

Stay At home 31

Chapter 31: Buy An Ugly Duckling Egg

“Shut up, Black Coal!” Urien shouted in a shrill voice. He was wearing a black robe for magicians, his face a little grim. He watched as the father and daughter walked away. “Such a strong magic wave! The little girl is a genius? Or is that man a hidden master of magic?” he muttered.

“Now you’re a real Black Coal.” The green parrot giggled at the black crow whose feathers had been burned away, gloating.

“Call me honorable Fama Odin Ben, old man. My palace has been burnt down buy that little girl, so get me a new one quickly. And make a flamboyant robe for me, or someone may catch a glimpse of my beautiful body,” complained the black crow. Then he sniffed around. “Good heavens, why do I smell a roast chicken?” he shouted.

Urien turned to look at his black crow. “Shut your mouth, or I’ll feed you my new potion!” His face was expressionless, his voice as shrill as the voice of a demon that had crawled out from hell.

The black bird stopped his unruly behavior right away. He moved over his feet timorously. “At least... at least give me two leaves to cover my body. You don’t have to see me like this.”

“Green Pea, get him some leaves,” Urien said as he walked towards his shop. “Why haven’t I noticed that magic wave before? Maybe we could exchange experience some day,” he muttered to himself.

“My Lord Urien, next time, call me Sunny when you want me to help,” said the green parrot merrily. She cocked her head to one side to open the lock on her cage and flew away; after a little while, she was back and put two leaves beside Black Coal. Then she flew back to her cage, locked the door, and preened herself gracefully.

“Never thought I’d come to be like this.” Black Coal sighed. He looked around and picked up the two leaves to cover his most important parts.

Mag was walking with Amy on the square. Apparently, she had become very happy after she set that black crow on fire. She skipped merrily in front, paused to wait for Mag, and resumed her skipping again.

Mag had 10 gold coins in his pocket. They were very important to him right now, but if Amy wanted to buy anything, he wouldn’t hesitate at all.

However, the little thing was very considerate. They had walked around for half an hour, but she had only asked for a puppet with strings.

Then Mag took Amy to the largest market on the Aden Square. Unfortunately, they didn’t find a swan, much less an ugly duckling.

They had found regular ducklings, though, but Mag feared that when they failed to grow into beautiful swans, Amy would feel he had cheated her, so he didn’t buy any.

The vegetables were cheap here, but the system once said that he was not allowed to take outside ingredients into the kitchen, so he wasn't tempted by their low price.

"Father, we can't find an ugly duckling today, right?" Amy looked up at Mag, a little disappointed.

Mag nodded. "They say the ugly ducklings haven't been born yet, so maybe we could buy one later." He was trying to find a way to comfort Amy, who had been filled with expectation. It was early autumn now. Big swans were very rare around Chaos city, let alone the small ones. There was a high chance that he wouldn't find one in a long time.

"What's that?" Before Mag could offer any consolation, Amy's eyes were already drawn by an herb stall by the roadside. She ran to it and squatted down immediately. She looked at it with her wide eyes for a while, and then turned to wave at Mag as she shouted, "Father, look! This must be an ugly duckling egg!"

"Oh?" Mag walked over to her. The stall was owned by a strong, dark middle-aged man who was weaving a basket from dried stalks. He looked like an herb collector, and his hands were covered with calluses from climbing ropes. The sacks on the ground were filled with herbs. Beside his feet was a small pile of hay, and on it lay a gray egg the size of the mouth of a bowl.

"Father, can we buy this egg? You said there is no ugly duckling right now, so we can hatch this one when we get home." Amy looked up at Mag as she pointed at the egg, her face full of anticipation.

Mag nodded, smiling. "Yes." The little thing had been disappointed enough times today. He wanted her to go back home in a good mood, so he turned to the herb collector and asked, "What is this egg?"

"Well, I'm not sure myself. I found it on a cliff yesterday when I was collecting herbs. Only birds can reach that place, so it should be a bird egg. It's very nutritious," the seller said with a smile.

"How much?" Mag's eyes brightened. If it was a bird egg, then it would be something like a swan when it hatched; besides, judging by its size, the bird might be even bigger than an ostrich, which would make a great ride for Amy after being well trained.

The seller smiled and scratched his head as he looked at Amy who was watching the egg with great interest. "I see the little girl loves it, so... three gold coins," he said.

"Fine. Here, three gold coins." Mag handed over the money. The herb collectors were risking their lives every day to climb cliffs. If this was truly a bird egg, three gold coins was not expensive at all.

"Thank you. Take this small basket with you, little girl. The egg will fit perfectly in it." The middle-aged man put the egg with the hay into the little basket he had just made and handed it to Amy.

"Thank this mister, Amy," Mag said to Amy quickly.

"Thank you, Mister." Amy took the basket merrily and carried it with her two hands. "Be good, ugly duckling. I will hatch you out very carefully," she whispered.

"You're welcome." The seller waved his hand, smiling. Then he turned to Mag, and said, "I have a little girl about the same age as her and she likes raising animals too. But she already has two monkeys, so I decided not to take this egg to her."

"I see. This little thing has been going on about raising an ugly duckling for several days. Hope she'll like it when it hatches." Mag gave him a sour smile, but when he looked at Amy, his eyes were full of love.

They left the herb collector's stall. Mag wanted to help Amy carry the egg, but she refused. She was carrying the basket with effort in front of Mag, making him worry about her dropping it.

Finally, they made it back after nearly half an hour. Amy put the basket gently on the stairs outside the door and sighed with relief. She turned to Mag, and said earnestly, "Father, thank you for buying this ugly duckling egg for me. I will take very good care of it."

"But that mister said it might not be an ugly duckling egg. It could belong to other birds," Mag said, smiling. He took out a handkerchief and wiped the sweat off her forehead.

Amy shook her head stubbornly. "No, I'm sure it's an ugly duckling egg. I'm going to hatch it and raise it. It will grow into a beautiful swan, and... and..."

Then Mag saw her swallow her saliva.

Chapter 32: Mag? My Father?

Mag felt a little sorry for the egg, but he could do nothing about Amy's obsession with the roast goose. It seemed he had to work hard and complete his missions to get the recipe for roast goose as soon as possible.

Of course, the recipe for the Peking Duck would be just as fine.

They opened the door and went inside. Amy put the little basket in a compartment under the counter. She crouched down and whispered a little something to that egg, and then closed the door carefully as if afraid of waking up the little creature inside the egg.

"Father, when will it hatch?" Amy asked as she looked at Mag, expectant.

Mag shook his head. "I'm not sure. Maybe next spring." He didn't know much about the hatching of birds'.

"That would be too long." Amy was a little depressed.

"Maybe it will hatch out more quickly if it's put in a warmer environment, like mother ducks hatching their eggs," Mag said quickly after thinking about it.

Amy's eyes brightened immediately. "Then what about Amy sitting on that egg too?"

Mag chuckled and shook his head. "No, that won't work. Amy, take that little blanket downstairs and use it to cover the egg. That should do."

"Okay," Amy answered happily. She ran upstairs quickly.

