

## Stay At home 181

Chapter 181 This race ended surprisingly early.

When Mag glanced back and saw no sign of the carriage, he smiled, his face all red. He had raced back in university, and had been pretty good at it.

Amy also took a glance back. "We won, Father! You're so amazing!" she said cheerfully.

His daughter's praise made him feel even happier than if he had won the Tour de France. Mag smiled. "Let's go to school." He slowed down the speed.

Actually, he had raced in the Tour de France before. His sprint speed had reached 70 km/h, which had been pretty fast. The pros were much faster—80km/h. Even race horses couldn't compete with them, let alone carriages.

He was a little panting now due to the poor shape he was in, but thanks to the system, he could still easily reach 40 km/h. The top speed of that carriage was around 25 km/h, so it was impossible for it to catch up with him.

They went down the street. Father, daughter, and a black bicycle. Now and then, the bell rang, making people stop beside the street and watch.

Hydle was walking on the street with a black bag in his hand, looking thoughtful. The sound of the bell made him look up. He watched as Mag rode past him. His eyes went wide in astonishment. *What is that?! How can that thing be this fast? What kind of energy is it running on?*

"Hey, wait! I..." Hydle called out, waving his hand, running behind the bike despite his old age.

Yet Mag was too focused on riding to notice him.

"Father, I think I heard someone yelled at us." Amy glanced back, but saw no one.

"Maybe they were trying to sell us things." Mag didn't stop. *Maybe it was one of my customers. Anyway, I don't think they have anything important to talk to me.*

"Good morning, Mr. Hydle. Are you going somewhere? I can give you a ride," Dicus said as the carriage stopped beside the old man, his respectful voice filled with surprise.

"Good morning, Mr. Hydle," Udyr echoed, and stopped eating. It seemed he was afraid of the old man.

"Oh, good morning, Dicus. Thank you," the old man said, getting into the carriage, breathing heavily.

"Did you see a man and a girl on a two-wheeled thing?"

"The girl was wearing a black-and-red cape?" Dicus asked.

"Yes!" Hydle said happily.

"Oh. If you want to talk to the man, I think he's heading for the Chaos School. Huang, go faster."

With a crack of the whip, the horses accelerated.

“Why are you in such a hurry to talk to him?” Dicus looked at Hydle, whose balding head was covered with drops of sweat and face was red from running.

“That strange vehicle,” the old man answered, leaning back in his seat to rest. “It ran so fast, and I didn’t sense any magic. It’s some kind of machine, I think. Also, it seemed much more convenient than a carriage.”

“I agree,” Dicus said, smiling. “Actually, I was following him too. That thing looked simple, and I don’t think it will produce any excrements. It’s much cleaner, and thus better for the city.”

“You’re so visionary, Dicus. We could use more officials like you. I’m sure you’ll be promoted again soon!”

“You’re too kind. I’m just doing my job. Your endless pursuit of knowledge is most inspiring.”

...

The bike slowly stopped in front of the gate of the Chaos School without making any sound. An old man and a big orc were looking at them. The bike was shining in the morning sun. They had never seen such a strange thing before.

They recognized Mag and Amy since they had somehow snuck into the school before.

“We’re here,” Mag said.

“I had a lot of fun!” Before Mag helped her down, Amy had already jumped to the ground, excited.

“Then I’ll take you to school every day.” Mag locked the bike with an anti-theft lock the system gave him and picked up Ugly Duckling. It was still expressionless, curling up.

*Bike sickness? Mag pulled a strange face. Since when do cats have bike sickness?*

## **Chapter 182: You Can Have Two Bowls Of Tofu Pudding Today**

“Wake up, Ugly Duckling. We’re here! Don’t make me burn you with my fire,” Amy said, pinching its jaw.

“Meow!” The kitten woke up immediately. It struggled to its feet and looked at Amy.

“Here, hold it, Amy.” Mag handed the cat to Amy and took the bag off the bike. He took a look at his watch. It had only taken him five minutes to get here. Normally, the same distance would take about half an hour on foot.

*I’m sure Yangzhou fried rice is still warm, but tofu pudding has probably broken into pieces. The texture hasn’t changed much though, I think. I’ll charge him the same price.*

*Bikes are not half bad for delivering food. If people here used them to deliver food, that would be quite a sight.*

*Also, they could use horses for long-distance delivery.*

*That's not a problem I should worry about now, though. I'm already very busy as it is.* Mag took Amy by the hand. "Let's go."

"Sorry, you're not allowed to go in," the orc said, signaling them to stop. He was eyeing them warily. *I won't let them get past me this time.*

"Father, let's sneak in through that hole," Amy whispered, tugging at Mag's clothes, stealing a glance at the orc. She was afraid of him, and her fear wasn't misplaced, since she had got rejected by this orc many times.

"She's too young to attend school," the old man added, shaking his head. "And pets are not allowed in school. It's the rule."

