

Stay At home 311

Chapter 311: Are You Still Alive?

“Is this the legendary cannon?” Mobai stared at the diagram for a long time before looking up at Mag with a peculiar expression on his face. No matter how he thought about it, it didn’t look very legitimate. He couldn’t imagine how that thing was supposed to be capable of launching a projectile.

Mag was also a little speechless as he looked down at his own diagrams. He hadn’t drawn anything in many years, and his skills had become very rusty. That cannon diagram really... wasn’t all that great.

“This is just a rough sketch. Let me give you some details on how it’s supposed to work.” Mag remained calm and collected as he turned the page. From there onward, he drew his diagrams with much more focus.

The diagrams that Mag was drawing were of the simplest cannon imaginable. There was no aiming mechanism or wheels, and it used the simplest front-loading method. It was basically just a cannon barrel supported by a frame. The concept was very simple to understand, and it would be relatively easier to create one as well.

Of course, the main limiting factor was that Mag didn’t know much about cannons himself, so he wouldn’t be able to draw any complex sketches.

However, he was familiar with the mechanisms of firearms.

The only problem was that firearms were a lot more difficult to create compared to cannons. There was an extremely high degree of precision required, and crafting a powerful gun or rifle was far more complex than creating a powerful cannon. It was best to learn to walk before trying to run.

Mag had once been able to draw internal combustion engines from scratch, so after getting serious, drawing a diagram of a crude cannon was a piece of cake for him.

“The concept behind a cannon is actually very simple, but it’s imperative that a sealed space is made for the explosives in order to create the most propulsion force. The instantaneous power unleashed by the explosion will determine whether it can kill a giant dragon. As for the specific details...” Mag elaborated on the mechanism of a cannon to complement his diagrammatic explanation.

Mobai was very skeptical at first, but his eyes gradually lit up. His expression became more and more reverent as he looked at Mag, and it was as if he had discovered a brand-new continent.

“So that’s about it. The key to the cannon is its structural integrity. That determines its range. You’re a blacksmith, so you should know more about that than I do.” Mag put down his pen. There were already three exemplary cannon diagrams on the sheet of paper laid out in front of him, complete with annotations.

“Mag, you must be a genius.” Mobai stared at the diagrams for a while before looking up at Mag with reverence in his eyes.

Mag's cooking skills had already conquered his stomach, and now, he had been won over by Mag's brilliant mind.

Inventing such powerful explosives had been a pleasant surprise, but he didn't know how to use them. However, Mag pointed out a feasible direction for him.

Using the powerful propulsion force of exploding gunpowder to launch projectiles, a barrel to create a sealed space, and a guiding structure to give the projectiles proper direction. What kind of genius could think of those ideas?!

"I'm not a genius, I just have a bit more knowledge in these areas." Mag shook his head with a smile. It appeared that Mobai had understood the ideas that he was trying to convey. As for what type of cannon he would be able to create, that was not something for Mag to worry about. The process was most likely going to be a long and arduous one, with many failed prototypes along the way.

Furthermore, none of this could go ahead before the issue of the instability of the explosives was rectified.

As a man who could create bullets on his own, Mag was actually quite interested in explosives. However, using powdered beast cores to enhance the power of explosives was completely outside his realm of expertise.

Thus, Mag refrained from making suggestions. If he were left to his own devices, perhaps he would be able to create some sort of super terrifying explosives.

They were living in an alternate world, after all, and bullets made using normal gunpowder probably couldn't even hurt the ordinary monsters here. A powerful fire-type magic caster was more effective than a normal cannon, so cannons were almost redundant unless an extremely devastating one could be made.

The beast core bomb that Mobai had unintentionally invented opened Mag's eyes to certain possibilities. Regardless of whether cannons or firearms were used, as long as the explosives were powerful enough, they could perhaps really pose a threat to giant dragons.

"Everything has to be crafted in one piece, and it must be able to withstand the force of the explosion from earlier. That won't be easy to create, but I'll be sure to look into it." Mobai picked up the diagrams on the table, and extended a gesture of gratitude toward Mag.

Mag shook his head with a smile before issuing another reminder, "No need to thank me. Just remember not to conduct your experiments at home anymore. Otherwise, I won't feel safe as your neighbor."

As Mobai continued with his experiments, his bombs would only become more and more powerful. Mag didn't want to die in one of those explosions in his sleep one day.

"I'll make sure not to do it ever again." Mobai hurriedly waved his hands.

Right at that moment, a loud voice erupted outside. "Mobai? Are you still alive?"

Mobai took a glance at the door, and an apologetic expression appeared on his face as he said, “Those must be the people who are here to fix the shops. I have to go now, Mag. I really do apologize for what happened today.”

“No problem.” Mag nodded. Mobai was his neighbor and the first customer at his restaurant, so Mag didn’t want to be overly critical toward him.

A magic cannon should be very interesting. A smile appeared on Mag’s face as he looked at Mobai’s departing figure. He was looking forward to seeing one of Mobai’s cannons blast a giant dragon out of the sky.

Mag picked up the notepad and glass on the table before making his way toward the kitchen. He put on his apron, and began to prepare the ingredients required for the breakfast service.

As soon as he gripped his knife, a numbing sensation shot up the fingers on his right hand, extending all the way to his right shoulder. The high-intensity training that he had put himself through the night prior was still bothering him a little. However, it had clearly been beneficial to him as his reflexes and reaction speed had both improved.

After chopping up some ingredients, Mag’s hands suddenly came to a still. He looked at the knife in his hand, then down at the chicken drumstick on the chopping board, and thought to himself, *I spend the majority of my waking hours chopping ingredients and cooking dishes. Every single motion is repeated countless times, so if I can incorporate my sword practice into this, won’t I be killing two birds with one stone?*

Mag took half a step back, and chanted in a light voice, “Slash.”