"Hope it's a swan egg. But it's quite unlikely," Mag muttered to himself. He went to the kitchen and poured two glasses of water.

Mag helped Amy wrap up the egg in the blanket. It was already 11:25 am and almost time to open his restaurant. He looked at Amy as she was crouching on the ground, whispering “ugly duckling, grow up quickly...” and considered getting a roast goose for her later today.

A few minutes later, at exactly 11:30 am, Mag went to the door, turned over the sign, and opened his restaurant formally.

Although still not many came here, the restaurant’s grand and different style truly fascinated some people. Two dwarves came, and then an orc, but when they saw the menu, they all shook their heads and left.

Mag had grown used to it. It was perfectly normal, though. Not all the customers liked Yangzhou fried rice; besides, they didn’t even know what this Yangzhou fried rice was. They would rather spend six gold coins on a large plate of roasted meat and a flagon of wine than spend them on something they knew nothing about.

Maybe only Mobai and his friends would come for lunch, Mag thought helplessly. This was his second day, and he had only sold eight plates in total. If he wanted to complete his mission, he had to sell 500 plates in the following nine days. It was not very encouraging.

Just then, Mag heard the sound of hoofbeats outside. He looked out and almost chuckled. It was not a horse, but a black donkey. On its back was a human knight in silver-gray boiled leather. He was so tall that his feet could almost touch the ground sitting on that donkey’s back.

The knight looked about 30 years old, his face square, his black hair tied up casually with a piece of gray cloth. He halted before the restaurant, holding reins in one hand and a longsword at his waist in another. He looked up at the signboard smilingly.

“Mamy Restaurant? Sounds like a good place. I’ll have my lunch here,” Conti Nicolas said to himself, smiling. He swung off his donkey and tied it to a tree. Then, he strode towards the restaurant and entered.

Mag was standing by the counter. He glanced at the knight’s sword with an emerald inlaid in it and smiled. “Welcome!”

“Hi, what do you have here?” Conti said to Mag, smiling. He didn’t look around the restaurant like others.

“There is a menu on the table. You can take a look first, sir.” Mag pointed at the black menu. He found this knight very enthusiastic, just as if nothing could trouble him.

“Thank you.” Conti seated himself and opened the menu with a smile. He froze for an instant when he saw only one dish on it, but his smile returned quickly. He looked up at Mag and said, “Owner, give me a plate of this Yangzhou fried rice.”

“Okay, please wait a minute.” Mag was a little surprised as he looked at this Conti who maintained a smiling face. After all, it was the first time that a customer had ordered after just one look at the menu. It seemed like he didn’t even need to think about it.

Mag remained very calm on the outside, though. He loved this kind of customers, of course. He didn't worry about him not liking his food. He nodded, smiling, and walked into the kitchen.

Conti put his sword on the table and took a look around the restaurant. "Looks good." He seemed in a good mood.

And then a little head appeared from behind the counter. "Hello, new customer," Amy said to Conti.

Conti jumped onto his chair in alarm, his sword half-drawn and his face serious and nervous.

Amy was also startled by Conti's reaction, but his shining armor and sword had really aroused her curiosity, so she revealed herself, and asked, "Are you a knight?"

When Conti saw a lovely little girl who was only three or four years old, he quickly slid his sword back into its sheath embarrassedly. Then he jumped down. "No, I'm a dragon slayer. I haven't killed any dragon yet, but some day, I'll put those evil bastards to the sword!" he said proudly, his head held high.

Mag looked over when he heard the noise and chuckled at Conti's words. In his predecessor's memory, there were many knights who wanted to slay dragons, and he had been one of them. However, unlike them, he had really killed a dragon before; more than one, actually.

"Whoa, amazing." Amy clapped her little hands and looked at Conti with adoration. Then she pointed at the longsword in his hand. "So you must have defeated many formidable opponents."

"I don't like fighting people. I like Mag Alex the most. He killed four wicked dragons and is one of the bravest and strongest knights on the whole continent," Conti said, smiling, his eyes full of excitement and adoration. Then he looked down at Amy. "If you like knights, little girl, you should like the ones like Mag Alex."

"Mag? My father?" Amy looked at Conti, a little puzzled.

Chapter 33: You Must Follow His Rules

"What?" Conti was taken by surprise. He followed Amy's gaze and looked to the kitchen. There he saw a lean Mag, who was busy cooking. He smiled and shook his head. "No. Their names may be the same, but Mag Alex is a mighty and proud knight. He would never cook in the kitchen; besides, he has no daughter."

Mag shrugged. Conti was not wrong. His predecessor would perhaps still have been a mighty and proud knight if that incident hadn't happened. He had never entered the kitchen, to say nothing of cooking.

Still, as he listened to his compliments, somehow he felt a little... good?

"My father's rainbow fried rice is very good. Father is the best in my eyes, no matter what you say," Amy said seriously as she looked up at Conti.

"Yes. I'm sure he is a great cook," Conti said, smiling. He resumed his seat, not arguing with Amy.

"Yes." Amy's smile returned.

The bells rang again. Mobai came in first, followed by two orcs. They were two meters tall, and each had a spiked club as thick as a man's thigh in their hands.

"Mobai, when did this fancy restaurant open? Do they have anything good?" Habeng asked. He was wearing a necklace with a ring of fangs around his neck, and his voice was so loud that Mag could hear it from the kitchen.

"It has just opened recently. Of course they have. That's why I've brought you here. I won't pay for yours, just for the record," Mobai said with a mysterious smile. Then he shouted at Mag, "Mag, I'm here again."

"You're much pickier than us. If you say it's good, it must be good. As long as they have meat and stuff to drink." Habeng nodded and didn't think much. Haga looked around curiously with a smile. He only grinned when they talked, and never spoke a word.

"Welcome." Mag had just finished processing the ingredients. The rice in the cooker was not ready yet. He walked to the door. "Please be seated and take a look at the menu on the table," Mag said, smiling.

Mag studied the two orcs quietly. They were each wearing a hide around their waists and a top also made of animal hides, showing their long black chest hair. They were a head taller than normal humans. They had brownish black skin, and their fangs were three centimeters long, reminding him of the orcs in the Warcraft immediately.

These two orcs should be brothers; they were so alike. The one on the left with a fang necklace had to be the grumpy one as the rightmost one was smiling innocently. He might be an orc, but he looked nice and harmless.

"I don't need to look at the menu. I have a lot of work today, so give me three plates of Yangzhou fried rice," Mobai said as he took a seat at his usual table. Then he looked at Amy and smiled. "Hello, little lady."

Amy nodded. "Hello, dwarf grandpa Mobai." Then she pointed at Conti. "He is a new friend. A dragon slayer," she said.

"Dragon slayer?" Mobai took a look at the young knight with surprise.

Habeng seated himself opposite Mobai. He smiled sarcastically as he looked at Conti. "Pfft, dragon slayer? He probably couldn't even beat a goblin." *He wears armor, but his sword hand has no callus. He is only a wealthy human with a fair face, I guess.*

"I want to be a dragon slayer, and I haven't fought with any goblins, so you can't say I couldn't beat one." Conti smiled as he looked at Habeng, seeming not caring about what he had just said.