Mag stroked Amy's head to calm her down, pulled a green card from his pocket, and handed it to the orc with a smile. "We're here to study under Teacher Krassu. He said we could use this as a pass. Could you tell me where the magic school is?"

The orc and the old man exchanged a baffled look. They didn't know any Teacher Krassu here. But when they took the card, the looks on their faces changed immediately.

It had one big word on it: "pass", and they found a name at the bottom right corner: Novan.

The name was everything. The card was useless without the name.

Suddenly, they remembered the white-bearded old man who had talked with the principal yesterday. *The principal gave the pass to the old man, but now this young man has it.*

*He is not to be taken lightly.* They looked at Mag and Amy more kindly now.

*Even Lord of Chaos City and Lord of the Gray Temple are treating the principal as their equal, but that old man was acting like he was senior to him,* the orc thought to himself.

"The magic school is to the left when you walk in. Take your pass and you can head right in," the orc said with a smile, handing the pass back to Mag. His attitude towards them had changed dramatically.

*We can walk in through the gate?* Amy's face lit up. She had had to sneak in through the hole every time she came here. She had always envied the students who could walk in through the gate.

Mag took the pass and nodded. "Thank you." He picked up Amy's hand, and was about to go in.

"Sorry. No pets allowed," the orc said, extending an arm to stop them.

"But..." Mag looked at the pass in his hand. *From the look in their eyes, this pass must have been from a very important person.*

"The pass is signed by the principal, but the rule was also made by the principal, and he said school always comes first, so I'm afraid you can't take the cat with you," the orc said solemnly.

*He goes strictly by the book. Impressive. Also, the principal here is really responsible.*

"I see. But, can I trouble you to take care of my cat and bike?" Mag didn't find this rule annoying. *Pets can be dangerous sometimes.*

The orc nodded. "Sure. You can leave them to us." *This man is quite reasonable.*

"Amy, put Ugly Duckling in the basket. I'll take it home with me."

Amy nodded. "Yes, Father." She stood on tips of her toes and carefully put it into the basket. "Be good at home, Ugly Duckling," she said, stroking its head.

"Let's go." Mag took her by the hand and walked in.

"Meow, meow!" the kitten called out behind Amy, sticking its little head out.

Amy turned back. "Stop whining! You can have two bowls of tofu pudding today and don't have to run."

The kitten's eyes lit up right away. "Meow, meow," it said, nodding.

*She really knows her way around this cat's thinking.* Mag smiled.

A while later, a carriage stopped at the gate. Hydle jumped off it. "The owner of this thing, where is he?" he asked the orc and the old man, pointing at the bike.

### **Chapter 183: Alarm Goes Off!**

"He just went inside," the orc answered, pointing. "What happened?" he asked nervously, looking at the sweat on the other party's face.

"Nothing. Which way did he go?" Hydle asked, bending forward to study the bike.

"He asked us about the magic school, so I think he went there," the old man said.

"Magic school?" Hydle straightened up, hesitant. After a while, he curled his upper lip. "I'll wait for him here. The teachers in magic school don't like me." Then he went back to studying the bike.

"I thought he's not allowed to go in," Dicus said, curious.

As the liaison officer between Chaos City and the Chaos School, Dicus knew every rule here—they had been made by Novan to ensure the safety and independence of the Chaos School. Even the Lord of Chaos City himself couldn't get his pet, a fire lion, through this gate.

Anyway, the fire lion probably didn't want to come anywhere near this place again after it got hit by Novan's ice ball and lay in bed for half a month.

"He has a pass," the old man answered calmly.

"I see," said Dicus. No outsiders had the right to enter the Chaos School without a pass. He had one himself because of his job. Before he got his pass, Novan had talked with him in person, and made him promise that he would follow every rule here and that he would never do anything that might put the school or students in harm's way.

*Who is that? He can't be anyone ordinary if he can get a pass from Novan. Besides, the girl looks to be of the same age as Udyr. I don't think she's old enough to go to school yet. Is she a highborn lady, or is she a genius magic caster?*

Dicus had so many questions in mind. *He is mysterious as well as interesting.*

Hydle was also very surprised. He took a look at Dicus and refrained from asking about the pass. He walked around the bike, his eyes shining in excitement. "He must be a genius, a real genius. How did he get the iron wires so even in thickness? And how did he manage to make such a perfect iron ring..." he murmured.

"Meow!" the cat shrieked suddenly, standing up. Its front paws were on the edge of the basket, and it was baring its teeth menacingly.

Hydle was engrossed in staring at the bike. The screech really startled him, and sent him stumbling down on his butt. He gave a wry smile when he saw the cute cat sticking its head out. "Good God! What is this cat doing here?"

The orc and the old man quickly helped him up. "Are you all right? It's that man's cat," said the orc.

"Yeah. I'm all right. Thank you." Then he pointed a finger at Ugly Duckling. "You naughty cat!" He crouched down and began studying the gears.

