

The Herb King

The Herb King #Chapter 81 – 90

Read The Herb King Chapter 81

81 I'm a Harmless Citizen

Prince Calvin smiled at Harold and nodded his head as he said. "It should be me saying that, Sir Harold. I hope that we can work together to apprehend those bandits."

If he was alone in this mission, his chances of completing it would be below fifty percent. According to the information that they have so far about the Northern Viper Group, those people are elites with power equivalent if not greater to that of a top noble household. Even if he has an army of the Imperial Family, it would be difficult to suppress them. The Reynolds Household would be a great support to the completion of this mission.

"Naturally." Harold replied concisely. The old subordinates of his father have returned to their mansion and they had bolstered the strength of their family. It was time to make everyone know that their Reynolds Household is back!

"Alright. You guys may leave and immediately begin your preparations." Emperor Ragnar waved his hand as he dismissed them. "Calvin, hand me those soaps before you leave." The emperor added.

Prince Calvin chuckled as he handed the soaps to his father. 'So father is actually conscious of his skin...'

Emperor Ragnar waved his sleeves and the soaps flew towards him. He then kept them inside his storage ring and gestured for them to leave.

Before they left, Prince Calvin bowed at his father, while Harold saluted the emperor.

Dimitri silently trailed behind the second prince.

When the three of them left, Emperor Ragnar abruptly stood up and ran straight into the bathroom. He couldn't wait to try out the soaps that they had bought from Aethelwolf's clinic. "Hopefully, this works as effectively as you said, Aethelwolf..."

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Meanwhile, Leric has already refined the Energy Augmentation Pellet and he managed to form three pills in one session. The three pills sat inside the cauldron, emanating a dense energy that was palpable to the naked eye.

Without hesitation, Leric grabbed one pill and threw it into his mouth.

A warm current started spreading throughout his body. The world essence contained inside the Energy Augmentation Pellet wasn't violent like the Saint Revolution Pellet. The world essence moved towards his Hegel in a gentle manner as if a meek household kitten.

Not long after, Leric managed to refine the energy inside the pill. The process took no longer than thirty minutes and he didn't feel uncomfortable throughout the whole absorption process.

He didn't look at his Status Screen and proceeded with refining the third pill. He can check his level later after consuming five pills.

Without further ado, Leric kept the remaining two Energy Augmentation Pellets before cleaning his cauldron.

The three pills that he was going to refine next are respectively called Spirit Boosting Pellet, Potent Strength Pellet, and Mighty Supplement Pellet. He didn't even bother to give them better names since he was in a hurry.

The Northern Viper Group made him feel unsafe and uneasy. He wouldn't be able to sleep well at night if he didn't have the power of a Level 4 Esper.

This time, Leric decided to do something interesting. He divided the space inside his cauldron into three parts. It wasn't difficult for him to do this with his near-perfect ability in controlling his world essence. He only has to expend a bit more effort and attention.

Leric was planning to refine three different kinds of pills at once! If any Alchemist sees what he was doing, they would surely look at Leric as if he was a crazy lunatic. No one has ever tried to refine two pills at once. Not to mention that Leric was now refining three different kinds of pills inside one cauldron! This was an act of a madman and no one has ever tried this before! Perhaps only Leric was crazy enough to try doing something like this.

"This is more difficult than I thought..." Leric muttered to himself when he reached the second step of the refinement process. He had to place his full attention into the cauldron and make sure that no mistake is to happen in the procedure or all his ingredients would be turned into ashes by the fearsome heat of his Black Pill Fire.

Nighttime came before Leric was finally able to completely refine the three pills. When he opened the lid of his cauldron, he saw nine pills emitting a concentrated amount of

world essence. The dense aroma of the pills assailed his nostrils, making him smile contentedly. "At long last!" He unconsciously raised a fist upwards in his excitement.

Leric grabbed three pills and kept the remaining six inside his storage space. These pills weren't violent in nature so he wasn't afraid in consuming them altogether. With this thought in his mind, Leric tossed the three pills into his mouth.

Boom!

An explosion of energy spread into his cells, amplifying his strength at a discernible speed.

Despite the immensity of the world essence contained within the three pills, Leric didn't find it hard to refine them. He closed his eyes as he sat in a meditative pose. This position feels comfortable while absorbing the pure world essence of the pills.

His Hegel worked tirelessly for the next half an hour.

Phew!

Leric let out a heavy exhale as he slowly opened his eyes. He then rose to his feet and felt that his body was extremely energized as if he had drunk a couple of sports drinks.

He then summoned his Status Screen and looked at the changes.

Talent [Esper] Level 4

Talent [Alchemist] Level 4

Talent [Blacksmith] Level 4

Talent [Engraver] Level 4

He then looked at his skills and noticed that there were also many major changes that happened. Most of his skills were raised up to Level 4 and the others were hovering at Level 3.

Looking at this, Leric let out a burst of joyful laughter. "Northern Viper Group, is it? Don't ever mess with me or I'll go to your main headquarters and play with you guys." He muttered in a haughty manner, but then he faked a cough and mumbled. "Nevermind... it's still much better to remain low-key and act like a good citizen. That's right! I'm a harmless citizen of the Leone Empire! How could I think about attacking a bandit group?"

Upon closer inspection, Leric discovered that he was now a mid Level 4 Esper! With this strength, the only ones he needed to be wary of were the old undyings of the noble households and the hidden experts.

“This time, I am a real Level 4 Alchemist!” Leric smiled as world essence danced around his fingertips to form what looked like small lightning serpents. They coiled around his arm before dissipating into thin air.

The fine control he exhibited could make those old experts die in shame, but no one was there to see the spectacle.

“Time to go. The clinic should be closed by now.” Leric muttered to himself as he pushed the door open.

When he walked out of the patient room, he noticed a group of ladies looking at him with excitement. Leric almost failed to process the sight of these beautiful young women looking at him with absolute admiration.

“Sir Aethelwolf, we managed to sell all the pills and soaps on display! Some customers even have to leave empty-handed because everything has been sold! Do you want me to tell you our total earnings for today?” The quiet and timid Kathlyn was unusually chatty this time and Leric almost thought that she was an impostor.