"So you're saying you can beat me?" Habeng stood up and his extremely big muscles hunched, the spiked club in one hand. He stared at Conti with wide eyes.

Conti shook his head, smiling. "We haven't fought, so I don't think I can't beat you. But I won't fight you; I only fight dragons." He looked past Habeng's head and saw a painting on the wall, in which a giant dragon was belching flame. "That is what I aim to fight."

"You false knight, you have really pissed me off!" Habeng shouted, putting the club on his shoulder.

“Guys, this is a restaurant, not a fighting pit. Take it outside if you want to fight,” Mag said coldly as he walked towards the two angry people.

Mag was a little angry too. *The world without laws is much more chaotic than I've thought. They would fight each other for one insult or another. What if they wrecked the restaurant?*

Habeng turned to Mag and shouted, “Shut up!” In his eyes, this human must have sided with the knight.

“Habeng...” Mobai said with a sullen face. He had planned to bring two customers to please Mag and Amy, and hadn't expected this to happen. He felt so embarrassed as he tried to calm his grumpy friend down.

Haga was a little worried too. He tugged at Habeng's clothes and wanted to say something, but stopped.

Mag narrowed his eyes, but before he could say anything, Amy already shouted out.

“Don't yell at my father!” When their fight started, Amy was a little shocked. Now, she was standing in front of Mag, trying to protect him. She lifted her hand, and a bluish violet flame about half a meter high appeared immediately. It burned a white hole in the air.

“So hot!” Habeng's face changed. He jumped back and took a look at his left sleeve that had been curled up by the high temperature, and then at the flame in Amy's hand. He swallowed.

Such a gruesome fire! I could feel its heat from here! I might be burned to ashes if I took it directly, Habeng thought.

She might be a little girl, but she is already a powerful magic caster. She is even quicker at conjuring a flame than those old magic casters. And the temperature is more terrifying.

When Habeng had shouted at Mag, Conti already held his sword in hand. However, to his surprise, Amy appeared and summoned a flame. He gazed at it for a while and put down his sword. It looked like his help was not needed this time.

“Magic?” Mobai was also astonished. He hadn't expected that Amy could use magic, and that her flame would frighten Habeng.

“This is Father's restaurant. You must follow his rules, or Amy will get angry and set you on fire,” said Amy, acting like an elder. She gazed at Habeng as the flame grew smaller, turning into a little fireball.

Chapter 34: Nothing Can't Be Taken Care Of By A Plate Of Yangzhou Fried Rice

As the owner of the restaurant, Mag had wanted to say something to earn their respect. Then, he'd realized he needed not say anything. Their faces said everything. Amy's fire frightened them more than he had thought; it even terrified them.

And the fact that Amy had stepped before him and the words she had said warmed his heart. She was such a sweet daughter.

“Habeng, if you still consider me your friend, sit down and don’t make trouble here,” Mobai said solemnly as he looked at his friend. It would be a great loss if he couldn’t get his Yangzhou fried rice anymore because of his reckless friend.

Haga grunted something to his brother in their native language. It seemed like he was trying to tell him to stop.

Habeng looked at Mag, and then at the fireball in Amy’s hand, a little embarrassed. Amy’s fireball truly scared him.

However, it was Mag who scared him even more. *Even this little half-elf is this good; the owner must be even better.*

Yet he couldn’t sit down right now. If other orcs learned that he had been frightened by a little girl, they would make fun of him. He found himself in an awkward situation where he couldn’t stand nor sit.

Mag only had to look at Habeng’s face once to know what was on his mind. He wanted to chuckle. He hadn’t thought that he would be regarded as a master of magic.

Then he found it useful. This way, he could make this grumpy orc behave and keep his restaurant in order. He was even calmer now. He stroked Amy’s head and smiled. “Amy, this customer meant no harm. Put the fire away.”

“Okay.” Amy’s hand coiled into a little fist, and the fireball disappeared. Still, she looked at Habeng with hostility.

Habeng breathed a sigh of relief. He took a glance at Mag and found that he possessed unfathomable strength, and that he knew how to do business. *He knows better than to treat his customer like that.* Even in this Chaos City, quite a few people knew his name. Now he wanted to save his face by acting tough.

However, before he could speak, Mag looked at him and said, “Please keep it down, sir, and do not disturb other customers. And no fighting here, or you’ll be put on a blacklist and banned from eating here forever.”

“What?!” Habeng’s eyes went wide. This was the first time that he was told to keep his voice down in a restaurant. He was always so loud. He couldn’t take it anymore.

“Father said, ‘keep it down.’ You are too loud, and I’ll set you on fire if you keep doing that,” Amy said solemnly as she looked at Habeng. She held out her little hand and seemed to prepare to unleash her fire.

Subconsciously, Habeng wanted to step back, but his pride as an orc warrior stopped his feet. His anger was coiling inside him, but he couldn’t take it out on a little girl; besides, this little girl could use such a terrifying fireball magic. He was very angry, but he could do nothing but control his anger.

Haga took his brother’s arm and said something. Then he dragged him into his seat. He smiled at Mag apologetically. “So... Sorry, my... brother... bad... temper...” he said in a broken common language.

Mag nodded with a smile. "It's all right. Please look at the menu before you order. Call me if you're ready." This orc looked much better. In fact, he wasn't very angry just now. Orcs were known for their short temper. Nonetheless, this was his restaurant, and he had his own rules.

Then Mag nodded at Mobai and Conti, went into the kitchen, and started cooking for Conti.

"Father is very amazing. Wait and see." Amy gave Habeng a glare. She felt a little bored, so she went back to watching her egg behind the counter.

"Mobai, what do they have here exactly? They are too strict with customers," Habeng said to Mobai sullenly. He found himself using a lower voice this time.

Smiling, Mobai pushed the menu towards Habeng. "See for yourself." Seeing that Mag was not angry, Mobai was much relieved.

These two were Mobai's regular customers. Their tribe was one of few tribes which possessed a gold mine, and they were sons of the chief. A lot of orc warriors' weapons were made by him; they were 1,000 gold coins each, very expensive.

The two brothers always came to Chaos City to buy a lot of things, so they and Mobai became old friends. They often ate out together. *These two like good food as much as me, and they can eat much more.*

"Don't leave me in suspense. Let me see." Habeng took the menu in his hand and opened it. He couldn't believe his eyes. He closed the menu to check the cover, and reopened it again. Then he pointed at those little words and looked at Mobai with a strange face. "Mobai, what the heck? One dish? Just one? What is this Yangzhou fried rice? And it's sold at 600 copper coins?!"

"Good stuff, of course." Mobai looked at them and smiled. "This is the best thing I've ever had. Don't say I didn't tell you."

Habeng had been ignored by a young knight, threatened by a little girl, and told to keep his voice down by a human cook. He was already in a very bad mood.