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At last, the father-daughter duo arrived at the No. 3 building. It was not as magical as Mag had thought it would be. Actually, this three-storied building was just like every other building in this school. On the wall was a drawing of a witch on a broom and a flying golden ball, which had probably been done by a child—not an artwork, but it was still adorable.

"Will I be able to fly on a broom like the witch here, Father?" Amy asked, looking at the drawing with wide eyes.

Mag smiled. "You will, but not necessarily on a broom." *Krassu must know some flying magic if he wants to fight ranged magic casters.*

Mag stepped into the building with Amy. Classes normally started at 7:30 AM, so no one was here yet. The inside was quite bright, and didn't feel stifling. Unlike the other buildings, there were fewer classrooms on each floor, and they had no windows.

The two got to the third floor and found only one classroom here. The door coated with black metal was ajar, with light coming through.

Mag walked up and knocked.

The heavy door slowly opened with a creak, and then they saw Krassu standing in his white robe. "Come on in. You're right on time." He smiled.

"Thank you," Mag said, smiling back.

"Good morning, Master Krassu," Amy said, looking up at the old man.

Krassu was taken by surprise. “Good morning, Amy.”

“Father said I ought to call you Master Krassu in school,” Amy said, smiling. “But can I call you Master Half-beard after school?”

“You can call me whatever you like,” Krassu said, feeling good.

*I can get used to her calling me Master Krassu. Her upbringing is better than I thought.* Then he noticed the bag in Mag’s hand and smiled. “Did you bring some tofu pudding for me?”

Mag nodded. “Yes. It might have broken due to the bumpy road, though,” he admitted.

“Oh, don’t worry about it. I’m sure it still tastes the same. Thank you.” He took the bag. “I’ll take her to your place for lunch at noon.”

“Thank you.” Mag crouched down and looked at Amy. “Do as Master Krassu says and study hard. I’ll be waiting for you at home.”

Amy nodded. “Yes, Father.” She didn’t want to leave her father, but when she looked around, the bizarre objects in the magic room really attracted her eyes.

“Go,” Mag said, stroking her hair. He watched for a while after she walked inside, and then closed the door lightly. He started towards the gate.

Before he arrived at the gate, he heard an alarm going off.

## **Chapter 184: Sorry, But I Have A Cooking Job To Do**

*Someone is stealing an electric bike? No, there are no electric bikes in this world. But the alarm...*

*My bike!* Mag became worried and quickened his pace. He hated bike thieves—he had lost several pro race bikes to them, and some of them were limited-edition models.

When he reached the gate, he was surprised to find his bike being surrounded by many people who were craning their necks to get a better look. Some were parents, some were teachers, and others were probably just passers-by.

The alarm was still ringing, with the screeching of the cat.

Mag raised an eyebrow. *What’s going on?!*

“I’m sorry, I...” the old man said apologetically to Mag.

*It’s just a bike. No need for all this fuss.* Mag didn’t understand.

“Mr. Hydle, the owner is here!” the orc shouted to the crowd.

“Please disperse. There’s nothing to see here,” Hydle said. Then the crowd parted and looked at Mag.

“Hi, I’m Hydle, the dean of the mechanical school. I saw you ride this. Can you please tell me what this interesting object is? Did you make it yourself?” Hydle asked with a smile, his eyes full of curiosity.

Mag’s bike had really intrigued them. It was like a work of art, shining in the sun. Some even assumed it was a new sculpture made by the Chaos School.

They were wondering how it was making such a loud noise.

They looked at Mag, waiting for his answer.

“Nice to meet you, Mr. Hydle. This thing is called bike. I guess you could say that I made it,” Mag said with a smile, relieved when he saw his bike and the cat were both safe and sound.

The Chaos School had a primary section and a secondary section. Children in the primary section studied basic knowledge. The secondary section was somewhat like a university; it had a magic school, mechanical school, language school, etc., and they would provide all kinds of talents for the Gray Temple and the Lord of Chaos City.

*I guess it makes perfect sense for a dean of the mechanical school to take such great interest in this bike, Mag thought.*

“Bike...” Hydle murmured. “I like its name. Oh, I’m sorry. I touched it and it started ringing.”

The crowd was staring at Mag curiously, wondering if he had cast a spell on this bike.

Mag smiled. “Don’t worry about it. It’s just the alarm.” He touched the lock and his fingerprint unlocked the bike immediately. The alarm stopped ringing.

“Meow, meow!” Ugly Duckling cried happily. It looked toward the gate as if trying to find Amy.

Mag touched its head. “Amy is in class right now, and she won’t be back until noon. We’ll wait for her at home.” He spotted Dicus in the crowd and nodded to him with a smile. He then got on his bike, ready to leave since he had to open soon.

Dicus nodded and smiled back. *He won the race fair and square; he must be somebody.*

“Can I ask you a few questions about this bike?” said Hydle. “We can talk more in my office. I’ve been trying to make a vehicle that can run without horses. I think maybe you can join me in this project.”

“The dean is inviting him to join his cause? They have been working on this project for decades.”