He swung his knife down, and the chicken drumstick was cut in half, with an extremely clean and even incision. However, a faint groove had also been sliced into the chopping board.

Not bad, but I need to learn to control my power output. Mag nodded to himself before repeating the same motion. He gradually began to speed up, and the drumstick was sliced into small cubes beneath the blade of his knife.

At the same time, he was constantly adjusting the angle and power of his strikes, slowly gaining greater proficiency over time. He also began to execute his movements more and more quickly, and before long, he had become so fast that one could only see a burst of golden light flash past before an entire drumstick was sliced into even cubes.

Chapter 312: The Aden Square Food Competition

“Today is the first day that the Aden Square food competition will be released. I wonder if some good new restaurants will appear on the poll.”

“That poll is just there to swindle those foodies who aren’t regulars here. The top 10 hasn’t changed for three years, and even the top 30 has always consisted of the same restaurants. It’s just a formality at this point, so there’s really no point in looking at it.”

“Exactly! Even the top 30 has remained completely unchanged for the past few months, let alone the top 10. I went to the trouble of dining at all of the top 30 restaurants, only to discover afterward that many of them are actually inferior to those ranked outside the top 50.”

“It’s getting worse year by year. About two decades ago, the Aden Square Aden Square food competition was actually worth consulting. All the restaurants that can make it onto the poll are worth having a taste, and the ones in the top 10 all serve top-of-the-range cuisine. At the very least, people were satisfied with the rankings given, and felt them to be justified, but now... Sigh...”

There were many people gathered in front of the central magic screen in the Aden Square. All of them were waiting for the updated rankings to be broadcast at 7am. Most of them were foodies who wanted to see if there were going to be any new restaurants, but there were also restaurant employees who had been sent there by their bosses.

A server wore a fawning smile on his face as he stood beside a middle-aged man in a set of long pork-belly-colored robes. The server asked, “Boss, our Ricky’s Rotisserie should still be in the top 30, right?”

“Of course! Our Ricky’s Rotisserie has occupied number 30 on the Aden Square food competition for three consecutive months. Our food is adored by our customers, and this time, our goal is not just the 30th spot. We are going for 29th this time!” Ricky replied with a smug voice. He intentionally raised his voice by an octave, and the triumphant smile on his face grew even wider as he sensed the envious gazes being directed toward him.

As a board member of the Chamber of Commerce, Ricky’s Rotisserie was guaranteed a spot in the top 30. Even though he had to spend a lot of money to secure that position, the customers it brought to his store resulted in far more profit than expenditure.

Following two consecutive months in the top 30, profits had already doubled for the rotisserie, and if they were to claim the 29th spot, their profits would be sure to rise again. With that money, they would be able to purchase the shop next to them and expand the restaurant. His business had been stagnant for 10 years, but there was finally hope.

That was the nature of business. In the Aden Square, it was very difficult for a restaurant to stand out with great food alone. The advertisement effect of the Aden Square food competition wasn’t as pronounced as it once had been, but restaurants which claimed spots in the top 30 still benefited greatly.

Of course, the rankings had pretty much become a money-making tool for the Chamber of Commerce. Aside from few traditional stalwarts, the rest of the top 50 were all board members of the Chamber of Commerce. Competition for the rankings was very fierce every month, and that was also just a part of business.

Look at those idiots. They take so much care when placing their votes, but what does it matter? Will good food really secure a high ranking? The system is no longer the same as it was two decades ago. Ricky looked at the expectant customers around him with a hint of a mocking sneer on his face. He looked at all of the workers who were busy gathering statistics, and raised his chin proudly. He was brimming with confidence.

Arvin prodded Rood, and asked, “Rood, what rank do you that restaurant will claim?”

“In my heart, the top four spots should all belong to Mamy Restaurant.” Rood paused momentarily before continuing, “However, the scale of his restaurant and his attitude toward cuisine will limit the number of votes he receives. Perhaps one or two of his dishes will make it into the top 50.”

“Top 50 on the first try? Is the food really that good?” Arvin was a little surprised. Even though both of them were workers, no one knew what the results would be until the votes were tallied.

“I strongly suggest you go taste their roujiamo and sweet tofu pudding. Even though it’s a bit expensive, the exquisite flavor is well worth the price,” Rood suggested with a smile.

“Alright, seeing as you’re constantly going on about how good their food is, I’ll be sure to pay them a visit this month after I get paid.” Arvin nodded with a hint of anticipation in his eyes. One had to realize that Deputy President Robert very rarely gave his critique on a restaurant’s food. However, he had advocated for the savory tofu pudding the day prior.

“Gjerj, what rank do you think Mamy Restaurant will claim?” Harrison was trying his best to force open his eyes, which had been squashed into a narrow slit by his flabby face, as he attempted to find Mamy Restaurant on the rankings.

“Just from their food alone, they should dominate the top five. However, there are many other factors at play, so it’s hard to say. Perhaps they’ll make it into the top 30,” Gjerj mused.

As veteran foodies of the Aden Square, they were well past the stage where they relied on the rankings to find good food.

However, they had voted for Mamy Restaurant the day prior, so they stopped by to have a look. The restaurant would only open at 7:30 anyway, so they could take a quick glance at the rankings, and have something to talk about when lining up for food.

Many more of the gathered spectators also had the same idea in mind. Even they didn’t quite understand why they cared so much about a particular restaurant’s ranking.