Now he saw this menu. He suspected that Mobai had taken them to this restaurant to be ripped off. *I have ordered a lot of weapons from him these years, and now he is doing this to us?!*

Looks like I have to find a more honest blacksmith after he delivers this batch. We could buy a large plate of roast beef and a flagon of wine with 600 copper coins in the Fryer's. He shook his head. "It seems there is no meat in it. I don't want to eat this."

"M... Mag, I... I'd like one," Haga said to Mag in the kitchen in his broken language.

Mag turned his head and answered, "Okay. Please wait a minute."

Habeng's voice was much lower than before, but Mag still heard it. He curled his lip. *Mobai had said the same thing before. Now that he has decided to stay, there is nothing that can't be taken care of by a plate of Yangzhou fried rice.*

If there is, then two plates should do.

Chapter 35: You're A Real Piece Of Work

"Brother, let's go have some meat and drink. Don't eat here," Habeng said to Haga in their own language. If Haga ate the fried rice here, he would have to drink alone later.

"Would you like one too? I have a feeling that it'll be good," Habeng said with a smile.

Habeng shook his head. "Absolutely not. I'll die before I eat anything here." He used the common language this time, and said that in a tone that brooked no argument. He crossed his arms, ready to laugh at their fried rice.

Amy was sitting on the long-legged chair. "Someone will have to break his promise," she said softly as she looked at Habeng.

Habeng was a little embarrassed, and Amy's words made him nervous and irritated. "I swear on my club that I'll never eat here!" he said firmly.

Mobai read his mind with ease; it was written all over his face. He didn't say anything, though. And he didn't need to. He just needed to enjoy himself.

Conti looked in the direction of the kitchen with expectation too. His was still smiling as if that little incident had never happened.

Soon Mag came out, holding a plate of Yangzhou fried rice. He put it down before Conti and put a spoon on the edge. "Please enjoy." Slowly, the strong and pleasant aroma permeated the air.

What a good smell! Habeng's face lit up all of a sudden. The faint aroma was like a kitten clawing at his heart. He hadn't intended to turn, but after a while, in spite of himself, he moved his head slightly and gave a quick glance at the colorful fried rice in front of Conti from the corner of his eye.

"Smells good," Conti complimented as he looked at his fried rice, astonishment in his eyes. He had never seen anyone cook like this before.

Every grain of rice was coated by eggs perfectly. All the ingredients were cut into the size of the rice grain. Such incredible cutting skills! The grains were almost of the same size, like they had been measured. So many ingredients, and they were all cooked together with oil. The aroma was very strong. It was already making him secrete saliva.

He brought a spoonful of fried rice to his mouth. Different tastes melted in his mouth together, making him close his eyes. The eggs were so tender, the rice was so sweet, the shrimp had a special taste of the sea, and the winter bamboo shoots and tree mushrooms were so fresh. They all blended together in this mouthful, and the aftertaste was long and pleasant. It was divine.

Habeng watched him and swallowed in spite of himself. Then he realized what he had done and looked away immediately. Seeing that no one had noticed, he glanced at Conti from the corner of his eye again.

Mag curled his lip slightly. He had seen everything.

Amy was resting her chin in her hands, her expression reflective. Then, her eyes brightened as if she had suddenly seen through everything.

"It's very good!" Conti opened his eyes and gave a thumbs-up to Mag. Then he got back to eating his fried rice immediately. One spoonful after another, he didn't ever want to stop. *Little Black is very trustworthy. I've made a good choice coming here.*

Moreover, what was more magical was that after he ate the fried rice, he felt a warm current inside his body relieving his fatigue. It was like the recovery potion, but gentler. He felt comfortable, just as if many little hands were massaging his body.

Mag went back to the kitchen to cook for Mobai. It might prove to be a busy noon.

Habeng didn't know how many times he had swallowed his saliva. He had only glanced out of the corner of his eye in the beginning, but now he was staring at the Yangzhou fried rice before Conti, turning and leaning forward slightly as if he would pounce on Conti any minute.

Conti finished his first plate quickly. He took a look at the empty plate before him and lifted his head. "It's very good. Owner, please give me seconds," he said to Mag in the kitchen.

"Okay, please wait a moment," answered Mag. He picked up his pace.

"Looks... good." Haga looked expectant as he watched Conti finish his Yangzhou fried rice.

Despite himself, Habeng looked at Conti, and asked, "Is it really that good?"

Conti nodded, smiling. "I've never had anything better. It's a great loss if you don't try it." He felt even better now, and didn't take their little quarrel from before to heart.

Habeng took a look at that empty plate that was even cleaner than his face, and then at Conti's face. He felt his smile seemed pretty sincere. *He is not that bad save his big talk.*

Suddenly, Habeng was a little regretful as he reflected on what he had just said. He shouldn't have said it with such a certainty. *If I went back on it now, I would lose face and the little girl would definitely laugh at me.*

"Please enjoy." Mag walked out with Mobai's fried rice, and put it down gently before him.

It was fresh from the wok, still steaming. The chopped green onions on the top made the colorful fried rice even more appetizing. The strong aroma was tickling Mobai's nose.

Seeing as Mag was there, Habeng crossed his arms again and looked grim. However, in spite of himself, his eyes were drawn by the Yangzhou fried rice on their table, his nose sniffing vigorously.

"Thank you." Mobai had already brought a spoonful to his mouth, chewing with satisfaction. He had eaten a dozen plates by now, but he still believed he could eat it every day as he looked at the fried rice, savoring the pleasant aroma and the intoxicating taste.

Mag took a glance at Habeng who was moving his mouth, and then went back to the kitchen, wondering how long the orc would be able to endure. *Perhaps the next plate will make him give up.*

Habeng put his arms down as soon as Mag left. He watched while Mobai was eating quickly. "Is it really that good, Mobai?" he asked in a low voice.

"Why would I lie to you?" Mobai quirked his mouth and took another bite, feeling the warm current soothing his weariness in his muscles. It felt so comfortable that he wanted to call out.

Habeng watched Mobai's happy face, and couldn't take it anymore. "Let me try it," Habeng said as he bent his head over.

"Absolutely not!" Mobai took his plate away, fearing that he would take it by force. He pointed at the menu on the table. "Order it yourself."

"But..." Habeng looked at the menu, and then cast a furtive glance over his shoulder at Amy behind the counter, not knowing what to do. *I have sworn on my club, and I'll make a fool of myself if I order now.*

However, this Yangzhou fried rice smelled really good, and he couldn't hold back his desire to order one as he looked at Conti and Mobai stuffing themselves.

"If someone wants to order, Amy will have to pretend that she didn't hear what he has just said. After all, Father's rainbow fried rice is too good to say no to it. You're a real piece of work." Amy sighed as she turned around.

Chapter 36: It's Very Good!

"Owner, give me one plate!" Habeng called out to Mag as he rose to his feet suddenly.

Then he sensed that someone was looking at him unkindly, and immediately realized he had done something wrong. "Owner, I'd like a plate of Yangzhou fried rice," he repeated in a much lower voice.