Leric wasn't the least bit surprised that their products were sold out. Everything was made by him and all of those items were extremely valuable. This was only his earnings on the first day of the opening, but his total profit was already comparable to a huge company's monthly revenue! Just the ten Awakening Pellets alone earned him a million gold coins and everything added altogether was worth around four million gold coins!

“This is because everyone did their work great. You only trained for a night, but it seems as if you've been trained for years. How about you guys work for me permanently?” Leric smiled at them, but he was carefully looking at the ladies to see any notable changes in their expressions. With the amount of profit his clinic was earning, it would attract the greed of many people. He couldn't allow temporary recruits to work for him since that would be akin to allowing a ticking time bomb in his own yard! They need to be absolutely loyal to him! That is the only thing that could make him feel assured.

Hearing this sudden offer, the ladies could not help but stare at Samira with hesitation. They were servants of the Reynolds Household and their job in the clinic was only temporary. As much as they love to work for this promising man, they couldn't accept him right away.

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When Samira felt their gazes, she chuckled and shook her head. "There is nothing to worry about working for Aethelwolf. Besides, he is now a friend of the Reynolds Household and it would be great if he can have you guys work for him permanently."

In truth, she also wanted to become a permanent employee of the clinic, but as the heiress of the Reynolds Household, she knew that it was impossible.

The eyes of the ladies lit up upon getting her approval.

"Sir Aethelwolf, we are willing to work for you!" They immediately said to Leric, afraid that he would take back his words. They sensed the great future in the clinic and with a talented man leading them, it might even be possible for him to become a colossal figure comparable to a noble household!

Leric nodded his head when he saw their genuine eyes. "Great! Let's sit down first and talk about your salaries and incentives. You can also tell me if you want to add anything. I'll try to accommodate every one of you." There was a long table at the corner of the third floor with luxurious sofas around it. Leric led them there and gestured for them to sit down.

The ladies were looking at Leric expectantly.

"Before we talk about your salaries, let's talk about your working schedule first. At the moment, the clinic only has me as its sole Doctor so it would be impossible for us to open twenty-four hours every day. Until we can find more suitable Doctors, the clinic will only be open from 9 A.M to 6 P.M from Monday to Friday. Saturday and Sunday will be our rest days, but this schedule might change once we get more employees. Do you have any questions about this?" Leric glanced at them.

In his past life, this was the normal working hours in most third-world countries. He wants to incorporate this working schedule into his clinic, but he still has to know their opinion.

"We don't have to work the whole day and we even get to have two rest days?" One of the ladies could not help but mumble to herself after hearing Leric's words.

Leric turned his gaze at her. It was a young lady in her late teens. She has a long black hair that reached up to her waist. Her clear obsidian eyes were filled with confusion and doubt.

"Is there anything wrong with the schedule?" Leric smiled at her gently. He noticed that the others were also looking at him with perplexed gazes.

"Aethelwolf, they are servants working for a noble household. It is imperative for them to work every day and the only times they could rest is during their sleep. Of course, our Reynolds Household gives our servants a lot of time to rest and we treat them fairly.

Just that, they still work every day.” The concept of rest days didn’t exist for the working class in this world. The ones with power and authority can make them work all day long and no one would say anything about it.

“I see...” Leric stared at the young ladies with a tinge of pity. They looked young and lively, but they had to work nonstop just because they were born to become servants. This world was truly cruel to people with no distinguishing talents.

“It is as I said. You guys will have two rest days every week and you don’t have to work for the whole day in the clinic. I also plan to buy a mansion near our clinic so that you guys no longer have to look for accommodations. And about your salary, you guys will be getting five thousand gold coins per month with free breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Other than that, you can also get five mid-rank soaps every month as incentives. Oh, I almost forgot, you will also get your working clothes for free, but you guys have to wait since I only have the designs with me and I haven’t had the time to contact a seamstress to make them.” After Leric spoke, he noticed that everyone has become silent.

“Sir Aethelwolf, are you speaking the truth?”

83 Isn’t He Just A Little More Handsome Than Me?

The ladies felt as if they were in a dream. The conditions that Leric was giving them as his employees were something they would have never thought was possible. He was giving them rest days and free accommodations. He even offered them free meals and also five mid-rank soaps per month! Not to mention that they will be getting five thousand for their salary every month! This was unthinkable for servants like them who only receives five gold coins at most.

Even Skylar and Kathlyn who have much better living conditions than these young women were surprised by his generous offer.

“Aethelwolf, are you sure about this? There are twelve of them here and if you include Skylar, Kathlyn, and me, that would make us fifteen working under you. The amount of money you have to give us would be a lot if we follow the offer you are giving.” Samira could not help but ask him. This man was giving them a lot of benefits. Could there be some motive behind this gesture? She fell into deep thinking as she thought about this.

‘So it was because of this.’ Leric smiled gently at the ladies. “I’m sure about this. Don’t forget that I can just earn what I’m paying for you guys by just selling one Awakening Pellet.” His words made the ladies’ eyes twinkle. That’s right. His pills were very popular and all items on display were even sold out on the first day of their opening. As long as this continues, Leric would become one of the most successful business owners in the empire!

Samira chuckled when she heard his words. "In that case, I have no objections. I believe that the others are more than eager to accept your offer."

"Great! I'll write a formal contract and send them to you guys shortly, but before that, how about we celebrate our successful opening? I saw a restaurant nearby and I think they are selling roast lamb and beef kebabs." Leric chanced upon the restaurant yesterday and he wanted to see if their food was as tasty as the ones he had in the Reynolds Household.

"Sir Aethelwolf, are you talking about Neil's Steakhouse?" Skylar asked him.

Leric recalled the name of the restaurant and it was indeed Neil's Steakhouse. "Yeah. That's the name of the restaurant. I'm a lover of meat, but if you guys don't like meat, we can look for other places to eat." He said as he observed their faces.

"Neil's Steakhouse is a famous restaurant in Lion City and it is among the most frequented restaurants of the nobles because the meat they use comes from high-level beasts in the wilderness." Skylar said as she salivated at the thought of eating delicious food.

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"Oh? I hope that the taste of their food will not disappoint me. By the way, Samira, where are your parents and Sir Julius? I haven't seen the three of them." Leric asked.