“Yeah. I heard the principal said 15 years ago that every participant of the project would be hugely rewarded if it succeeded. Many people want to be in. There’re only seven core members, and they are the best of the best in mechanics and iron working.”

Some teachers started to chat, whispering to each other. Dicus also looked very surprised. He knew about that project. The Lord of Chaos City had also seen the value in this project, and funded it because he knew it would change the world once it succeeded.

Smiling, Mag shook his head. “Sorry, but I have a cooking job to do. Maybe another day.” He patted the kitten on the head to signal it to sit down.

He had to go. He didn't want to waste another minute here.

Hydle stared at Mag with wide eyes. He couldn't believe that he got rejected, and with such a ridiculous excuse too.

The crowd was no less shocked than Hydle. *He just threw away such a great opportunity like it was nothing. Is he arrogant or stupid?*

Dicus smiled. *Interesting.*

"Good morning, Mag. What are you doing here?" Luna asked, walking over to him with a handbag.

"Good morning, Luna," Mag said with a smile. She was wearing a long black dress and the same silky scarf with a golden lily around her shoulders. Clearly, she really liked that scarf. "I took Amy here to study magic. She's in the magic school. Come to the restaurant when you have time. I've got to go now."

Luna nodded. "Okay." She watched as Mag pedaled off. *What is that?*

The crowd was even more shocked now. *That thing goes so fast!*

"Teacher Luna, do you know that man?" Hydle asked, looking excited.

## Chapter 185: Nothing Fancy About It

The crowd dispersed after a while, whereas the teachers and Dicus stayed. They were all looking at Luna since she apparently knew the man who had just ridden off.

"Yes, Mr. Hydle. His name is Mag. He is the father of one of my students," Luna answered. She didn't understand why they were all fixing their eyes on her.

"Do you know where he lives?" he asked, excited.

"Yes. He owns a restaurant at the far end of the Aden Square. You can find him there. He is really a great cook."

Now they understood why Mag had said he had a cooking job to do. They had considered it his lame excuse. What was baffling them now was why he had turned Hydle down. The way they saw it, joining Hydle's project was far more rewarding than running a restaurant since every participant got at least 100 gold coins a month. A normal teacher's monthly salary was only around 30 gold coins.

How did an owner of a restaurant manage to get a pass from Novan? Dicus wondered. I thought he was an official from Rodu or something.

Hydle nodded. "Thank you." He felt so relieved now that he found out where Mag lived; he could go talk with him whenever he wanted. That bike had really whetted his curiosity.

The black thing wrapping the wheel, the chain, the gears, the light yet strong material... Everything about this bike was driving his crazy.



If it weren't for his classes, he would have gone to that restaurant right now. He was known as a leading authority in mechanics, but that bike had made him realize how ignorant he was.

Luna nodded and went off. Why is Mr. Hyde so interested in Mag? Suddenly, she stopped. Has he found out Mag is a math genius?

But I don't think math plays such a great role in mechanics. Then she saw the magic school. Wait, I thought Amy is too young to start school yet?

"Mr. Hyde, how is the project going?" Dicus asked. He was responsible for the funding of this project, so he needed to know the progress.

"I'm afraid it's not going very well. We have managed to convert steam pressure into kinetic energy, but how to use this energy in a machine is still baffling us." Then he looked in the direction of the Aden Square and smiled. "However, I think I've found a solution now. If that man joins us, we may be able to see the first steam vehicle soon. Steam will change the world."

"I look forward to that day. Good luck!" Dicus also turned to look. Mag...

...

Mag was riding at a normal speed since he didn't want to sweat and have to take a shower.

He said hello to Black Coal and Green Pea when he passed Urien's shop. Ugly Duckling also meowed in a tired voice.

When Mag arrived at his restaurant, dozens of people were already waiting there. They were surprised when they saw the bike.

"That's a fancy ride you've got there, Mag," Harrison said as Mag got off.

"It's just a bike. I use it to take my kid to school. Nothing fancy about it," Mag said, smiling. He nodded at the people who said hello to him and pulled out his keys to open the door.

The customers didn't understand how Mag could maintain balance on only two wheels and how this bike thing could go that fast.

"Good morning, Boss," Yabemiya said. She also stared curiously at the bike.

"Good morning, Miya," Mag said, opening the door. "Can you carry the bike inside for me? Don't worry about Ugly Duckling. It's just a little tired."

She nodded. "Sure, Boss." She walked to the bike and lifted it up carefully. It was much lighter than it looked despite all the metal and stuff.

"Sorry, we will be open in 10 minutes," Mag said to the crowd with a smile, closing the door.

"Just put it behind the counter," Mag said to his waitress. It was not very gentlemanly to ask a girl to do the heavy labor for him, but she might be 10 times stronger than him. The bike was as heavy to her as an apple was to a normal human.

"Ugly Duckling doesn't look so well..." she said, worried.