"Okay. Please wait a minute," answered Mag. He found himself chuckling when he turned around. *He gave up his pride just to get a plate of Yangzhou fried rice.*

"Father is not mad this time, so I'll let it go." Behind the counter, a small fireball dwindled and died out as Amy clenched her little fist. No one noticed.

Mag was becoming quicker and quicker after he cooked for two days. He could process the ingredients and make a plate of Yangzhou fried rice in just five or six minutes.

"Your Yangzhou fried rice, please enjoy." Mag put the plate in front of Haga.

"Thank... you," Haga said with a smile. His eyes brightened when he took the first bite. *It's so marvelous, like nothing I've ever eaten.*

He tasted the eggs outside the rice first. *How did he do it? Even the swan eggs by the lake wouldn't be this soft and tender. The taste of the eggs is brought out by the rice. The sweet rice has combined perfectly with the eggs.*

Other ingredients are very tasteful too. The ham, which had been salted for many years, releases juice as I chew on it. The shrimp have a taste of the ocean, and the grain-sized mushrooms, winter bamboo

shoots, green peas, and green onions are so sweet. All the ingredients are combined perfectly, and together they create a unique taste, which lingers in the mouth long after I swallow.

Habeng was swallowing ceaselessly. "Brother, let me try it." He leaned close and looked at Habeng expectantly.

Habeng was the nicest brother he had, and he would normally give it to him when he found something good to eat.

"No." Haga took his plate and turned away from him, just like Mobai had done. His spoon clattered on the plate, and he stuffed himself quickly and unceasingly.

Habeng wouldn't give up that easily. "I am your little brother. You always give me something to eat," Habeng said, circling around him.

Habeng stopped eating and swallowed the fried rice in his mouth. "Because they are bad," he said to Habeng, smiling.

Habeng stiffened. He took a look at Haga, who was enjoying his fried rice, and then he resumed his seat, not feeling right. *Is this still my good old brother?*

After a little while, his mind was back on the Yangzhou fried rice again. He waited and waited, and finally, it was ready.

"Your Yangzhou fried rice, please enjoy." Mag put the plate down and stepped back.

Amy was standing beside Mag, blinking.

Habeng was totally attracted by his Yangzhou fried rice. Three people had enjoyed gourmet food in front of him, but he had had no choice but to watch. It had been a torture he could barely stand.

He snatched up the spoon and scooped a large spoonful from the middle. Its aroma was even stronger and more appetizing than the roasted meat's. He brought the spoon to his mouth. His eyes widened.

How can something taste this good?!

Different tastes were dancing on his tongue. He felt so good that it seemed his body and soul were screaming: eat, eat, eat!

One spoonful after another, he wanted to swallow the whole plate. He finished it in no time.

"Is it good, Loud Voice?" Amy asked Habeng.

Habeng held the plate in one hand and the spoon in another. He got a weird nickname suddenly, but still he nodded, smiling. "It's very good!"

"If you want to eat it again, do not be so loud, or we won't sell it to you." Amy sounded like a grown-up. She crossed her arms.

Habeng nodded quickly. "I won't. I promise!" He was not nearly as grumpy as when he'd first come. He could only think about Yangzhou fried rice right now. One plate was far from enough. He would regret it for the rest of his life if he got kicked out because of his loud voice.

Did the 600 copper coins, or his face, or his vow matter right now?

No. They didn't matter at all in front of such a plate of Yangzhou fried rice.

Of course, it was also because Amy was such a lovely and terrifying little girl. If someone else had said those words to him, he would pick up his club and fight to uphold his honor as an orc.

And he would strike himself first before he fought Amy.

Amy nodded. It seemed she liked Habeng's answer. She climbed onto the long-legged chair again and smiled at Mag cheerfully.

Mag chuckled and stroked Amy's head. The little thing was trying to maintain order. She was so adorable, and unexpectedly helped a lot. He went back into the kitchen.

"One more plate!" the customers called out over and over again, and Mag slaved away in the kitchen for almost a whole noon. The pleasant aroma brought more customers. They watched as Mobai, Habeng, Haga and Conti were stuffing themselves, intoxicated. Some even ordered a plate in spite of the high price, and after the first plate, they couldn't help but ask for seconds.

Habeng belched. "Owner, you must be a genius. How can you make something as good as this? We'll come again for dinner." After five plates, he was finally stuffed.

Mag put the fried rice before a customer and nodded, smiling. He felt so good to conquer the customers with his food.

"Five plates. Five six thirty. 30 gold coins please," Amy said to Habeng as she held out her hands.

Habeng smiled. "Little girl, we're together."

"Then it will be..." Amy cocked her head to one side and thought for a moment. "60 gold coins!" she called out delightedly just when Mag wanted to give her a hint.

"Here, six dragon coins." Habeng pulled the coins from his pocket and put them on Amy's hand. Then he rose from the table and reached out his hand. "Mag, right? I'm Habeng and this is my brother Haga. Sorry about before."

"Do you have another brother called Hacui¹?" Mag asked after he shook his hand gently.

"What?" the two brothers asked, wondering.

"Nothing. Please come again." Mag smiled awkwardly, and didn't explain.

Chapter 37: So, Why Can't I Start Crowdfunding?

It was already 1:35 pm when Mag showed the last customer out. In fact, one customer wanted another plate, but Mag turned him down politely. His opening hours were over, and he deserved some rest. Besides, he and Amy still hadn't had a bite.

"Father, we sold 24 plates at noon, and we have made 10 dragon coins and 44 gold coins. We have a lot of coins!" Amy clapped her little hands cheerfully as she looked at Mag, her eyes shining.

“24 plates?” Mag was also a little surprised. To be sure, he cooked for a whole noon, but he hadn’t expected to sell this many.

He was very glad that more customers had come at noon, and they would probably come for dinner. If they recommended this place to others like Mobai had done, perhaps even more would come in the evening.

Mag calculated that if this kept up, he could make 3,000 gold coins in less than ten days. Thus he stopped worrying about getting back to the disabled shape. He breathed a sigh of relief and watched as Amy counted the coins delightedly. “Amy has done a great job today. I’ll go make the rainbow fried rice for you. You must be hungry,” said Mag, smiling.

Amy nodded miserably as she brushed her stomach. “Thank you, Father. Amy’s tummy is flat from hunger,” Amy said with a twist of her mouth.

“It will be ready in no time.” Mag stroked Amy’s head. His heart ached a little as he strode towards the kitchen quickly. After a little while, he came out with the appetizing fried rice.

Amy ran to wash her hands. She dried them off, sat on the chair, and spooned a spoonful of fried rice. “Father has worked for a whole noon. You must be hungrier than Amy, so you have to eat the first bite. Then Amy will eat,” Amy said as she looked up at Mag.

He nodded. “Okay.” Amy’s sincere little face warmed Mag’s heart. He stooped down and ate it with a smile. “Now go ahead and eat. I’ll make another plate.”

Amy nodded meekly. She took the spoon and started eating happily.

After lunch, Mag cleaned the restaurant carefully. He wiped each and every table clean with a wet towel and then a dry one. Not a trace of any oil stain remained. Then he walked up to Amy, who was whispering to the big egg behind the counter, and said a few sweet words to make her sleep. Then he took a nap himself.