Gjerj was a little angry as he exclaimed, “30? If they don’t make it into the top 10, then I’ll use my foot to cast votes from now on! The rankings have become more and more unsightly in the past few days! If you want to find a good restaurant, you have to start looking below number 50. However, that doesn’t really matter now. Mamy Restaurant is enough for me; I’m not sure I could stomach another restaurant’s food ever again.”

“Don’t let the other restaurant owners hear you say that. Otherwise, they’ll give you a thorough beating.” Gjerj chuckled. He looked at the restaurants on the rankings, and couldn’t help but shake his head.

Aside from the few aforementioned traditional stalwarts, many of the high-ranking restaurants could only talk the talk, but not walk the walk. Their food couldn’t even compare to the one of the restaurants that were ranked below 50.

“It’s almost time.” A voice suddenly erupted in the crowd.

Everyone raised their heads upon hearing that, and turned their attention to the first magic screen. The top 30 would appear on that screen, and those restaurants would also be printed on the first page of the Delicious Cuisine Magazine, which was released by the Food Association.

Ricky had a wide, confident smile on his face. He was going for the 29th spot this month. He had already paid the required fee, and all that was left for him was to bask in the envy and congratulations from others. That was why he had woken up early to arrive in the square.

One of the workers stepped forward with a serious expression, and placed a rhomboid magic crystal in a slot located at the center of a black pillar, which was in turn situated in front of the magic screen.

A blue light appeared, and the screen turned black before words began to appear upon it.

“29th place, Mamy Restaurant! Braised chicken and rice!”

“30th place, Mamy Restaurant! La zhi roujiamo!”

Cries of surprise and elation erupted among the crowd.

Ricky’s smile instantly froze on his face.

Chapter 313: I Wish You Good Luck

“Th... th... that’s impossible!”

Ricky looked at the last two rows of text on the magic screen, and his hands were trembling.

The 29th place that he had dreamed of was gone, and even the “guaranteed” 30th place had been stripped away from him!

Furthermore, it was the same restaurant that had dealt him those two heavy blows, a restaurant that he had never even heard of!

Just a day ago, he received personal confirmation from Secretary Mars that Ricky’s Rotisserie was guaranteed a spot in the top 30.

But what was going on now? A restaurant that he had never heard of had taken two places in the top 30 out of the blue, banishing Ricky’s Rotisserie to the 31st place!

The envious expressions on the faces of those around him all turned into mocking sneers; the stark contrast was very difficult for Ricky to accept.

“Boss... W-what happened?” The worker was also completely dumbstruck at the sight of Ricky’s Rotisserie, which was first on the second magic screen.

Some of the people around Ricky were looking at him with gloating eyes. There were many restaurant owners who had heard Ricky boast about his assured spot in the top 30 among them, and it was very satisfying for them to see him take such a fall.

All those who owned restaurants in the Aden Square knew that the Chamber of Commerce was manipulating the rankings. They were all very angry about it, but the opposition was rich and powerful, with strong ties to the Catering Association, so no one dared to say anything.

However, a Mamy Restaurant had appeared out of the blue with two dishes in the top 30, successfully breaking the stranglehold being exerted by the Chamber of Commerce. Even though it wasn't their own restaurants that had reached the top 30, all of the owners were still struck by an indescribable sense of satisfaction.

"Hmph, that Mamy Restaurant must have played some dirty tricks to get ahead of us! I'm sure the Catering Association will give me a proper explanation for this." Ricky harrumphed coldly as he tried to calm down. He looked at the last two lines on the first screen, and his expression became even more determined as he said, "I've never even heard of that name before, and they've never appeared on the Aden Square food competition. How did they suddenly get two dishes in the top 30? If this is an accurate representation of their food, then I'll strip naked and streak around the Aden Square for an entire lap!"

"What the f*ck?! Only 29th? How did the braised chicken and rice not claim the top spot? What kind of bullsh*t ranking is this?!"

"Roujjiamo should be claiming the top spot! Taking a bite of it lets you experience the true meaning of life, and allows you to rediscover your burning passion! How could it only be ranked at number 30?"

"Those two at least made it into the top 30. The breathtakingly unforgettable sweet tofu pudding is ranked at number 99! That's absolutely unacceptable! It's an insult to my faith!"

"The sweet tofu pudding shouldn't even be on the rankings board! Anyone with a brain knows that the savory tofu pudding is better, but it's only claimed the 100th spot! Which one of the dishes ahead of it can compare to its delectable flavor? They're forcing me to vote with my feet!"

"I love the Yangzhou fried rice the best, and I'm very angry that it's only at number 72. I've tasted all of the other dishes on the rankings board, but nothing compares to the Yangzhou fried rice. This rankings board is a load of bullsh*t!"

Everyone erupted into a frenzy after the rankings were released. Aside from the restaurant owners that were lamenting their exemption from the top 100, the loudest bunch was the Mamy Restaurant customers. None of them were satisfied with the rankings that had been presented.

In particular, when they saw the sweet and savory tofu puddings, which were number 99 and 100, respectively, they were all absolutely furious. The only reason why everyone was still repressing their rage was because the sweet and savory factions were all split up, so no one knew who their allies were.

"The top 30 is basically the same as last month, but an unknown restaurant claimed the last two spots. The vote was held by the Catering Association, so there should be no issues. Looks like that restaurant will be the most prominent black horse on the rankings board."

"That's not necessarily the case. Perhaps that restaurant's name will be wiped off the rankings board tomorrow. Everyone knows that you can make it onto the board if you pay enough money, but the Catering Association can't make it too obvious. They have to protect their reputation as well."

“The Catering Association has a reputation? They lost all of it 15 years ago!”

A few of the bitter restaurant owners banded together and conversed in low voices.