Mag took a look at the cat curled up in the basket. "Don't worry. It will be fine." He went upstairs and changed into his cooking clothes. "Oh, Miya, I think you can have a tofu pudding for breakfast, a tofu pudding and roujiamo at lunch, and the same for super."

"Thank you, Boss, but you said only two meals every day are free."

"No, I said you can eat whatever you want with 1,200 copper coins." Then he made a bowl of sweet tofu pudding for her. "Eat. We'll open soon."

## **Chapter 186: The Transaction Is Done!**

"Thank you, Boss." Yabemiya smiled and sat down to eat her food. The sweetness spread in her mouth and warmed her heart.

Mag took a look at her scarred hands, and went back into the kitchen. *No girls like scars. That's the least I can do.*

*Besides, she really deserves it considering her productivity.*

She finished it quickly, licked the syrup off her lips, and gave a blissful smile. The sweet food had put her in a real good mood. She stood up and went to the kitchen.

"Roujjamos are about a third less this morning, but we have maybe 200 more bowls of tofu pudding. We'll be busier than yesterday morning, and you'll have to collect money since Amy is not here. Can you do it?" Mag said, putting a clean bowl on the cooking bench. Now it was full of bowls.

She nodded. "Yes, Boss. Amy has taught me the multiplication table."

Mag smiled. *Amy is so thoughtful! Yabemiya is such a quick learner too.* "Okay. Then let's do this."

The morning turned out to be busier than expected. Finally, the opening time was over.

Mag turned over the sign on and took a seat by the door. "Get some rest first," he said as he looked at Yabemiya, who also seemed a little tired.

"I'm not tired, Boss." She went into the kitchen and brought a glass of warm water for Mag. "Do you want me to massage your shoulders?"

Mag took the glass. "Thank you. Uh, no. I want to talk to you about something first," he said, beckoning her to sit opposite him.

"Okay." Yabemiya seated herself, looking at Mag.

"We'll just talk. There's no need to be nervous." Mag smiled. The young waitress was wearing her blond hair in a side ponytail. She didn't look as pale as when he had first found her anymore.

She hadn't had enough to eat before, but her meals were much more nutritious now. She was growing fast. It had been only a few days, but she seemed to be taller. Her maid dress got tighter, showing off her curves.

"I'm thinking about hiring another waitress," said Mag.

Yabemiya stood up. "Did I do something wrong, Boss? You don't want me here anymore?" she asked anxiously.

"No, I said another," Mag answered, smiling. "Amy can only help after school, so your workload has increased. I want to hire another waitress to help you."

Yabemiya was taken by surprise. She had never thought Mag would worry about her workload. She shook her head immediately. "Thank you, Boss, but I don't find my job hard, and I'm happy doing it. However..."

"However what?"

"If you find me too clumsy to do the job well, you should hire another. You can halve my salary," she said hesitantly with her head bowed, her fingers wriggling nervously.

"No! I'd never do that. You're very diligent, and can always put customers in a good mood. Actually, I have planned to raise your salary after probation." Her work attitude had moved him. After a moment, he added, "I'll leave all the work to you then, if you insist. But, you can always tell me if you find it too hard for you."

Yabemiya's face lit up. "Thank you, Boss. I'll try my best." She smiled and walked up to him. "Let me massage your shoulders. You must be very tired."

Mag nodded. "Thank you." He felt so good that he closed his eyes.

He was really very tired after slaving away in the kitchen for an hour and a half, but on the flip side, he had finally saved 10,000 gold coins.

"System, I want to buy strength," Mag said urgently. He had had enough of his weak body long ago. *Between exercise and tofu pudding, I'll get in a good shape in no time.*

*More importantly, of course, I'll be able to swing a sword at last.*

He had all the skills in his head, but his body was too weak to lift a sword.

As his restaurant became more popular, more people would cast their covetous eyes on his money.

Although he had Krassu and Urien protect him and his daughter, it wouldn't hurt him to become stronger, since this world was full of danger.

He wanted to be able to protect Amy when needed.

"It will cost you 10,000 gold coins. Are you sure you want to buy it?" The system's voice sounded very excited.

"Why are you even more excited than me?" said Mag with contempt.

"Who said I'm excited? I recommend you win the strength through accomplishing missions, but—"

"I won't buy it, then," Mag said calmly.

“Please don’t interrupt me,” the system said hurriedly. “But I’m little moved by your struggle to make money, so I’m going to allow you to buy strength this time.”

“I don’t want to impose on you, really. I can wait for the lucky draw.”

“I’ll save you the trouble of waiting. The transaction is done!” said the system.

## **Chapter 187: Did I Look Like I Needed An Electric Shock**

“You have made the transaction without my permission?” Mag snapped. He was excited, though, as he stared at the sweet, shining strength bag in his head.

“Yes. And I don’t want to hear your complaints.”

“Oh yeah? What if I told you I don’t want to make money anymore?”