Mag and Amy had their dinner before they opened in the evening. Otherwise, they might not be able to eat until after 9 pm, which would be too late.

Mobai was waiting outside the door. Haga and Habeng came shortly after he opened, and a little while later, Conti arrived with his donkey.

Habeng had been very hostile towards Conti at noon, but now he nodded at him and reflected for a while. “I think maybe you really can kill a dragon. I’ve heard the best human knight Mag Alex disdains to fight humans unless in battle. Are you paying your respects this way?” he asked in a low voice.

Conti nodded, smiling. “Yes. He is the man I look up to and my aim. I’ll become a dragon slayer like him some day.” His eyes were shining with enthusiasm.

“Young man, dozens of young knights who came to my shop said the same thing to me. If you really intend to kill dragons instead of being eaten, you’d better hone your skills with your sword and get a proper ride. Mag Alex didn’t kill dragons on a black donkey,” Mobai said with a smile.

Conti shook his head, smiling. "Little Black is my old friend. He has been with me for many years," he said. "I'll go to the Town of Two Towers next month. I've heard that an evil red dragon is attacking the town again. I'd like to try my luck there..."

Mag listened to them talking about him as he cooked. He felt rather good because his legends were still catching on with others even though he was not a knight anymore.

Technically, it was his predecessor that they were talking about, but their souls and memories were intertwined to some extent, so it was not wrong to say those legends were his.

It was true that his ride was not a donkey, but a griffin, the only purple-striped griffin in the whole Roth Empire.

More customers came for dinner as Mag had expected. Old customers brought new ones. Some passers-by were also attracted by the grand restaurant; they couldn't help but order as they saw others enjoying the good food.

"Owner, one more plate!"

"Sorry, our opening hours are over. Please come back tomorrow." Mag showed the last customer out with a smile, turned over the sign, and closed the door. He let out his breath in a long sigh. His opening hours in the evening seemed to be a little too long.

"Father, guess how many plates of rainbow fried rice we have sold tonight?" Amy asked.

Mag pondered for a while, and said, "Er... 40 plates?"

Amy shook her head. She grabbed up a fistful of dragon coins excitedly. "No, 45 plates. We made 20 dragon coins and 70 gold coins today!"

"Then we've sold 71 plates of Yangzhou fried rice today. Not bad." Mag smiled happily. "That is 426 gold coins. Subtract the costs, and we have earned at least 213 gold coins."

Amy nodded. "Yes." Then she looked at Mag. "Father, your rainbow fried rice is so good, but why don't you make other dishes? I'm sure they are good too," Amy said, her face wondering and expectant.

Mag froze for an instant. Then he understood immediately as he looked at her face. She had probably grown tired of the Yangzhou fried rice.

To be sure, Yangzhou fried rice was good, but it was not very pleasant to eat it three times a day. Amy had to feel the same.

"Maybe after several days." Mag was also a little upset as he looked at Amy's face, but he had no choice. The roujiamo could only be unlocked after he completed this mission, and at the current pace, he needed at least six more days.

"I see." Amy was a little disappointed.

How can I get those 2,500 gold coins quickly? Mag thought as he looked at Amy. It was not a small amount of money. Then his eyes brightened suddenly. "System, can I start a crowdfunding campaign?"

“Please take your mission seriously and complete it the normal way. Make your way towards the God of Cookery steadily!” the system said grimly.

“Please repeat the mission’s objective,” Mag said quietly.

“The host has to buy 3,000 gold coins’ worth of ingredients with cash in 10 days. Completing the mission will unlock the new recipe—la zhi roujiamo; failing it will lead to strength -0.5.”

“So, why can’t I start crowdfunding?” Mag asked.

Chapter 38: Crowdfunding

The system fell silent for a long time. Finally, it said, “Please complete your mission in a normal way. Crowdfunding would cause serious problems for system!” The system seemed a little offended.

“I don’t care. I’ll start the crowdfunding campaign tomorrow and raise 3,000 gold coins. Then I’ll use the money to buy the ingredients.” Mag paused a moment. “3,000 gold coins, cash,” he said calmly.

“Deal,” the system answered instantly.

Mag curled his lip. *The system indeed has no principles.* He smiled and stroked Amy’s head. “I’ll make la zhi roujiamo for you the day after tomorrow, okay?”

“La zhi roujiamo?” Amy’s eyes lit up immediately. “What is that, Father?” she asked curiously as she looked at Mag.

“It tastes a hundredfold better than pancakes. You’ll know when you wake up that morning.” Mag kept her in suspense and didn’t say much.

“Then it must be very good.” Amy looked at Mag expectantly, thinking about the taste which was a hundredfold better than pancakes.

“Yes. Go wash up, change into your sleepwear, and lie in bed. I’ll tell you a story after I do the dishes and clean the restaurant.” Mag took back his hand.

“Okay.” Amy nodded meekly. She climbed down the long-legged chair, squatted on the floor beside the egg, and patted it softly. “Sleep well, ugly duckling, and hatch out quickly,” she said in a serious voice. Then she climbed the stairs with some effort on her short legs.

Mag chuckled and took a look at the big egg, feeling a little sorry for the little creature that had been named ugly duckling before it even hatched.

Mag put the dishes in the dishwasher, wiped the 16 tables clean, and mopped the floor. He smiled as he looked at his restaurant that was clean and tidy. He was a little tired, but he felt fulfilled. It could be considered his form of exercise, and he didn’t need any employees for now.

When Mag turned off the lights and went upstairs, Amy was already asleep in her purple bear sleepwear. Her beautiful eyelashes were slightly moving, and she looked like a little angel.

Mag put her little hand under the quilt and tucked her in. The little thing seemed very sleepy today.

“System, I want to buy a pair of pajamas, and make sure they have a big brown bear,” Mag said in his mind.

“I—”

“I’ll pay in cash.”

“Your sleepwear is in your wardrobe.”

Mag opened his wardrobe. Inside, he found a pair of fuzzy brown pajamas with a big bear on the front.

Mag nodded contentedly. “Good.” He picked them up and went to the bathroom.

He would never have worn pajamas like these in his previous life. Not for one second would he even entertain the idea of wearing them.

Yet, right now, he thought, *Amy will be very happy when she sees this in the morning.*

Mag took a bath, changed into his sleepwear, and walked to the bedroom. He pondered on the crowdfunding campaign. *This concept must be beyond the people in this world. Besides, the restaurant has only operated for two days. It’s not easy to raise such a large amount of money.*

After a while, Mag had a general idea. The customers that came to his restaurant these days could be seen as members of the middle class; they had some money. He had learned some information from their talks.

Mobai was one of the few dwarf craftsmen in Chaos City. His work was worth 1,000 gold coins each. He ate two plates of Yangzhou fried rice three times a day. He liked its taste, and probably also liked its effect on his muscles. He could become a long-term customer.

Habeng and Haga were an orc chief’s two sons, responsible for making purchases for their tribe. They were wealthy enough to afford the weapons for their warriors from Mobai, which made Mag think of the police in Dubai, who were equipped with supercars as their patrol cars.