Within the crowd, there was a fine and delicate young man with free-flowing red hair. Smiling, he said, “If my ears serve me right, many people seem to be arguing about Mamy Restaurant. To have so many customers take pride in the restaurant suggests that it’s no ordinary establishment. I believe that it will indeed be a black horse, one that can stir up the entire rankings board.”

Everyone fell silent upon hearing that, and began to listen to what everyone around them was arguing about. Soon, their expressions showed they became very intrigued.

They didn’t know what this savory and sweet tofu pudding were, but what they could confirm was that everyone was indeed arguing about Mamy Restaurant.

Furthermore, they were all very vehement about their ideas, but there was one unanimous opinion that united everyone: the rankings were too low!

One had to realize that this was a restaurant that had made it onto the rankings board for the first time ever. Not only that, but they had five dishes in the top 100, among which two were even in the top 30! And yet, those people were still complaining that the rankings were too low?

Even Dukas Restaurant, which had claimed the top spot with their whole roast lamb, only had a second dish at number 38, and three dishes in total in the top 100.

Could it be that that restaurant hired these people to stage a fake argument? That was the first thought that flashed through everyone’s mind.

No! That’s the boss of the largest textiles shop in the entire Aden Square, that infuriated man who was as red as a beetroot was the boss of the gold shop, that man with his sleeves rolled up is from the Gray Temple, and there’s also an official from the City Lord’s castle... How can those people be hired as actors?

Soon, everyone began to identify those Mamy Restaurant customers. They were all tycoons or people very high in status, people that would never even bother to visit the average restaurant unless that restaurant was run by the city lord’s son-in-law.

All of those nobles were frantically arguing over the same restaurant, so it was no exaggeration to refer to it as the most prominent black horse on the rankings board.

“Hmph, let me see what kind of backers this restaurant has. How dare they fix the rankings so blatantly? I’m going to expose them for what they are, and show the customers that not everyone can make it onto the Aden Square food competition, let alone the top 30!” Ricky squeezed his way out from within the crowd with a thunderous expression. He looked around before plucking out his worker by the collar, and asked furiously, “Where is this Mamy Restaurant?”

“I... I don’t know.” The worker had no clue.

“Go west along the Aden Square all the way to the end and you’ll find it. If you want to start some trouble for them, then I wish you good luck,” Harrison said with a smile.

Chapter 314: Lord of Ice Urien!

“Boss, the rankings board has already been updated, but...” Yabemiya immediately blurted out after entering the restaurant, but her words suddenly faltered as she caught sight of Mag.

Mag was holding a platter with four bowls of tofu pudding on it, and his eyes lit up upon hearing that. He turned an expectant gaze toward Yabemiya, and asked, “So? Did our restaurant’s food secure some good rankings?”

Even though it was only the first day that the rankings board was released, that set the tone for the days to come. The restaurant had set a new record high in profits the day prior, and that was a lofty mark that would be difficult to exceed unless he released new dishes or became more powerful.

Amy, who held Ugly Duckling, was full of confidence as she said, “Father’s food must have taken all of the top spots! It’s the best food!”

“Um... I’m sure there must have been an error with the voting process. Boss’ food is clearly the best, a hundred times more delicious than the rest, but... but...” A difficult expression appeared on Yabemiya’s face, and she averted her eyes from Mag’s expectant gaze. She wrung her hands together and desperately wanted to console him, but she couldn’t find the words to do so. Her cheeks were completely flushed, and she didn’t know what to say anymore.

Sally walked in. She took a glance at the verbally constipated Yabemiya before informing, “Braised chicken and rice was number 29, la zhi roujiamo was number 30, Yangzhou fried rice was number 72, sweet tofu pudding was number 99, and savory tofu pudding was number 100. Our restaurant has five dishes in the top 100.”

Sally’s expression was also a little strained. In her eyes, Mag’s food was the best in the world. Such delicious food should dominate the top five on the rankings board. Even though she had never tasted the savory tofu pudding, she was certain that it was most definitely good enough to claim the fifth spot.

Yabemiya and Sally both appraised Mag with concerned looks. Even they were feeling quite wistful, so Mag had to be very dejected. They could imagine how terrible it had to feel to cook such delicious food, only to receive no acknowledgment and respect that he deserved.

“Father, are you alright?” Amy was also quite concerned about Mag.

“The braised chicken and rice was ranked 29? And the roujiamo also made it into the top 30? All five of our dishes made it into the top 100?” Mag was elated after hearing Sally’s report.

“Hmm?”

Yabemiya and Sally looked at Mag with puzzlement and surprise. They had thought that he would be very dejected, but it appeared that he was very pleasantly surprised instead.

“That’s right. That was today’s rankings board. It should get updated at 7am tomorrow,” Sally confirmed with a nod.

“That’s great! Seeing as we achieved such good results on the first day, we have to maintain this standard. At the very least, we have to ensure that the braised chicken and rice and roujiamo remain in

the top 30.” Mag nodded with a content expression. He was not putting up a strong front and feigning his elation.

He was a bit more knowledgeable about the Delicious Cuisine Rankings than Sally and the others. The rankings were decided according to the number of votes given, so just having delicious food was not enough. Without a sufficiently large customer base, even if all of their customers gave them five-star ratings, it would be very difficult to secure good rankings.

Compared to the other large restaurants, Mamy Restaurant had a far smaller customer base. As such, having two dishes in the top 30 was already a result that went beyond his expectations. Even though those two dishes only just made the cut, he didn’t really mind, as he only wanted to complete the system’s top 30 mission.

Yabemiya and Sally were both very confused. They were unable to understand why Mag wasn’t angry, but was quite ecstatic instead.