“I’d say you are crazy. Money talks. Money makes the world go round. There are many obstacles between you and becoming the God of Cookery, but with enough money in your pocket, you can make them all go away. You cannot survive without money.”

“I can survive well enough even if I only work three days a week, don’t you think?”

“The next 0.5 strength: 50,000 gold coins! As long as you have enough money, you can slay trolls, demons, dragons! You can kill anything that stands in your way!” The system paused a moment. “Sorry, I got a little carried away.”

Mag nearly jumped up from the chair. “50,000?! That’s highway robbery!” *I have worked so hard to earn that 10,000.*

*The second 0.5 strength increase is as much as 50,000 already. I believe the price of the third will go through the roof.*

*But, I have to admit slaying dragons sounds much more tempting than becoming the God of Cookery.* He recalled the scenes where he had killed dragons, and felt a little fired up.

Still, he wouldn’t go back on his promise to make Amy the Manchu Han Imperial Feast. He had to become the God of Cookery.

What pissed him off was that the system kept reminding him of that these days.

After a while, the system said, “You can touch the bag now, but—”

Before it could finish, Mag had already done it. An electric shock went through his body immediately, stirring his every cell. His body went numb; he couldn’t even feel his tongue. He opened his eyes.

Yabemiya withdrew her hands right away, taking two steps back, shocked. Her fingers tingled as if she had got stung by Mag’s shoulders.

“Are you all right, Boss?” Yabemiya asked with concern as she looked at his hair standing up.

“Yeah. I think so.” He had a puzzled look on his face.

“But...” Part of her wanted to laugh. The other part was a little worried.

“Don’t worry. Go clear the tables. I’ll go get some fresh air outside.” When he touched the metal handle, he got shocked again. He slammed the door as he walked out.

*What happened?* Yabemiya didn’t understand. She started cleaning.

“Did you do that on purpose?!” Mag roared. “Are you an AED <sup>1</sup> or something? Did I look like I needed an electric shock?!”

It was all Mag could do not to laugh when he saw the shadow of his big head.

“I tried to warn you, but you didn’t want to listen,” the system replied with malicious pleasure in its voice.

Its answer failed to appease Mag. “But I didn’t get shocked last time.”

“Your body had sustained the harm from poisons, magic spells, and curses. Although I cleansed it of all of them, your cells remained vigorless. An electric shock is the most effective and efficient way to revive them. You didn’t feel the shock the first time, because I didn’t have to revive so many cells.”

Mag nodded. “I see.” Then his eyes went wide. “Does that mean the shock will only get stronger next time?!”

“I’ll try to be careful.”

“Thank you.” *You bastard.*

Mag had thought he could buy his way to becoming a stronger man without having to face any danger, but he had apparently been wrong. *I don’t think the system will let me die, but I really could do without the electric shock.*

*I hope it won’t have to strike me with lightning next time.*

Mag looked down, feeling the change of his body, clenching his fists. He wasn’t weak anymore; he felt as strong as he had been in his previous life.

Maybe because of the electric shock, he looked slightly thinner than before.

“Maybe the average adult man in this world is stronger. I feel as strong as when I was working out,” Mag thought aloud. Then he saw Mobai’s forge. He hesitated for a while, and walked towards it.

## **Chapter 188: He Had Been Able To Kill A Dragon With A Single Swing Of His Sword**

The numbness was wearing off. Mag could feel his strength as he stepped on the ground, which lightened his mood.

*I’m not a cripple anymore! I may not be very strong, but I’m strong enough to be a good father now.*

"I'll be more productive. I think I should hire another waitress after all," Mag said to himself as he walked.

He passed by Mobai's forge all the time, but not once had he stepped in.

His forge was as large as Mag's house. In fact, all the houses in the Aden Square were pretty much the same in size; they had been built at the same time. Some large shops were using two or more houses.

Mobai's house was built of black square stones, newly repaired from the look of it. The walls were rough—as expected of the tough owner.

His signboard was made of five iron discs hanging on an iron bar sticking out of the front wall. On the discs were five red letters in caps, which read: forge. The signboard had seemingly been repainted many times. It was old, and had seen so many customers come and go.

The forge had a wooden door, and now it was wide open.

Mag could hear somebody hammering now. *Thankfully, the system did a great job making my house soundproof. It would kill me if I had to endure this every day.*

He stopped at the door and looked inside. He saw various kinds of weapons hanging on two wooden racks and the right wall: axes, knives, iron staves, short swords, longswords, and heavy swords; they were weapons commonly used in this world. There were four chairs by the left wall, in which was a small window. Beyond the left wall was the place where Mobai was working. The layout was simple, and the black stone floor seemed pretty clean.

The swords were shimmering, screaming sharpness.

*As expected of the swords which are 1,000 gold coins each.* Mag was more than familiar with swords.

Naturally, weapons were crucial to soldiers; they could mean life or death sometimes. Mobai's reputation kept his business successful.

There were only three blacksmiths who were as good as Mobai. Although no one could tell who was the best, the fact that he was busy all these years spoke volumes.