As for Conti, he didn’t reveal too much information, but his accessories that he showed casually—except for his donkey—proved he was definitely wealthy, maybe a rich second generation.

He still remembered the elf lady from yesterday. Since she didn’t come back, she might not have much money in her pocket, so Mag didn’t count her in.

There were still a few others who had come today. Mag didn’t know much about them, so it would be too forward for him to ask them. Therefore, he didn’t count them in, either.

Mag had made up his mind. He took a look at his sleeping girl, turned off the light, and fell asleep quickly.

After a good night’s sleep, Mag opened his eyes in the morning and saw a little girl standing by his bedside. She was looking at him with a pleasant surprise, her little mouth slightly open.

“Our Amy woke up so early.” Mag sat up and stroked Amy’s hair, smiling.

“Yes. Father’s clothes have a bear like mine, and it’s a big bear. Amy’s bear is small. So it’s little bear and her father?” Amy asked as she pointed at the big bear on Mag’s sleepwear.

Mag nodded, smiling. “Yes, do you like it?”

Amy threw herself into Mag’s arms, rubbed his chest with her face, and narrowed her eyes in comfort. “Yes! I love it! It’s so soft and warm.”

Mag looked at Amy, who was leaning on his chest like a cat, and felt his heart was going to melt. He played with her for a while before he washed up and went downstairs with her.

When they were downstairs, Amy disentangled herself from Mag, stroked her ahoge, and looked at him. “Other fathers all tie up their daughters’ hair. When will you be able to tie my hair, Father?” She pouted.

“Um... I’ll learn.” Mag scratched his head awkwardly. It was a difficult problem for him. *If today’s crowdfunding campaign goes well, I’ll buy the experience bag for braiding hair first, and then I can do any hairstyles she wants.*

“Father, you can do it, I’m sure.” Amy clenched her little fist and gave him an encouraging look.

Mag nodded, a little amused. “Thank you.”

After he had breakfast with Amy, Mag took some paper and a pen and wrote six identical receipts, with each one being 500 gold coins. Then he checked them again carefully. By then, it was already time to open his restaurant, so he went to the door and opened it.

“Business was good yesterday, Mag.” Mobai came here first again. He took a seat at his usual table. “As always, two plates of Yangzhou fried rice,” he said, smiling.

Mag nodded with a smile. “It was all thanks to you. Please wait a second.”

Habeng and Haga arrived when Mobai had just seated himself. “Mag, we’re here again. Five plates each.” Then, hoofbeats came from outside.

Mag nodded with a smile, but he didn’t walk to the kitchen immediately. He waited until Conti entered. “Since the restaurant has just opened, we have a little trouble with money. So I plan to start a crowdfunding campaign for a new dish. Are you interested?” Mag asked as he looked at them.

Chapter 39: Mission Complete

“Crowdfunding for a new dish?” His customers were all feeling puzzled.

“Are you trying to borrow money from us, Mag?” Mobai asked after reflecting on his words.

Habeng’s eyes brightened. “New dish! Mag, are you planning to sell another dish?” Sure, the Yangzhou fried rice was good, but if he was given a chance to try other food that was as delicious, he would gladly take it.

Conti and Haga were looking at Mag, wondering. *This man is kind, but he always keeps his distance. He seems a little strange, wanting to borrow money from people that he has known for only one day.*

“Yes.” Mag nodded, smiling. “But the necessary appliances and ingredients cost money. I can make enough money this month, but I want to add this new dish to the menu sooner, so now I’m starting this crowdfunding campaign. You can look at it as lending out money to me. It’s completely up to you.”

Then Mag put the six receipts he had just prepared on the table. “One receipt is worth 500 gold coins. If you buy one, you’ll gain the prior right to try the new dish and get two plates of Yangzhou fried rice for free. This money can be used to pay for your expense in the restaurant, and at the end of the month, all the remaining money will be returned,” he continued.

“500 gold coins is not enough to buy 100 plates of Yangzhou fried rice, and we’ll stay in this Chaos City for a month. And more importantly, I’d like to try the new dish as soon as possible. Give me two receipts,” Habeng said as he took two receipts from the table brusquely. Then he put a purse on the table. “This is 100 dragon coins.”

“Thank you.” Mag took a look at the bulging purse and nodded with a smile, showing little excitement.

Mobai thought for a while and took two receipts too. “Then I’ll have two receipts too. If I eat six plates a day, this money could almost last me a month; plus, I get four plates for free.” Then he turned to Mag. “I don’t have enough money with me right now, Mag, but I’ll bring it to you after breakfast.”

Mag nodded. “Okay. Thank you.” He had raised 2,000 gold coins in an instant.

“I’ll have one as well. Please tell me in advance when you have a new dish on menu.” Conti smiled as he rose to his feet. He pulled two fistfuls of dragon coins from the purse at his waist and counted out 50 coins.

“I ... one.” Haga took the last one with a smile. “Pay for me. I’ll pay you back,” he said in another language as he gave his brother’s shoulder a pat.

“Don’t you have money?” Habeng asked, a little surprised.

“I like spending others’ money first,” Haga answered with a smile.

Habeng didn’t know what to say. He had no choice but to put 50 more dragon coins on the table, feeling his brother had become a little strange.

Amy looked at the shining dragon coins that were piled up like a little mountain. “Father, these coins are ours?” She looked at Mag, her little mouth slightly open.

“No.” Mag shook his head, smiling. “These customers lend us this money for our new dish. They just leave the money with us temporarily. This way, Amy will be able to eat the new food early.”

Amy cast Habeng an appreciative glance. “Loud Voice is very good today.” Then she started counting the coins cheerfully.

Habeng felt a little happy at first, but then he smiled awkwardly when he realized that maybe he shouldn’t be so happy.

Mag looked at his four customers with a smile. “Thank you all for your money. I’ll introduce my new dish quickly and notify you of the progress. You’ll be able to try the new dish in a day or two if nothing goes wrong.”

“No matter. I’m sure it’ll be very good.” Habeng waved his hand indifferently. Then, he asked out of curiosity, “Is there meat in it? Big pieces of meat. I like big pieces of meat.”

“There is meat and that’s all I can say right now,” Mag answered with a smile, trying to maintain an air of mystery.

“Anything where meat is involved. We’re hungry. It’s time to eat our breakfast.” Habeng was still a little curious, but seeing that Mag didn’t want to say much, he refrained from asking.

In fact, it was mainly because he had suddenly felt Amy’s stare.

Mag put the money in the drawer. Amy went back to counting the coins behind the counter after she said hi to the customers. She really loved counting coins.

Mag started cooking for them. *When Mobai comes back with 1,000 gold coins, I can buy enough ingredients and complete the mission.*

Although the flow of time in the test field had been very much slowed down, he still needed time to practice, so he had to wait until night. There was no need to rush.

Breakfast time was relatively not busy. Only two customers came besides Mobai, Conti, and the orc brothers. They were merchants, and had eaten their dinner here last night. They told Mag that they had to leave for the capital of the Roth Empire today and wouldn’t be back until after a few months, so they decided to eat the delicious Yangzhou fried rice once more before they left.