"Mother and grandpa have matters to do and they left after I gave them the gifts you've prepared for them. As for father, he hasn't come back since he left earlier. I think he might be discussing something important with His Majesty." Samira answered.

"I see. That's a pity. It would have been much better if they can come with us, but since they are not here, we should get going." Leric smiled as he led them downstairs. His smile deepened when he saw the empty display cases.

After locking the door, they boarded the two carriages outside the clinic. Each carriage was driven by Level 2 elite guards of the Reynolds Household. Reed left together with Lord Julius and it seems like they were about to do something big. As for what it was, Leric didn't even need to think to know that it is definitely related to the Northern Viper Group.

Leric was no longer worried about them after becoming a Level 4 Esper. Besides, those bandits wouldn't dare to commit a crime at the moment since some of their men were captured. However, Leric still checked his [Virtual Map] from time to time. He was together with his employees and it wouldn't be nice if some random cockroaches decides to mess with them. Luckily, the journey was smooth and they arrived at Neil's Steakhouse safely.

After alighting from the carriage, Leric turned his gaze to the two coachmen and asked. "Do you want to go with us?" These two have been standing guard outside the clinic, preventing the customers from causing trouble. If he finds their personality to his liking, he might even offer them the same treatment he gave to the ladies, but he scraped off this thought since it wasn't a good idea to poach the servants of the Reynolds Household.

The two coachmen stared at him and shook their heads firmly. They were tasked by Lord Julius to protect the clinic from troublemakers. "We can leave the carriages behind, Sir Aethelwolf so we can only decline your offer."

Leric shrugged when he heard this. He then walked inside the restaurant with fifteen ladies following behind him.

When they entered the restaurant, their arrival immediately sparked the attention of the dining customers. They were surprised when they saw a black-haired man surrounded by more than a dozen beautiful young maidens. He was living the life that they all want and they could only stare at him in jealousy. Some of them were also wondering who this man was. No ordinary person could make fifteen stunning young women follow him willingly.

"What a lucky bastard! He actually dares to parade his women in front of us! My eyes! I think it's burning! Argh!"

"Isn't he just a little bit more handsome than me? Why is he surrounded by those beauties? Why is the difference between us so huge? I think I'm about to have a heart attack!"

"Handsome my ass! Have you looked at yourself in the mirror?! I doubt if the mirror can even withstand your hideous face! Peh!"

The diners chatted between themselves as they stared curiously at Leric's group.

"Hello, guests! Welcome to Neil's Steakhouse! Do you want a private room or do you want to dine in the public area?" A professional-looking waiter in his late twenties walked up to them with a smile. He was also observing Leric closely, trying to remember if he had seen this man before.

84 Mysterious Urgel Household

'There's even a private setting?' Leric smiled at the waiter. "Is there a room that can fit all of us?" He asked the waiter.

The waiter looked at Leric and then the fifteen ladies behind him, but then his pupils suddenly constricted because there was someone he knew among them. It was Samira

Reynolds, the heiress of the Reynolds Household! Why is she together with this man? Could this guy be a son of a high-ranking noble?

As soon as they left, the diners chatted even more fiercely.

“Hey, guys! I think one of those ladies is Miss Samira Reynolds. I’ve seen her before and that is definitely her! I’m sure of it!”

“Now that you mentioned it. That’s indeed Miss Samira, but why is she together with that man? Could there be some inexplicable relationship between them?”

Meanwhile, the waiter also had so many questions, but he refrained from talking with Leric. He seemed to be someone of high status and he didn’t want to risk offending him. He led Leric’s group to the largest room of their restaurant. After letting them go inside, he handed a menu to each one of them and said with a smile. “Just tell me what food you like after looking at the menu. Though I suggest you order our beef kebabs since it’s the most popular dish in our restaurant. I guarantee that you won’t be disappointed by the taste.”

Leric nodded his head at the waiter before turning his head to the menu. There was a long list of dishes with their pictures drawn neatly. The prices were indeed a bit more expensive than he had imagined, but it was still within his expectations.

According to Skylar, the restaurant uses the meat of magical beasts as ingredients for their food so the prices were reasonable.

After a quick look at the menu, Leric put it down and handed it back to the waiter. “I want five beef kebabs, one roasted lamb leg, and a bottle of Coner Blanco.”

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He wants to try the wine since it has a ‘Best Seller’ label on it. Leric believed that it should be their best wine. He wondered what it would taste like. Hopefully, it was as good as the wines in his past life or at the very least on the same level as the wines offered by the Reynolds Household.

Leric then turned his head to the ladies and smiled at them. “You guys can freely choose the dishes that you want. Don’t worry. I’ll pay for everything so don’t hold yourselves back.”

Hearing his words, the eyes of the ladies lit up and they immediately ordered the dishes that they’ve been eyeing for.

The waiter diligently listed everything down and he read them carefully to check if he missed something. “The dishes may take a while before they are cooked so I will bring some refreshments first. Our restaurant also offers free dessert if your spending

exceeds five thousand gold coins and since your total order has exceeded that amount, I'll also get your free desserts. Please wait a moment and thank you for dining here with us." The waiter bowed and left the room.

"Their service is great. I believe their owner is someone who values good customer service. Samira, do you know who owns this restaurant?" Leric turned his head at Samira.

Samira nodded her head. "The owner is someone from the Urgel Household. His name is Neil Urgel, a renowned hunter of magical beasts. He is a Level 3 Esper who specializes in hunting magical beasts, but he is now quite old so his sons are the ones doing the hunting now."

Leric's eyes narrowed as he fell into silence. The Urgel Household is a very mysterious family. Their former patriarch is among the strongest Espers in the empire and he stepped down in the head seat and gave his position to his eldest daughter. It was a move that shocked everyone to this date, no one knew why he did this. He was still in his prime and his daughter, Julie Irish Urgel, is only twenty-four.

Leric cleared his thoughts. "It seems like the Urgel Household can truly be found anywhere in the empire. Even this restaurant is owned by them." He mumbled.

"Indeed. Although they didn't reveal the strength of their family, many people say that their overall combat prowess is almost on the same level as the Imperial Family. Of course, this is merely a rumor, but I believe that the Urgel Household should be the strongest noble family." Samira said in a solemn tone.