As Mag walked in quietly, he could hear men talking. He recognized the voices of Mobai and Habeng. Apparently, Habeng went straight here after breakfast.

"What brings you here, Mag?" Mobai asked, looking at Mag through the small window in surprise.

"Don't mind me. I'm just browsing." *It's quite strange for an owner of a restaurant to buy a weapon.*

Habeng walked out and smiled at Mag. "You should buy one, Mag."

Mag shook his head with a smile. "I already have one: my cooking knife. I just came here to satisfy my curiosity." *Actually, I want to find out what's the best weight of a sword for me.*

Mag Alex used a black heavy sword in his prime—it weighed around 50 kg. He had been able to kill a dragon with a single swing of his sword.

Mag could lift something just as heavy now, but there was no way he was capable of *wielding* a sword that heavy.

“Do you sell weapons, system?” Mag asked. He found his neighbor’s weapons too expensive.

“I do not have any lethal weapons,” the system said seriously.

“I guess I’ll buy one here, then.”

“I’ll sell you one if you promise you won’t use it on anyone,” the system said reluctantly.

“What good is a sword if I can’t use it to kill? Do you intend me to play with it like a freaking toy?!”

“What’s wrong with toys? You bought Amy’s toys from me, remember? Some toys need more skills, devotion, and time than your cold weapons. Some are even more expensive. So, why are you so against toys?”

*That’s a good comeback. Amy’s music box cost me 200 gold coins. It’s not impossible for a toy to be more expensive than a weapon.*

Habeng nodded. “It would be a great loss for us if you became a knight. We could do without a knight, but we couldn’t do without a chef.”

“Thank you.” Mag smiled. *But Mag Alex wasn’t just any knight.* He walked towards a longsword on the wall.

“I’d take the shorter one if I were you,” Mobai said with a smile as he walked out in a thick black apron.

*I have seen him resting a lot while cooking. He is too weak to lift that longsword, Mobai thought to himself. I don’t want him to hurt his wrist. The shorter one is a sword for women, but it’s much lighter.*

“Thank you, but I think I like this one.” Mag took it in his hand. The carved handle was cool to the touch, but he suddenly felt fired up.

## **Chapter 189: This Is No Toy**

The sword felt strange and familiar at the same time. Mag Alex’s memories had intertwined with his, and were gradually becoming his own memories. Sometimes he couldn’t even separate them.

Maybe it was a good thing; it might help him fit in with the people here more naturally. He loved Amy as well as his new life here. He wanted to make the best of his second chance.

*He looks like a fine swordsman, Mobai thought with surprise. He had made over 3,000 swords and seen enough swordsmen to know one when he saw one.*

*Mag has the same look as many brilliant swordsmen have when they hold their sword.*

*But, he is just a cook. I don’t think I’ve ever seen him wield a sword before.*

*Maybe he got his experience from using his cooking knife every day.* Mobai had found an explanation for his question.

“Is it heavy, Mag?” Habeng asked with concern. *If anything happened to his hand, I wouldn’t be able to eat roujiamo for lunch.*

“Yes, it’s too heavy for me,” Mag replied, putting it back. Actually, the weight was just right for him, but he had managed to hold back his urge to show off his swordplay.

Of course, he was not strong enough to recreate all of Mag Alex’s sword techniques, but he should be able to beat a 1st-tier knight by now.

Knights were a major fighting force of humans. There were armies made up of knights guarding the borders, protecting the empire.

One had to pass the tests of the Knight Association to become a knight. They couldn’t call themselves a knight until they had been recognized by the Association.

2nd-tier knights and below were by tradition often called rookies in the army; it was a way to spur them to improve their swordplay.

To become a 1st-tier knight, one had to pass the Association’s written test first. Those who failed were not allowed to take the remaining tests.

The second was the strength test: lifting a 150 kg heavy stone up in the air and holding it for at least 10 seconds.

The last was the basic sword skills test: testing their skills in a fight.

These tests were pretty much like driving tests in a way.

Mag had failed his driving test three times, and ended up buying his license. He had got himself ticketed many times every year.

*I don’t think I can pass the strength test now, even though I’ve become stronger; still, I should be a good swordsman with all the skills and experience in my head.*

*Strength is important, but so are skills and speed.*

Mag stopped browsing and turned to face Habeng. “Has Haga come back?”

“No, but I received word last night that the war is over,” Habeng said, smiling. “Our tribe won and got back all the gold mines. Haga’s hand was wounded, but it’s nothing serious. He will come here in a few days.”

Mag nodded; he looked relieved. “I’m glad he is okay.” He liked that silent orc, and Amy had talked about him two days ago.

“I have to go meet a friend. Catch you guys later,” Habeng said, and then left.

“Do you like swords?” asked Mobai. *He said that sword was too heavy for him, but it didn’t look very heavy in his hand to me.*



"I had wanted to become a knight before I picked up my cooking knife." Mag smiled.