The opening hours in the morning were over. Mag was cleaning tables. Mobai came in while Amy was bending over a table doing nothing. He put a bag of coins on the table. “Little owner, here, 80 dragon coins and 200 gold coins,” he said to Amy with a smile.

“Really?” Amy’s eyes brightened immediately. She pulled the money bag towards herself with effort and started counting. She separated the dragon coins from the gold coins.

“I’ll take my leave then, Mag,” Mobai said to Mag.

Mag nodded. “Thank you for the money.” He watched Mobai leave, took a glance at Amy, who was counting the coins merrily, and got back to wiping tables.

Amy finished her counting when Mag was done cleaning. “Father, I counted 80 dragon coins and 200 gold coins. No more, no less,” Amy said to Mag.

Mag nodded, smiling. “You’ve done a great job, Amy. Let’s put the money in the drawer and recite the 9×9 table ¹ again.” Amy had almost mastered the 9×9 table after these few days.

“But, Father, I’ve found a secret. Please don’t be upset after you hear it. It seems some money in the drawer has been stolen. We had more when I’ve counted yesterday, but about half was missing this morning.” Amy looked at Mag, a little worried.

Mag was taken by surprise. He hadn’t expected that Amy had remembered his income every day, and that she was worried about him being upset after finding out that their money had been stolen. He smiled, and explained, “It was not stolen. We have to buy ingredients to make the fried rice, so some money in the drawer will be spent every day. But we’ll have more and more money.”

"I see." Amy's smile returned. "Then let's put the money in the drawer and buy a new dish," she said expectantly.

"All right." Mag helped Amy put all the money in the drawer, and then he said in his mind, "I want to buy 3,000 gold coins' worth of ingredients."

"You have bought 3,000 gold coins' worth of ingredients with cash. Mission complete," the system said instantly.

Chapter 40: You Can Call Him Black Coal

"Reward: the experience bag for la zhi roujiamo. Please enter the test field as soon as possible." Then, a glittering experience bag appeared in Mag's head.

"System, give me the experience bag for braiding hair too," Mag said in his mind. Since he had raised 3,000 gold coins and bought enough ingredients that could last him a long time, he'd decided to use the remaining 400 gold coins to buy the experience bag for braiding hair.

"System has to weigh whether or not supply you with other experience bags." The system seemed a little reluctant.

"I'll give you 120 gold coins—in cash," said Mag calmly.

"Done. The experience bag is in place." Then a blue experience bag appeared in his head.

"Money-grubber," Mag said in his mind. Then he touched the blue experience bag, and all of a sudden, an enormous amount of information flooded into his head. After a minute, it was done.

Now he had almost 100 ways of braiding hair in his head. Ponytail, two ponytails, chignon... He could do them all. The system's experience bags were really great.

120 gold coins was a little expensive, though. It was 12,000 yuan on the Earth. Nonetheless, it was really worth it if he could make Amy happy.

Amy gave Mag's sleeve a slight tug. "Father, let's go out. Customers won't come until noon, right?" Her face was full of anticipation.

Amy was at an age when most children were always playing, but she was able to stay in the restaurant helping her father collect money. She was pretty considerate for her age. Of course, Mag couldn't turn down such a request. He nodded with a smile. "No, they won't. But let's tie your hair first before we go."

"Really?" Amy's blue eyes widened. "But, Father, are you going to do my hair like what you have done it yesterday?" she said to Mag, a little dubious and worried.

She remembered what her father had done to her hair yesterday morning. He had made her hair look like a big bump on her head. She would definitely have been laughed at by other children if she had gone out like that that day.

Mag was a little embarrassed as he remembered his work. "No! It's just I have remembered a super pretty hairstyle just now. It will be perfect. Trust me one more time, please?" he said earnestly.

Amy looked at Mag's face for a while, and then nodded reluctantly. "Okay. I'll give Father another chance. If you fail again, then I think Teacher Luna would teach you."

Mag nodded, smiling. "Thank you." He needn't learn from Luna, though. He could do almost a hundred hairstyles right now, and maybe Luna had to learn from him.

Mag cut the purple hair band in two and started doing Amy's hair with a comb.

As to the hairstyle, Mag didn't have a hard time choosing at all.

There was only one true hairstyle for little lolis: twintails ¹ !

However, instead of normal twintails, Mag decided to tie Amy's hair into twintails and then braid them to show his skills.

Amy sat on a long-legged chair meekly. Every now and then, she looked up, her face both suspicious and expectant. The little mirror was put away by Mag; he didn't want her to see it until it was done.

Mag was not very nervous anymore now that he had the experience in his head. He was not very skilled, though. According to the steps, he split her hair, made two braids, and tied off the braids with two hair bands. Then, it was done.

Mag took two steps backwards and looked at Amy. Her silver hair had been changed into two exquisite braids. They were hanging on her front, with two little purple bows at the end. Between her beautiful face, her blinking blue eyes, and the black Gothic dress, she was really adorable.

Amy lowered her head and took a look at her braids. "Father, does it look good?" she asked, her face filled with expectation.

Mag didn't answer her question, but put a mirror in front of her. "See for yourself."

"Wow..." Amy looked at herself in the mirror, her mouth wide open. She blinked as if she could not believe her eyes. After a while, she turned to Mag, and said adoringly, "Father, this hairstyle is so beautiful. You're even better than Teacher Luna! You're so amazing!"

Mag nodded calmly. "It's a piece of cake. I can change your hairstyle every day. Come on, let's go." He lifted her down from the chair, untied his apron, and put several gold coins in his pocket. Then he took her hands in his own and walked out.

"Okay." Amy looked up at Mag as she played with her braids. *Father is able to do anything; he is so incredible.*

Mag stayed very calm while his little girl was looking adoringly at him, but on the inside, he was really delighted. The 120 gold coins was really worth it.

Amy stopped at the magic potion shop. "Father, look! That stupid bird is wearing leaves as clothes. It seems he has no feathers," Amy said in surprise as she pointed at the birdcage.

Mag turned to look in surprise. That stupid crow was still alive, and had a new cage.

Only the feathers on his head survived Amy's fireball; two leaves were covering his important parts like a loincloth. He was staring back at them, very hilarious.

“Lowly... You two, you have burnt down my palace and destroyed my precious robe. What do you want now?!” the crow said angrily, but there was weakness in his voice.

“Stupid bird, be good, or I’ll set you on fire,” Amy said grimly as she watched that crow.

“Stop, stop, stop!” The bird jumped nervously on his stick. Then he held out his wing, and said, “Well, seeing that you’re reasonably adorable, I’ll allow you to address me as Fama Odin Ben. You don’t need to bow when you see me, and don’t worry about my robe and palace anymore.”

Mag wanted to chuckle as he looked at the crow that was forced to compromise. It seemed he was afraid of Amy too.

“You can call him Black Coal,” the green parrot cut in. Then she nodded at Mag and Amy. “And call me Sunny, please.”