"Oh?" Leric faked an intrigued look, but he wasn't the least bit interested at all. Who cares about who the strongest was? People fight for power and authority, but Leric only wants to strive in earning more money.

Outside the restaurant, two young women were being led by two men in their thirties. One of the ladies was wearing a veil, while the other looked to be someone in her early teens. The two men were sweating buckets as they brought them inside their restaurant.

"Miss Julie, you should have told us that you guys will be coming here. We could have prepared a great feast to welcome your arrival." One of the men spoke in a nervous tone.

The expression of the woman called Julie couldn't be seen since she was wearing a veil so the two couldn't guess what she was thinking.

"If we have told you that we will be coming, what use will our inspection be?" The teenage girl sneered at the two men who could only awkwardly smile at her words. These young ladies were someone of high status in the Urgel Household and they couldn't afford to offend them. One is a genius with talent that was said to be close to the crown prince, while the other is the mysterious family head, Julie Irish Urgel!

Julie who had been silent the entire time suddenly spoke. "Take us to a private room. I want to test some of your dishes."

"Yes! Right away, Miss Julie!"

85 Bond of Sisters

The two men were the sons of the owner of the restaurant. The older one with the bald head and buff physique is called Paul Vince Urgel, while the young brother with lean stature is called Archie Urgel. Both of them are skilled hunters and their techniques are something they learned from their father.

At this moment, Archie and Paul led the two young sisters to the location of their best private room. They want to offer them the best service they could give. They also planned to sternly warn their chefs to bring out their best efforts in cooking their dishes.

When they arrived in front of the private room, they noticed a waiter coming out and the guy was shocked to see the two bosses in front of him.

"Good evening, Boss Archie and Boss Paul. Is there anything I can help you with?" He immediately gave them his most professional smile, but he was feeling incredibly tense in his heart. The atmosphere seemed to be weird and the two big bosses didn't look like they were in the best mood.

"Is this private room occupied?" Paul asked the waiter in a solemn tone.

Hearing this question from his boss, the waiter nodded his head a bit nervously. "Yes, boss. There are more than fifteen of them and this private room is the only one big enough to accommodate them."

"More than fifteen?" Paul thought that he was hearing things. Did they bring their whole family?

"Yes, boss. And Miss Samira Reynolds is one of them. There is also a man who looked like someone of high status." The waiter immediately said. He noticed that there were two women behind the big bosses and his eyes widened when he saw them. 'Aren't they Miss Julie and Miss Grace?'

Paul revealed a troubled look when he heard that Samira Reynolds was inside. This private room was the best in their restaurant, but it seems like they couldn't offer it to

their family head at this moment. Their Urgel Household might be strong, but they couldn't afford to offend the Reynolds Household.

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Paul turned his gaze at Julie apologetically. "I apologize, Miss Julie. This private room is the best one we have, but it is already occupied. We can only bring you two to another private room. I hope you don't mind."

"Lead the way." Julie answered in a calm voice that was devoid of any emotion.

She came to Lion City to inspect the properties of their Urgel Household and also to spectate the matches of her sister.

Neil's Steakhouse's funding came from the main family and they hold sixty percent of the restaurant's ownership. As the main investor of the business, they have the authority to inspect the restaurant and ensure that it was strictly adhering to the standards that they've set. Failure to comply means that they could remove the ownership rights of the current owner.

Archie and Paul know this as well and this was why they want to offer the best services to the two sisters.

When they left, the waiter heaved a sigh of relief. He then went to the kitchen and give the list of orders to the chefs. He also specifically told them that the order came from Miss Samira Reynolds.

Meanwhile, Paul and Archie brought the two sisters to the private room next door. The room is also great and had a wonderful view outside, but it was only half the size of their best room.

"You can tell me what you want to order after you guys look at the menu." Paul handed them one menu each. He then turned his head to his younger brother and whispered. "Go to the kitchen and supervise the cooking of their dishes. Taste it before sending them here, okay? I'll be there shortly with their order."

Archie nodded his head seriously and silently left the room.

Julie and Grace scanned the menu and pointed at several dishes.

"That's everything we want to order. Oh, right. I want my steak medium rare." Julie handed the menu back to Paul.

Paul smiled at them and nodded his head. "I'll inform the kitchen to make your dishes immediately. The restaurant is currently having a promotion and we are giving desserts to customers with total spending that exceeds five thousand gold coins. I'll bring your

desserts and refreshments right away. Please wait a moment.” After saying these words, he quietly left the room and sprinted to the kitchen.

“Sister, I think we scared the two of them.” Grace chuckled in amusement.

When she heard her sister’s words, Julie smiled beneath her veil and shook his head. “If they fail the inspection, they could be removed from their positions. It’s normal for them to be afraid. I just hope that their food hasn’t deteriorated after Uncle Neil stepped down from his position.” She then changed the topic. “Although the main family is the biggest shareholder of this restaurant, Uncle Neil is still the owner in the eyes of the public. Archie and Paul will do everything in their power just to retain their positions. After all, this business is the result of Uncle Neil’s hardwork.”

Grace nodded her head in agreement. “By the way, I heard them saying that Samira is in the room beside us, but who is she together with? From the waiter’s words, there seem to be fifteen other people together with her. Could they be someone from the Reynolds Household?”

Julie remained silent at her words. She was also curious, but their job here was more important. Besides, she didn’t have a close relationship with Samira and it would be weird if she came into their room just to satisfy her curiosity.

“Who are you matched with for the one-on-one battles tomorrow?” Julie asked the pouting Grace.

“We don’t know yet. The organizers didn’t tell us who are we fighting against. They will only announce it tomorrow. Don’t worry, sister. I’m sure that I can reach the top five.” Grace smiled confidently.

Julie tapped her nose as she said. “You should not underestimate your opponents. Most of those people are also talented individuals and there are even some of them who have experience in combat. The latter ones are more dangerous for you since you haven’t had the chance to fight on the battlefield yet. They could use their experience to outwit you or even overpower you.”

Grace’s complacent smile stiffened upon hearing her sister’s words. “You’re right, sister. I’ll keep your words in mind.” She said seriously.

Julie smiled and patted her head gently. “Good. Just do your best and take this chance to gain more battle experience.”