He kept looking until he saw pieces of paper on a small table in a corner.

On one piece of paper was a drawing of a round object with several things in it, and he saw Mobai had scribbled something on the side: sulfur, charcoal, saltpeter.

*What the hell?! Mag's eyes went wide*

"This is the thing I told you about. It can release a large amount of energy, but I haven't figured out how to use this energy," Mobai said.

*"This is no toy. You must handle it carefully." I don't want to be blown into pieces in my sleep!*

"I know. But, I don't think it's powerful enough to kill a dragon. Their scales are not easy to penetrate. Besides, I don't know how to get this thing near the dragon." Mobai frowned thoughtfully.

"I'm sure you'll figure it out soon. I have to get back to prepare for lunch. I'll see you later." Mag walked out. *How does he know how to make gunpowder?!*

*I'm sorry for his loss, but I don't want to help him make such a destructive weapon.*

"How much is a sword like that one?" asked Mag.

"1,000 gold coins. It's a good deal!" answered the system.

"Go lower."

## **Chapter 190: Should We Take Her Back By Force?**

"I don't want to go lower than the market price. It's despicable and bad for the market," the system said solemnly.

"Oh, how noble you are!" Mag turned around. "I'll buy from Mobai then."

"Wait! I will give you a discount!" the system said urgently.

Mag stopped. "I'm listening."

"2%," the system said reluctantly.

Mag started walking towards Mobai's forge again.

The system raised its voice. "5%!"

Still Mag didn't stop.

"10%. Take it or leave it," the system said as if trying hard to make up its mind.

"Okay. I'll buy one when I have money." Mag didn't even have 100 gold coins now. He started walking back again.

Yabemiya was wiping tables when Mag walked in. It was all she could do not to laugh when she saw his head. She greeted him with a smile.

Then she noticed more differences. *He doesn't look weary anymore. His dark eyes have grown deeper and more attractive. I think I might fall for him if I keep staring.*

Mag smiled back, and wanted to go upstairs to wash his hair. When he walked past the counter, Ugly Duckling woke up. It looked around and meowed at Mag after it found no way to get down from the basket.

"You call yourself a cat when you can't jump off a bike?" Mag said with disapproving eyes. "Jump onto the counter, and then I'll get you down."

It shook its head helplessly after taking a look at the counter. "Meow."

"Jump or stay in that basket." *I may need it to watch over Amy someday, but it can't do that if it's a coward.*

*I don't care if it's a cat or not, but I don't want it to become a good-for-nothing fatty.*

Ugly Duckling mustered up all its courage and regarded the counter seriously. It bended its knees and jumped.

"Bang!"

It smacked right into the counter, and then fell down onto the floor, where it stayed silent and sullen.

"At least you made it down. Congratulations!" Mag said.

Ugly Duckling raised its two paws to cover its ears.

Mag shrugged and went upstairs.

After he took a shower and changed into clean clothes, he felt even fresher and fitter. He found everything beautiful.

With no customers, the restaurant was clean and quiet. There was sunlight coming through the window. Ugly Duckling was basking in the sun, rolling back and forth. Now and then it looked to the door as if waiting for Amy to come back.

Yabemiya was sitting at a table by the window, resting her chin in two hands.

"Miya, do you want to dance?" Mag asked with a smile, putting the music box on the table.

"Thank you, Boss!" she answered delightedly.

Mag turned it on. "I'll be in the kitchen. I'm afraid lunch time will be very busy."

*I should be able to finish the mission of getting 1,000 customers after lunch, and I'll get that braised chicken and rice recipe.*

*I can't wait to eat something different for a change. I'm sure Amy will like it too.*

The kneading was much easier now that he was stronger. It had taken him only half an hour to knead a chunk of dough that used to require over an hour, and he didn't feel tired at all, so he kneaded more.

He smiled when he saw Yabemiya dance awkwardly but enthusiastically. He put the dough aside. "I'm much more productive now. I have to hire another waitress to help her."

...

In an alley not far from Geya Hotel, an old elf was watching through a telescope as Sally hung quilts up to air. His hair was graying, but his eyes were deep and full of wisdom.

"Lord Yngwie, that's Lady Sally, right?" Earvin asked quietly, excited. This information alone might get him a huge reward, and he might get transferred back to the Wind Forest.

The old elf nodded, putting the telescope away as Sally went back into the hotel. "Yes, I've seen her personally on a banquet two years ago."

"But why is she working in a hotel?"

He had followed her here after he saw her by accident in Mamy Restaurant. He had thought she was holing up there.

*Who would have thought that such a lady like her would work in a hotel owned by a human?* Earvin thought to himself.

"Do not tell a soul about this. You got it?" Yngwie warned, looking into Earvin's eyes.

"Yes, Lord Yngwie!" he answered quickly. Yngwie was serving as an ambassador here. He was responsible for all elves in Chaos City, and was a powerful 7th-tier magic caster. After a moment, he asked, "Should we take her back by force, Lord Yngwie?"