“Come and have some breakfast. Due to your exceptional performance of late, from this day forth, an extra tofu pudding will be provided as part of your morning work meal.” Mag didn’t bother to explain anything as he placed the tofu puddings one by one onto the table. He then looked at the two of them with a smile, and asked, “What else would you like this morning?”

“I want a roujiamo,” Yabemiya said as she raised her hand.

“I want a Yangzhou fried rice.” Sally was full of anticipation.

“Alright, coming right up.” Mag nodded with a smile before turning toward the kitchen.

Yabemiya and Sally looked at each other, only to find that their joy was mirrored in one another’s eyes. Nothing was more blissful than being able to enjoy such delicious food first thing in the morning.

...

At the entrance of the magic potion shop, Urien held a handful of grain, and was feeding Black Coal. He heard the sound of approaching footsteps, but he didn’t turn around as he said, “There’s water in the room; feel free to help yourselves.”

“Thank you for saving us.” Xixi and Lulu bowed deeply toward Urien in unison.

Urien slowly turned around and appraised them with a solemn expression.

“You two are dryads,” he said in a deep and indisputable voice.

Xixi and Lulu’s expressions changed at the same time, and Lulu stepped forward to shield Xixi. Both of them stared at Urien with nervous expressions.

“Don’t be so tense. I may not be a good person, but I’m not a bad person, either.” Urien tipped the grain in his hand back into a little jar, and sat down in a lounge chair. He looked at the dryad couple with slightly narrowed eyes, and asked, “What relationship do the two of you share with Freuden?”

“The Great Dryad? You know Master Freuden?” Xixi’s eyes immediately lit up as she emerged from behind Lulu.

Lulu was also quite surprised, but he still appraised Urien with a hint of caution in his eyes. They were the only two dryads left on the Norland Continent, so very few people would be able to identify them, and even fewer would know the name of the Great Dryad.

“I do. Back when that old man was about to die, he asked me to help him find two younglings. He said that those two will be the hope of the dryads. Seeing as the World Tree is in your body, you two must be the ones he was referring to.” Urien nodded as he turned his gaze on Xixi.

Xixi and Lulu’s expressions changed again. They were already very surprised that he was able to identify them as dryads, but they were even more stunned that he knew about the World Tree. The World Tree was the final hope of the dryads, and they had never told anyone about it.

“Freuden asked me to give this to you.” Urien reached for a little green box that was about the size of a hand, and gestured for Xixi to take it as he said indifferently, “My name is Urien. Perhaps you two have heard my name before.”

“Lord of Ice Urien!”

Lulu and Xixi’s eyes widened in unison as they stared at the hunched old man that was lying in the lounge chair.

Chapter 315: Inheritance

Shock lingered in Xixi and Lulu’s eyes. Even though they had been in hiding on the continent for over 100 years, they were magic casters themselves, so they had heard of all of the most renowned figures in the magic world. In particular, they were quite familiar with the infamous fight between fire and ice.

Now, the legendary Lord of Ice was sitting right in front of them.

They had experienced Urien’s terrifying ice magic the night prior, but neither of them made the connection between him and that legendary magic caster.

However, they didn’t have time to marvel at Urien’s identity, as their attention had been drawn to the small green box in his hand. Xixi hesitated momentarily before striding forward and accepting the box, upon which tears immediately welled up in her eyes.

The box was a little antiquated, and there was a string of peculiar symbols lining its surface. The symbols appeared a little jumbled and haphazardous, but they struck Xixi and Lulu with a strong sense of nostalgia.

That was the language of the dryads. Those were symbols that were unique to them, and they had never seen those symbols ever since they had left the Night Forest over a century ago.

Xixi gently ran her finger over the signature on the lower right corner of her box. She was excited yet grief-stricken as she said, “It really is the Great Dryad.”

“He gave it to me over 100 years ago. There should be a special dryad seal on it; I’ve never opened the box,” Urien said.

Xixi nodded, and quickly scanned the text on the box with her eyes. She turned her left palm upward, and a small seedling with only a single green leaf at its tip appeared in her hand. The seedling slowly flew toward the box in her right hand, and that green leaf came into contact with the box.

It was as if a stone had been tossed into a calm lake. The symbols on the antiquated green box lit up one after another, and the box itself rose slowly into the air. Bursts of rainbow light erupted from it, illuminating the flowing sand particles that were swirling on the surface of the box, creating a very spectacular sight.

Xixi's hand flew to her mouth, and she exclaimed, "That's... the Great Dryad's Flowing Sand World!"

"It really is the Flowing Sand World." Lulu was also extremely excited, and his lips trembled as he was struck by the urge to kneel before the box.

"Flowing Sand World? That old bloke sure is daring. Wasn't he afraid that I would take it for myself?" Urien sat bolt upright in his lounge chair, and there was also a hint of surprise in his eyes as he stared at the shimmering little box that was hanging in midair. He then got up and closed the door to his shop.

The Flowing Sand World was an independent small world.

The dryads nurtured the World Tree, which was renowned for its ability to create a true small world. The Flowing Sand World was the small world that had been created by the previous World Tree, and it was placed under the care of the Great Dryad.

After that, the dryads fell, and the World Tree was toppled, so no one knew where the Flowing Sand World had gone.

Only the Great Dryad knew of its location, while his other brethren didn't even know in what form it existed in this world. They could only see it when offering sacrifices to their ancestors, and it was constantly being presented to them in different forms even then.

The only constants were the rainbow light and the swirling sand.

Upon coming into contact with that rainbow light, Xixi's World Tree also appeared to be very excited. It wiggled its branches and bathed within the light. Soon, the green leaf at the tip of the tree grew larger in size, and appeared to be filled with vitality.