86 Unimpressed Leric

After waiting for a while, the waiter came back with a trolley filled with various refreshments. Most of which are vegetables, fruits, and other healthy food. The plating of each dish lacked the artistic image that Leric was used to in his past life, but they

didn't look that bad either. He smiled warmly at the waiter despite the lackluster food presentation of the refreshment dishes.

Samira, Kathlyn, and Skylar nodded their heads appreciatively after seeing the food being placed on the table. To them, they looked appetizing and great.

Meanwhile, the twelve newly hired workers were ecstatic at the sight of the luxurious food. "Thank you!" They said to the waiter who smiled back at them.

"How many minutes are left before our main dishes are served?" Leric asked as he looked at the waiter. The man was wearing a smile on his face, but Leric could sense that he was hiding a sense of anxiety and distress. He didn't reveal this kind of expression earlier and Leric became curious as to why there was a sudden change in the waiter's mood.

"The main dishes will be ready in another twenty minutes. I can tell the chefs to hasten the cooking, but it might negatively impact the resulting dish." The waiter answered patiently.

"Alright. Thank you for your hardwork." Leric nodded his head in acknowledgment.

The waiter smiled as he lightly bowed his head. "If you need anything, just press that button over there." He said as he pointed at the small blue button near the right portion of the door.

Leric gave a sound of understanding.

The waiter didn't linger after seeing that they no longer need anything. He left the room and silently closed the door.

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"You guys can dig in. You don't need to wait for me." Leric smiled at the ladies when he saw them looking at him nervously.

The ladies smiled shyly as they started eating the food.

Samira noticed that Leric didn't touch the food and she couldn't help but ask him in low voice. "Aethelwolf, is the food not to your liking?" She tasted the vegetable salad and fruit pie. Both of these are great and can be compared to the dishes served in their mansion.

Leric shook his head as he replied with a grin. "It's not that I don't like the food. I just want to starve myself so that I can eat more meat later."

In truth, Leric truly felt that the food didn't look appealing. He tasted a small bite of the dessert earlier, but he almost spat it out of his mouth. It felt like he was eating coarse bread. The texture was rough, and when he started chewing, it felt as if he was biting on grains of sand.

Now that he recalled it, the food he ate in the Reynolds Household wasn't any better. He even wondered why he thought it was great. Perhaps it was because he became used to their small city's food after eating it every day for more than two years. During that time, he had forgotten the usual taste of the food in his past life.

However, at this very moment, the smell of roasted meat lingering in the restaurant evoked a memory that made him recall the heavenly taste of the food in his past life.

Samira stared speechlessly at Leric. She had only known him for about a month, but she knew that this guy was not telling the truth. "Their roast meat won't disappoint you." She said.

"I hope so." Leric let out a smile, but his mind was moving elsewhere.

'I think it would be a good idea to open my own restaurant. The food in this world lacks flavor and artistic image. The only issue is that I'm currently tied up with the affairs of my clinic. I'll rethink this matter once I hire more Doctors and Alchemists that will work for me.'

While Leric was immersed in his thoughts, the waiter came back after twenty minutes. A few more servants came with him, pushing a couple of trolleys that are filled with piping-hot dishes.

The fragrant smell of meat made him wake up from his stupor.

The smell is almost there, but Leric has to taste them first before he could give his opinion.

The waiter introduced the dishes as he placed them on the table. "This one is the roasted boar ribs dipped in our restaurant's secret sauce... This one is..."

'Secret sauce my ass! Isn't this just a cheap version of gravy? No. Even the cheap version of gravy would taste better than this.' Leric muttered in his heart after tasting a small amount of their so-called secret sauce. It tastes similar to the gravy in his past life, but the sauce didn't have the thickness of the gravy as well as the savory aftertaste.

Leric put on a calm expression as he cut a small portion of meat using a knife. He then dipped it with a small amount of their sauce before eating it. "Oh? Not bad..." He muttered. To be honest, it tasted okay-ish, neither good nor bad.

If it were not for the fact that the meat came from magical beasts, the prices of the dishes were definitely not worth it.

Leric ate his food in silence, but he was inwardly commenting on how bad it was.

Samira smiled upon seeing this and she thought that Leric liked the meat. "Tastes good, right?"

Leric turned his head at her and nodded his head calmly. "It's alright, but what if I tell you that I can make something better than this?" He had a playful look on his face as he was saying these words. Luckily, the waiter and the servants have already left the room or they would have secretly cursed him for being too boastful.

"Eh? You also know how to cook?" Samira let out a surprised expression, but when she recalled that Leric lived as a wanderer before they met, she found this believable.

Leric nodded his head. "Of course. Tomorrow, let's skip watching the battle event and I'll let you guys taste my cooking." This way he could escape watching those boring fights and he would even be accompanied by many beautiful women.

Samira and the others looked at him and hesitated. The battle event tomorrow will be a lot more exciting since they would start the one-on-one matchups. They didn't want to miss it, but Leric's confident tone made them want to have a taste of his cooking.

"I promise that you guys won't regret it. If I fail to impress you with my cooking, then each of you will get one high-rank soap from me!" Leric's confidence stemmed from his experience and in his skills in cooking. Heck! He had lived alone in his past life and he had to cook food for himself. Although he didn't possess the abilities of a Michelin-rated chef, he was confident that he can whip out a dish that was a hundred times better than what was served to them. Not to mention that he can use his Status Screen to enhance his cooking skills.

Leric smirked evilly as he thought about this.

87 Oh Crap!

Leric only ate a small amount of meat that was enough to satiate his hunger. The ladies were also done eating their food and they revealed satisfied expressions on their faces. To them, eating in this restaurant was a once-in-a-lifetime chance so they were joyful and excited. The food didn't disappoint them and they vowed to come back when they have more money. With their contract with Aethelwolf, they no longer had to worry about having no money.

"Have you guys eaten your fill?" Leric asked them with a smile.

Everyone nodded their heads, but one of them could not help but ask. "Sir Aethelwolf, you only ate a small portion of meat. Is it really just enough for you?"

The others also looked at him worriedly.

Leric shook his head and chuckled. "I'm not that hungry so I didn't eat a lot."

They didn't pursue the matter after hearing his answer.

