingered persistently in Vania's head.

"I'll send this photo to that fortune-teller and tell him to verify her identity."

Even though 20 years was a long time, after reaching adulthood, one's face wouldn't change too much if nothing major happened to alter it. Hanson looked at the message on Vania's phone, which her babies had sent. "That's all?"

Vania nodded, confused as well. "Yes."

Perhaps someone had purposefully hidden some information. What exactly happened in the Apothecary's Family? Why is so much information wiped? Is it simply because they don't want anyone to find them?

"We'll go see the boss of this hotel tomorrow morning." Vania's gaze was firm.

"Okay." Hanson reached out and embraced her, finally managing to calm her anxious mind a little.

The next morning, as soon as Vania opened her eyes, she saw the message her babies had sent to her, which appeared to disappoint her.

"They still haven't found any information on Old Mr. Bamboo." He looked over at Hanson wistfully, so he comforted her by giving her a peck on the forehead. "It's okay. We're already proceeding smoothly, aren't we?"

They were only in Gondalwelt for a day, but they had already found an important clue. Just then, Larry knocked on the door. "President Luke, the hotel's boss, is confirmed to be the woman from 20 years ago."

The fortune-teller vividly remembered the incident, as if it had just happened yesterday, so he could recognize her right away. Vania was extremely shocked as she looked at Hanson. "Who should we see first? Old Mr. Bamboo or the boss of the hotel?"

"Old Mr. Bamboo."

We mustn't alert anyone before we can accumulate enough clues.

After a simple breakfast, the four immediately went to Bamboo Pavilion by car.

Bamboo Pavilion was already desolate enough, and since it was still early in the morning, the appearance of Vania and her companions turned into an unexpected sight. In a moderately sized yard, a few round tables were laid out. At the moment, a few workers were cleaning up the place.

When a worker saw Vania and the others enter, he asked in a considerably polite manner, "Are you here for a storytelling session?"

Vania nodded. "Yes, we are."

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Sometime later, an older gentleman walked toward them. He was around Gordon's age. However, it was clear from the sullen look on his face that he wasn't very successful in his endeavors.

The older man caught sight of Vania as soon as he emerged, and he kept examining her. The look in his eyes was probing, and it felt as if he was reunited with someone he hadn't seen in a long while.

Vania panicked a little at his gaze. She didn't remember meeting Old Mr. Bamboo before, but she still

decided to greet him first, despite the confusion. "Hello, Old Mr. Bamboo. I'm Vania Greyson."

When Old Mr. Bamboo heard her name, he seemed to have come to his senses, a hint of disappointment on his face. The look of disappointment was too obvious, and it puzzled Vania greatly. She had even more questions in her mind now.

Hanson also spoke up, frowning. "Did you mistake her for someone else, sir?"

When Old Mr. Bamboo heard Hanson's voice, he peeled his gaze from Vania and looked at Hanson as he said, "I'm old, and my sight is failing. What a fool I've made of myself!" Then, he continued with a bitter laugh, "You're here for The Great Chemist, aren't you?"

Even though not many people listened to his stories, there was still a continuous stream of visitors who came to him in order to figure out where The Great Chemist was.

Hanson said, "I have a way to make your dreams come true."

Old Mr. Bamboo looked at Hanson, his eyes lighting up. "In exchange for the whereabouts of The Great Chemist?"

When he said that, the light in his eyes disappeared. Hanson could see that Old Mr. Bamboo was troubled by something, so he didn't force the latter. "Sir, you don't have to use The Great Chemist's name in order to make yourself famous."

Old Mr. Bamboo looked at Hanson again, beginning to form another opinion of the young man in front of him. "May I know your name?"

Even though he was talking to someone younger than him, there was unlimited respect in his voice.

"Hanson Luke."

Even though Hanson was an unruly person, he didn't forget basic manners, especially when talking to an elderly person. However, when he was talking, he couldn't hide the nobility and pride he was born with.

Old Mr. Bamboo made a mental note of his name, whereupon his gaze drifted to Vania. There was an obvious unrelenting emotion in his eyes,

Hanson took Vania in his arms. "This is my wife."

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Old Mr. Bamboo trembled as he looked at Hanson in shock. It was just as expected of the young man he had admired at first sight, for Hanson could see through him so quickly.

"You're right, but I've learned to let go."

The past was gone with the wind, and the memories were getting fainter.

"You and The Great Chemist fell for the same person." Even though Hanson intended for it to be a question, he said it with too much affirmation to be one.

As soon as he said that, Old Mr. Bamboo was shocked, and so was Vania. Hanson was really amazing. However, while everyone was still reeling in shock, Hanson spoke up again with an even more alarming idea. "Master Gordon fell for her too."

A love triangle?

They thought there was a juicy secret, but they never expected it to be so cliché. Vania, Larry, and Linda all froze a little, a bit speechless at the turn of events.

They thought that Old Mr. Bamboo would get mad at having such a personal affair exposed, but he didn't. Instead, he laughed and said, "You're an extraordinary man, just like I expected. However, you're not completely right."

His words had confirmed Hanson's suspicions.

"The Great Chemist went into seclusion because of her," Hanson continued guessing.

Old Mr. Bamboo was instantly stunned. "How did you know that?"

This young man was too good at reading minds.

"Just a gut feeling."

From the way Old Mr. Bamboo looked at Vania, Hanson knew that he was looking at someone he deeply loved through Vania. However, when he shook his head and sighed, Hanson knew that it was an unrequited love. Old Mr. Bamboo said that he had given up, but in reality, he probably hadn't.

"You and Master Gordon wrote the Legend of the Great Chemist at the same time, and you competed against each other for so many years. In truth, you're just trying to prove your abilities to that woman."

Old Mr. Bamboo didn't deny it. He wanted to see what else Hanson could deduce from their short conversation.

"The Great Chemist didn't want to hurt her, nor did he want to break the bonds between the three of you, so that's why he retreated to the mountains. After that, you and Master Gordon worked hard to prove yourselves and win the woman's heart, but the woman chose to go into seclusion at the end."

Old Mr. Bamboo was shocked as he listened to Hanson's analysis. Hanson could figure out so many things just from one look in his eyes; he was impressed.

"The Legend of the Great Chemist, which you both wrote, was written in remembrance of a dear friend and also for this woman whom you deeply loved."

Vania felt a bit saddened, for she didn't expect the truth to be like that.

"You're right." Old Mr. Bamboo's voice was laced with sorrow.