Right at that moment, the light from the box flashed, and the projection of a humanoid figure appeared. It showed an old man with white hair, wearing a set of green magician robes. His features appeared very benevolent, and he appraised Xixi and Lulu with a warm smile as he said, "Xixi, Lulu, you're all grown up now."

"Great Dryad." Both Xixi and Lulu stepped back, and extended a respectful salute. Both looked at the projection of the old man and tried their hardest to repress their sorrow.

"Don't be said, children. You two are the only ones who can carry on our legacy. I'm very happy to see you two again, and the new World Tree as well. That tells me that I entrusted the heart of the World Tree to the right people." Freuden was quite elated as he looked at the tiny World Tree seedling.

Xixi also looked at the little seedling, and said self-critically, “But... Great Dryad, Xixi hasn’t done a good job in protecting the World Tree. It’s almost completely wilted, and I couldn’t make it thrive and prosper.”

Freuden shook his head, and praised, “No, you’ve already completed the mission I assigned to you by hatching the World Tree. The werewolves have been hunting the two of you, and the elves have also been searching for you, so you must have suffered a lot during these years. You two are already the heroes of the dryads for being able to accomplish what you have so far.

“Now, I’m entrusting the Flowing Sand World to you. During that battle all those years ago, the Flowing Sand World was almost destroyed. I used up the last shreds of nature power I had to hold it together, but the world is in a very unstable state, so no one can enter.” The little box in front of Freuden hovered toward Xixi. His eyes shimmered with a faint light as he said, “Plant the World Tree here, and use its power of laws to reform the Flowing Sand World. Build a new world upon the ruins of the Flowing Sand World. If this world has renounced us dryads, then we’ll just have to create a new one, and stage a resurgence. All of that will fall upon your shoulders.”

Xixi gently caught the shimmering little box, and smooth flowing sand covered her right hand before swirling along her arm. It encompassed her entire body practically in the blink of an eye, leaving only her neck, head, and hands exposed. It was as if a rainbow dress had draped itself over her body.

Xixi closed her eyes, and could sense a certain connection forming between herself and the Flowing Sand World. The World Tree slowly hovered toward the box before taking root on it. Those roots grew at a rate that was perceptible to the naked eye, and they gripped the box tightly as if they were tentacles.

The wilted seedling took root on the antiquated green box, and rainbow sand swirled around it, creating a peculiar scene that was also somehow very harmonious.

Lulu stared at Xixi with a nervous expression, but he repressed the urge to speak.

She was receiving an important inheritance—the Great Dryad’s inheritance.

She was inheriting a world. That was an inheritance unique to the dryads, one that only the regal Great Dryad could bestow.

The process lasted about half an hour.

Xixi slowly opened her eyes, and countless symbols flashed through her golden pupils. The flowing sand swirling around her rose from her body, creating what appeared to be a barrier.

Chapter 316: Fight Me, Trash!!!

“Disperse,” Xixi uttered softly.

The sand instantly receded, flowing back into that little box. The rainbow light emanating from the box also faded, while a green light appeared on her hand. Both the box and the World Tree disappeared in a flash.

Freuden's eyes were filled with approval and elation as he said, "Very good. From this day forth, you are the Great Dryad, Xixi."

"Xixi... How could Xixi be known as the Great Dryad? That won't do, Xixi can't do it." Xixi shook her head vigorously in a slightly panicked manner.

"The only criterion for becoming the Great Dryad is to obtain the acknowledgment of the World Tree. You have satisfied that condition even better than I was able to," Freuden said with a smile. "Compared to the simple-minded Lulu, you're clearly more suitable for the task."

Xixi turned to Lulu, who was also looking at her with an encouraging smile. She was suddenly instilled with a sense of confidence, and could sense the World Tree radiating joy and excitement within her body. She turned back to Freuden, and nodded with a serious expression as she said, "I'll take good care of it, and make it grow into an enormous World Tree."

"I'm sure you're up to the task. I'm convinced that you two will be able to make the dryads reappear on the Norland Continent." Freuden nodded with a smile; his body was now becoming increasingly more insubstantial. He then turned to Urien with a smile, and said, "What did I tell you, Urien? I told you that a day would come when even you would grow old, but you refused to believe me. How about now? You're an old man, haha!"

Urien pursed his lips with displeasure, and retorted, "At least I'm still alive! You've been dead for over 100 years, you old fart."

"Speaking of that, I really do envy you young people. Still, death isn't too bad. I've gotten sick of living after several centuries anyway; death is a lot more peaceful." Freuden was not enraged by Urien's words. After a short pause, he adopted a serious expression, and said, "Before you come over to join me, please look after those two. Us dryads cannot go extinct no matter what."

"How many they can give birth to will depend on them." Urien pursed his lips.

"Hahaha, you're just as naughty as ever, you little brat." Freuden laughed heartily before completely dissipating.

Silence descended upon the magic potion shop.

Xixi stared blankly up at the roof overhead. Lulu gently placed a hand on her shoulder, but didn't say anything, either.

Urien slowly lay back down in his lounge chair. He wore no expression on his face, but there was a nostalgic look in his eyes. Back then, he was still young, and liked to go on adventures everywhere. He wasn't a legendary figure yet, and encountered many interesting people and intriguing things during his travels.

Urien was silent for a long time before looking up at Xixi, and breaking the silence. "If you don't mind the low wages, you can work at my shop."

"Really?" Xixi was slightly taken aback before a hint of excitement appeared on her face.

The werewolves from the day before had already been detained, and most likely wouldn't be released for a long time, but there were many werewolves out there who could still hunt them down. In that case, they wouldn't be able to remain in Chaos City.