"By the way, you guys should order a few more dishes for our coachmen. They must be hungry now." Leric changed the topic.

"I'll call the waiter." Samira smiled and walked to the door to push the button.

Not long after, the waiter came to the room. "Hello! Is there anything I can help you with?" He scanned the empty plates and nodded his head in satisfaction. It seems like they also love their food. He thought.

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"We'd like to order two servings of roasted lamb leg and two servings of that beef ribs as well. Just wrap them up for takeout." Samira said after a bit of thinking. It should be enough for the two guards.

The waiter listed down the order and nodded his head. "Is there anything else?" He asked.

Samira shook her head. "That should be enough."

"Alright. I'll be right back." The waiter bowed and left the room.

"Aethelwolf, I chose the dishes without asking your opinion. I hope you don't mind." Samira smiled apologetically at Aethelwolf.

Leric shook his head gently. "It's fine." He then stood up and looked at everyone as he said. "Since all of you are now full. How about we take a short walk outside the restaurant? Walking can help us digest the food we ate faster."

"Really?"

"Of course! We can just tell the waiter to send the food to the coachmen outside." Leric wanted to get some fresh air after forcing himself to eat food that he didn't like. Perhaps walking could make him forget the nasty dessert that felt like grains of sand in his mouth...

Even the wine that has the 'best seller' label on it didn't impress him. At best, it was comparable to the cheap imitations of red wine in his past life.

As soon as they stepped out of the private room, Leric could not help but comment in a low voice. "That bloody wine... Coner Blanco my ass... It only has a good name, but it didn't taste good at all..."

He was only whispering silently so even Samira who was the closest to him didn't hear his words. However, Leric failed to notice that there was someone else who had heard his words.

Julie glanced at the man who was walking side by side with Samira. He looked dashing with his short black hair and sword-like eyebrows, but she heard him say something nasty about the restaurant that they owned. She didn't feel great when she heard it.

Coner Blanco is a wine created by the main family and the recipe was something that was passed down by her late grandfather. She couldn't bear it when she heard a stranger insulting his grandfather's creation.

Grace noticed that her sister's visible eyes had suddenly turned cold. She couldn't help but shiver at the sight of this. "Sister, what happened?" She asked worriedly.

Julie ignored her and briskly walked towards Leric as she called out in an icy tone. "You right there, stop!"

Hm?

Leric paused his steps and turned his gaze behind them. Samira and the others also shifted their gazes to the veiled woman who was walking towards Leric.

She had an extraordinary aura that surpassed all the women present at the scene. Even Samira felt subdued by her mysterious air and elegant but cold demeanor. Who is this woman? They thought.

Leric used his appraisal skills to detect the strength of this woman. When he laid his eyes on her, he felt that she didn't seem to be ordinary. After using his skills, he could not help but gasp in his heart.

This veiled woman was actually a Level 4 Esper! Although she was just a newly ascended Level 4 Esper, it was still very shocking! Leric couldn't tell her age because of the veil covering her face, but her exposed eyes were clear with no hint of impurities. She should be someone in her twenties, but she was already a Level 4 Esper!

Samira furrowed her eyebrows in displeasure. Although the woman seems to be extraordinary, she rudely told them to stop. "What do you want?" She stood in between her and Leric.

“Step aside.” Julie uttered in a cold voice.

“Sister, what is happening?” Grace pulled her arms as she looked at her sister and Samira’s group. She didn’t know what was going on.

Samira felt a bit afraid when she heard Julie’s commanding voice, but Grace’s arrival gave her time to process her fear. ‘Wait. Isn’t this Grace of the Urgel Household?’

She had seen this little girl participating in the battle event.

Grace Urgel is one of the hottest contenders for the championship so a lot of people had already seen her.

‘Grace is calling this woman her sister. Could she be...’

Leric also reached the same conclusion after seeing Grace. ‘This must be Julie Irish Urgel. The new family head of the Urgel Household.’

Leric smiled as warmly as he could. ‘Perhaps this woman heard me cursing their wine. Dammit!’

“Is there anything you need?” Leric asked.

Julie retracted her aura after realizing her outburst. “You said that our wine doesn’t taste good. You are the first person to say this and I want to know why you gave this kind of comment when even His Majesty said that Coner Blanco is the best wine in the market.”

‘Oh crap! She indeed heard me...’

88 Shocked

Leric scolded himself for being careless. He also decided to always use his [Virtual Map] skill even in safe environments like this restaurant. At least this way, he would be able to know whether an enemy is hiding or not. Other than that, he would also have a rough understanding of the strength of anyone in the establishment since the [Virtual Map] also indicates one’s level of power.

“You must have heard me wrongly, miss.” Leric coughed lightly.

Julie sneered beneath her veil. “I don’t think my senses have dulled to such a degree that my hearing would be impaired. You seem to know a lot about wines. Maybe we can have a chat and exchange some pointers.” Her voice was calm, but everyone in the scene felt the intense coldness in the atmosphere.

Grace retracted her hands from her sister’s arms. It seems like this man said something bad about their wine that made her sister react like this. She knew that her sister loved

their late grandpa so much and she also happened to learn the method of making their best wine from him, the Coner Blanco.

Leric furrowed his eyebrows in displeasure, but he soon calm down because of his skill [Demon Heart]. It was his mistake to badmouth their wine in public, but there should be no need to make matters escalate, right? "I don't think I am skilled enough to exchange pointers with the renowned family head of the Urgel Household. I'm just a wandering Alchemist with no noteworthy accolades. I apologize for my words earlier if I have offended you."

When she heard his apology, Julie's anger subsided a bit. She wasn't surprised that the man was able to identify her since Grace's presence was already enough for the others to speculate who she was.

"Just tell me the reason why you said our wine is bad and I won't pursue this matter." If this guy could not give her a good response, then she will make him pay for insulting her grandfather's creation.

Leric sighed and shook his head. It seems like this girl was determined to cause trouble for him. Initially, he wanted to be nice since he was together with Samira and the others, but who would have thought that he would encounter such a stubborn young lady?

Leric unconsciously activated his [Intimidating Aura], making Julie feel a hint of surprise. This guy was actually an expert! And based on the danger he exudes, his strength should be on the same level as hers, if not stronger!

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She thought that no one in the same age group as her would be her equal in terms of talent. Even the so-called one-in-a-century genius, Crown Prince Christopher, pales in comparison to her.

"Since you badly want to know why. Listen carefully. As someone who knows a thing or two about winemaking, I know that there are five major steps when making wine. First is the gathering of ingredients. During this step, it is ideal to only collect the best fruits. The second step is the crushing of the ingredients. This step is a laborious process since it would take more than an hour to thoroughly crush the fruits until all their juices would be taken. I believe your family is crushing the ingredients by stomping on them. This is an old method and will take more time..."

"You! How did you-"

"How did I know? Simple. The wine you serve still has some small residues of insoluble substances. Although these tiny pieces can be negligible, high-level Espers would be able to notice them. However, I can let this off the hook since you are doing the most manual process of crushing, but..."

“What made this wine taste bad is the third step, which is called fermentation. There is a strain of yeast that has the best aroma and it can also enhance the flavor of the wine. If you add this yeast to the fermentation process, the resulting juice will become more flavorful. I think you don’t know how to make this specific strain of yeast. Well, I can understand since the technical skills of this empire are very behind...” Leric immediately shut his mouth when he realized that he had almost slipped up. When he turned his gaze at Julie, he realized that the latter was looking at him as if she was looking at an alien.

“You even know about yeasts? The making of yeast is a closely protected knowledge that has only been passed to me by grandpa. Other than me, only my father knows about it. How do you know about yeasts?” Julie’s anger had long since vanished the moment Leric started his explanation. She knew everything he said since it was the process of winemaking. However, her grandpa only taught her four steps, but this guy claims that there are five steps. Where did he get all this knowledge from?

“Sorry, but this conversation might take a few hours if I continue this explanation and as you can see, we are about to go out of the restaurant to have a short walk.” Leric didn’t answer her questions. He then turned around and looked at Samira and the others.
“Let’s go.”

Julie gritted her teeth, but she didn’t press the matter. This guy possessed knowledge about winemaking that was far beyond her own. Even her grandpa might not be able to compare to that guy. “I’ll look for you once I settle my matters!”

Leric waved his hand nonchalantly and he didn’t even look back at her.

“That guy...” Julie’s expression suddenly became calm.

“Sister, that guy sure knows a lot about winemaking. You’ve also taught me about the four steps of winemaking, but his explanation is much easier to understand.” Grace stared at Leric’s back with curiosity.

Julie rubbed her head and nodded in agreement. “It’s the first time someone forced me to concede. The information he has about winemaking can improve the tastes of our wines. Tell Paul and Archie to gather information about that guy, but make sure that they wouldn’t offend him. We’ll look for him in the next few days. The one-on-one matchups start tomorrow so we should focus on that first.”

Grace nodded her head in acknowledgment. “Alright, sister.”

89 Another Business Opportunity?

After informing the waiter to deliver the takeout food to the coachmen, Leric went out of the restaurant with the ladies following behind him. Their presence immediately attracted the attention of passersby.

“Look at that guy! There are more than ten beautiful women around him! What a god! He must have been a saint in his past life!”

“Goddammit! Why did I have to see this before I can go home? My eyes are aching!”

Everyone stared at Leric with jealousy and envy. With his handsome looks and the fact that he was surrounded by more than ten gorgeous women, he was the epitome of a male god!

Leric was amused when he noticed the gazes of the crowd. He was happy and contented with his present life and he also lamented the years he had wasted in his previous one. ‘So this is what it means to be genuinely happy...’

In his past life, Leric’s joy revolved around the successes of his experiments. He thought that successfully creating new herbal products was the happiest thing he could achieve, but he was very wrong. He never would have thought that one dinner together with his friends and colleagues actually made him a lot happier. Perhaps being together with the right people can truly make one happy.

He might have been the best herbalist and doctor in the past, but there were only a few people he had interacted with, making his life dull and boring.

“Aethelwolf, what are you thinking?”

Leric snapped out of his daze and turned his head at Samira. He smiled at her and shook his head. “I’m just grateful.” He answered mysteriously.

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Samira could see the sorrow and pain behind his smile, but she didn’t dare say anything. Leric was hiding a big secret, but she didn’t have the courage to ask him about this.

Looking at his desolate figure, it seemed as if she was looking at someone who had experienced so much in life.

“Eh? Is that an auction house?” Leric pointed at the closed building when he spotted the plaque that says ‘Golden Dragon Auction House’.

Samira followed his gaze and as soon as she saw the familiar building, she nodded her head as she said. “That’s an auction house owned by the Merchant Association’s leader, Brian Linaza. It only opens once a week, but the auction house is always packed with people. I think they would be open in two days.”

Brian Linaza is a famous merchant in the Leone Empire. His story is that of a commoner who had worked his way up to become the richest merchant in the empire! Although he

doesn't have an illustrious background, the noble households didn't dare put on airs in his presence.

"Oh? How about we close the clinic on that day and join the auction? We might even see some rare items. What do you guys think?" Leric hasn't been to an auction house before and he was eager to experience it.

Samira was silent for a moment. "Alright. I'll go with you, Aethelwolf."

Skylar and Kathlyn also expressed their desire to go with him. Meanwhile, the other ladies hesitated. With their status, they would only embarrass themselves if they join them. They don't even have the money to raise bids.

When he saw their hesitant expressions, Leric immediately said. "Don't think too much about social hierarchy and stuff. We'll only go there to have a look. Who cares about what the others think?"

The ladies cheered up after hearing his uplifting words. "In that case, we'll go with you, Sir Aethelwolf!" They sounded rather excited because it will be their first time to spectate an auction event.

After getting everyone's reply, Leric smiled happily. He turned his gaze forward and enjoyed their night stroll under the strange gazes of the crowd of onlookers.

Soon, they reached a huge clothing shop that sells exquisite clothes. The eyes of the ladies shone upon seeing the array of beautiful dresses and gowns on display, but when they saw the prices, their faces suddenly stiffened as if they had seen a ghost.

"So expensive! They're selling clothes worth a hundred gold coins! That beautiful purple dress is even priced at ten thousand gold coins!"