But Xixi had just found a way to help the World Tree recover, as well as to repair her body, and if they were to leave Chaos City, then they would never be able to eat Mag's braised chicken and rice again. That was unacceptable to them.

However, if Urien was willing to employ them, then their safety would be ensured. With the legendary magic caster, Lord of Ice Urien, extending a helping hand, they wouldn't have to fear any danger in Chaos City.

Xixi hesitated momentarily before asking nervously, "Then... Can Lulu also stay?"

"I don't employ clumsy people." Urien shook his head. At the sight of Xixi's dejected expression, he slowly added, "That room upstairs is for you. You can keep as many people as you want there. He's your man, so you'd better earn enough money to keep him alive."

Xixi's eyes immediately lit up on hearing that, and she bowed to Urien as she said, "Thank you, Master Urien."

"Thank you." A smile also appeared on Lulu's face, and he, too, extended a grateful bow toward Urien.

They had been wandering the Norland Continent for over 100 years, slowly growing up from children in the process. They had suffered far too many hardships, and what they yearned for most wasn't revenge. Instead, they simply wanted to settle down somewhere, and truly live.

They merely wanted to have many children, so they could ensure the survival of the dryads, and to create a prosperous race again.

They had seen hope the day before. After falling into complete despair, and resigning themselves to death, Mag and everyone else stepped in to save their lives. They had thought that their life on the run would continue, but all of that had come to an abrupt end.

"We only sell potions, tonics, and ointments here... Every time a vial is sold, you have to replace it with a new one on the shelves; that will be the extent of your work. After subtracting the costs, you can take half of the profit, but there is no bare minimum wage, so your earnings will directly correlate with the shop's earnings." Urien pointed at the magic potions on the shelves before getting up, and pulling out a dusty black magic tome from behind the counter. He tossed the book casually onto the counter, and said, "This is a guide for mixing potions. If you encounter something you're unfamiliar with, then have a look through the book. As long as the potions you mix don't kill anyone, the effect doesn't really matter."

"But... Isn't half too much? This is your shop, after all." Xixi was a little hesitant about taking such a large cut of the profits.

"Don't expect a whole lot of income. Half of the store's profits will only be enough to half-fill your stomachs." Urien pursed his lips, and strode out the door as he said, "Seeing as you two are all better now, you can start working today. Breakfast is on me."

“Are we going to Mamy Restaurant? Thank you, Master Urien!” Xixi’s eyes immediately lit up at the mention of food. She quickly hurried out the door with Lulu close behind her.

...

A long line had already gathered outside the restaurant. The sweet and savory factions seemed to be more antagonistic toward each other than usual, and many people were flushed with rage. Some had even rolled up their sleeves, and it appeared that a mass brawl was imminent.

“Idiots who are into sweet tofu pudding! I’m warning all of you right now; stop giving the savory tofu pudding one-star votes! Do you people not have a conscience?”

“Hmph! It’s you savory faction people that should take a good look at yourselves! Sweet tofu pudding is not to be insulted! Number 99 on the rankings is an absolute farce!”

“Fight me, trash!!!”

Someone suddenly let loose an enraged roar among the crowd.

The sounds of swords being drawn immediately erupted in front of the restaurant!

Chapter 317: Smash This F*cking Restaurant!

The sounds of swords being drawn came as a surprise to Urien’s trio, and they all halted in their steps as they turned to look at the line.

Coincidentally, Ricky had also just arrived on the scene with his employee. He was going to expose this unknown restaurant’s shady dealings, and recover the 29th spot that was meant for his restaurant. However, he was also startled by the scene that greeted him there, and came to an abrupt halt.

After the swords were drawn, deathly silence ensued. Many people in the line were a little scared upon seeing the drawn weapons, but they refused to back down, and drew determination from their undying loyalty to the tofu pudding of their chosen flavor. Thus, both factions glared at one another, and neither was about to concede.

“Ugly Duckling, do you think they’re finally going to fight? I’ve been waiting every single day; they’ve finally drawn their swords.” Amy was sitting on a little stool at the entrance with Ugly Duckling in her arms. She was supporting her chin with one hand, and her eyes were wide with anticipation.

Ricky was a little confused by the sight of the farcical scene outside the restaurant, but a thought quickly occurred to him. *Why are there so many people lining up? And they’ve all drawn their swords? Could it be that we’re not the only ones trying to expose them?*

The worker behind him was a little frightened, and asked in a low voice, “Boss, what do we do now?”

“At times like these, someone needs to step up and rally the troops! Our Ricky’s Rotisserie is the main victim in all of this, and that duty falls upon me as its boss!” Ricky could feel his heart rate accelerating as blood flowed straight into his head. His cheeks were flushed as he swaggered toward the two

opposing factions. He spread his arms open, and yelled, “Boycott the Aden Square food competition! Smash this f*cking restaurant!”

The situation outside the restaurant was very tense, and it was so quiet that one could hear even a pin drop. As such, Ricky’s vehement cry was clearly heard by all of the customers.

“Hmm?”

Everyone turned to look at him in unison, all of them with benevolent looks in their eyes—the same type of benevolence afforded to children with mental disability.

The sweet and savory factions were indeed in conflict with one another, but no one wanted to boycott the food competition or smash Mamy Restaurant!

They had voted diligently during the competition, and were very displeased that the restaurant’s dishes had been ranked so low. Was this guy trying to pour salt over their wounds?

And he wanted to smash the restaurant?

Many people recalled the roujiamos awarded to the Burning Legion, and wanted to step up to take care of that rabble-rouser for Mag. Perhaps their actions would also be rewarded by free roujiamos!