Leric moved his gaze toward the purple dress that they were pointing to. He saw that even Samira had her eyes drawn into the dress. Leric wasn't a seamstress, but he had seen a lot of luxurious clothes in his past life. The designs of the clothes sold in the store are mostly comprised of 1500s Western style of clothing. They looked elegant and beautiful, but the designer clothes in his past life would make these dresses look normal.

'Ho! I thought that only my skill as a doctor and herbalist would prove to be useful in this world. Who would have thought that the various knowledge I have would also be useful?' Leric's eyes flashed. This was another business opportunity!

"Hey! What are you guys doing there?! Don't block our store's display area!" A loud shrill voice resounded in the street, making everyone turn their heads in the direction of the clothing shop.

A woman in her late thirties came out of the store with her hands in akimbo. She was wearing a disdainful look on her face as she stared at Leric's group.

Leric wasn't wearing anything luxurious and he only has a plain white shirt and brown trousers, but because of his handsome face, he still looked good overall despite his lack of style.

"She is someone from the Rayden Household. I think she wants to use this opportunity to embarrass our Reynolds Household in public." Samira whispered.

"It's them again?" Leric shot a playful look at the woman. Initially, he didn't plan to start a clothing business any time soon, but it seems like he has to adjust his schedule a bit. 'Did you really think that because I'm old, I would be forgiving? Oh, wait! I'm not an old man anymore...'

"Eh? Isn't this Miss Samira? I'm so sorry, I thought it was just a group of poor slaves blocking our store's display area." The woman apologized, but she had a mocking look on her face.

90 Leric's Anger

The spectating crowd had interested looks on their faces as they watched the scene. Most of them were aware of the dispute between the Rayden Household and the Reynolds Household so they were expecting a good show to happen.

The reason for the dispute between the two families can be traced back more than several decades ago. At that time, the Reynolds Household only had Julius Reynolds as its sole Level 4 Esper, and their status in Dominion District was beneath that of the Rayden Household.

Their conflict started when Julius Reynolds and the family head of the Rayden Household were both assigned to the same battalion of the empire's army. Julius Reynolds became the Vice Commander while, Jericho Rayden, the family head of the Rayden Household, was the Commander.

At first, everything was good, but during the warring period at that time, Julius Reynolds was able to accumulate more merits than Jericho Rayden. As the Commander of the battalion, this was like a slap to his face and he became a laughingstock in the army for being overshadowed by his Vice Commander. In his anger, Jericho Rayden suppressed Julius Reynolds in all sorts of ways, preventing him from getting more merits. This sparked the feud between the two noble households and even now, they still haven't reached a consensus. The Imperial Family also tried to mediate between them, but Emperor Ragnar failed to make the two old men concede and could only choose to turn a blind eye to their dispute...

“I wonder why the air suddenly smells like fart. Perhaps you have forgotten to brush your teeth, old woman.” Leric waved his hand as if he was disgusted by the ‘bad smell’.

Samira and the others laughed when they heard his words. The man who was usually civil and gentle actually knows how to utter such demeaning lines.

The manager of Rayden’s clothing shop was stunned for a moment before she pointed at Leric’s face with a look of shame and anger. “What nonsense are spouting you slave?! Do you think I would be afraid of you just because you have that brat, Samira?! Well, guess what. I don’t give a fuck about her!”

Leric’s tranquil eyes narrowed and a trace of fury was hidden beneath his chilling gaze. “To think that a random nobody would dare to call me a slave. Rayden Household is it? I will destroy their business in Lion City within a year! As for your clothing shop, you will no longer have customers in less than two months!”

The woman unconsciously stepped back when she looked at Leric’s flickering eyes. It seemed as if she was looking at an endless abyss!

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“What’s going on here?” More workers from the clothing shop came out when they noticed the commotion. There were also five men with strong auras walking toward Leric with menacing faces.

When she noticed that her backup has arrived, she regained her courage. She glared back at Leric and spat out on the ground before she shouted in a haughty manner. “What high-sounding words coming from a mere boytoy of Samira! Destroy our Rayden Household’s business in one year? Keep dreaming!”

Leric smiled coldly and said in a calm but freezing tone. “Killing isn’t allowed in the empire, but as long as you have the status, the Imperial Family will do nothing about it. You’ve successfully angered me, but I’m not going to kill you just yet. I want you to witness the downfall of the Rayden Household that you hold in high regard, but you will still be punished!” As soon as he said these words, Leric snapped his fingers and produced a wisp of golden flame. He then shot it toward the clothes of the woman, burning all the fabric until she was left naked.

During the whole time, the woman could only scream in fear as her clothes burn into ashes. The five people who seemed to be guards of the clothing shop also stopped in their tracks when they saw the golden flame.

It was a Golden Pill Fire that can only be produced by a Level 4 Alchemist!

“Payment for your burnt clothes. A hundred thousand gold coins should be enough to pay for it, right?” Leric took out ten pieces of golden cards from his storage space and

casually tossed them to the woman who was now looking at him with fear and trepidation.

After saying his piece, Leric gently smiled at Samira and the others and said. "Let's go back to the clinic."

When Leric's group left, the crowd started clamoring.

"He summoned a Golden Pill Fire! That guy is a Level 4 Alchemist!"

"The Rayden Household kicked an iron plate this time. That man didn't seem like he was joking..."

"Serves them right! They have been too arrogant in the past few years!"

The five guards quickly covered the naked manager with a coat.

When the manager regained her senses, her eyes flashed with a ferocious look. 'Level 4 Alchemist? Even someone at that level can be killed!' She angrily shouted in her heart. No one has ever humiliated her since she was born and that man even burned her clothes in front of a large crowd!

"Scram!" She bellowed at the spectators.

The five guards also shooed them away after seeing how angry the manager was.

"Take me to the mansion. I want to discuss something with the family head." She muttered in a cold voice before entering the shop. She has to dress up first before going back.

An hour later, inside Neil's Steakhouse, Julie received a report about the incident. She revealed an intrigued look after hearing the report.

The Rayden Household was by no means weak. Their family head, Jericho Rayden is a mid Level 4 Esper. Other than him, there were also rumors that there was another Level 4 Esper working for them.

"As expected of someone who caught my attention." Julie smiled beneath her veil. No individual would dare to challenge a noble household, but that guy didn't seem to care about it. She became even more curious about him.