With that in mind, many of the sword-wielding customers began to appraise Ricky with animosity in their eyes. The werewolves from the day prior were too powerful, but this fat mortal seemed to be an easy target.

Amy also turned her gaze on Ricky, and thought to herself, *Is that a bad person? Father has only just replaced the door, so I won’t allow him to go in this time.*

Thus, she lifted her chin off her hand, and a burst of bluish violet flames began to dance along her fingertips.

Ricky’s heart rate continued to spike at the sight of everyone turning to look at him. He was thoroughly basking in the feeling of commanding such widespread attention, and there was so much adrenaline pumping through his veins that he couldn’t see the enmity in everyone’s eyes.

He was already beginning to envision himself as the leader of a revolution, charging at the forefront as everyone stormed through the doors of that unreasonable restaurant. They were going to raze the establishment to the ground, and then give the heinous boss a brutal beating before making him admit in front of everyone that he had manipulated the food competition’s results.

He hadn’t experienced that kind of hot-blooded passion in many years, and it was an extremely exhilarating feeling!

“Boycott the food competition! Smash this f*cking restaurant!”

Ricky raised his fist to the sky, yelling at the top of his lungs. His eyes were bloodshot as he advanced toward the door of the restaurant, attempting to lead the charge.

“Smash it! Smash it!”

His employee was influenced by his passion, and also echoed his cries with vehement fanaticism. He hadn't thought that the boss was such a courageous and righteous person. Just thinking about smashing the restaurant with those customers was getting his blood boiling.

Xixi looked at the two "revolutionaries" with an adorkable expression, and asked, "Those two... Are they already drunk so early in the morning?"

"Some people simply want to die." Urien pursed his lips as he took a glance at the fat Ricky.

Ricky quickly made his way to the door of the restaurant, and only then did he turn around with a confused expression to look at the eerily silent customers behind him. He had thought that his words would light the fuse, and all of them would heed his call, smashing open the door before laying waste to the restaurant.

... Why were they suddenly so quiet?

"Looks like everyone is quite civilized, but there is a time and place for manners, and this is not one of those settings! You all need someone courageous to lead you, and I will be happy to fill that role!" Ricky could see that everyone was looking at him, and felt like a hero that was being revered and worshipped. As such, his confidence was bolstered further, and his entire body was filled with power and passion.

"Don't be scared! I am the boss of Ricky's Rotisserie, Ricky Berman. I am the manifestation of justice and fairness! I trust that everyone must have seen the strange dishes on the Aden Square food competition rankings!

"You are all correct to be angry! I have never even heard of this shabby restaurant, so how can it possibly have two dishes in the top 30 for its first time participating in the food competition? How can it have five dishes in the top 100? That's a feat that even the well-established restaurants cannot accomplish!

"As such, I'm sure that this restaurant's rankings have been fixed! What is this braised chicken and rice trash? La zhi roujiamo? Just the names of those dishes make me want to barf! How could they be worthy of the spots in the top 30? His blatant manipulation of the voting system is absolutely disgraceful!

"As a loyal follower of the Aden Square food competition, I cannot allow something like this to happen! We must vent the rage in our hearts, and tell these deceitful businesses that we are not idiots! So let's smash this restaurant, and restore the order of the Aden Square food competition!"

Ricky became more and more excited as he yelled, and at the conclusion of his stirring speech, he rushed directly toward the door of the restaurant.

Right at that moment, the door suddenly opened outward.

"What's going on? Who's causing all this ruckus here?"

Chapter 318: Help! I'm Going to Die!

"Crack!"

A muffled thump erupted as the wooden door slammed Ricky in the face, sending him flying back through the air.

He was a fatso that weighed in excess of 100kg, and he was falling into the crowd.

Everyone dispersed to open up some space, and watched as he thumped heavily into the ground. He lay dazed on his back with a red door-mark on his face, just as if he had just had the soul bashed out of him.

Mag was also a little taken aback upon seeing that. He had just finished breakfast, and was coming out to remind Amy about her morning lessons. However, he wasn't expecting someone to be charging at the door, and sent them flying as he opened it. Thus, he was feeling a little apologetic as he looked at the dazed fatso on the ground. If the victim were a customer, then his business could suffer.

He was sent flying by that door! Mag really isn't someone to be messed with!

All of the customers appraised Mag with peculiar expressions. Even though Ricky appeared to only be a mortal, he was still a fully grown 100kg man. For him to be sent flying was quite a shocking spectacle.

Of course, the customers that were about to beat him up were feeling quite disappointed. They hadn't even had a chance to teach Ricky a lesson before Mag took care of him himself.

"Wow, Father is so strong." The little fireball on Amy's fingertip was snuffed out, and she clapped her little hands together with glee. She looked up at Mag with adoration and reverence on her face.

H-how could this be? Is this restaurant owner supposed to be a powerful man? Ricky was lying on the ground, and his face throbbed with searing pain. It was certainly not a good feeling to be swatted into the air by a door, and rage was building up in his heart.

He hadn't even gotten a chance to strike yet, but had been struck down himself!

That guy had to be the restaurant's owner, but that didn't matter. Even though he had been struck down, there were still countless comrades behind him, all of whom were wielding sabers and swords! There was no lack of orcs and demons among them, either, so no matter how powerful the restaurant owner was, there was no way that he could beat everyone.

With that in mind, Ricky's confidence was restored, and he clasped a hand over his throbbing cheek as he struggled to his feet. He spread his arms open again, and yelled, "Not only is he fixing the rankings, he's even assaulting people! Where's the justice?! Everyone, get him! Smash the—"

"Smash your f*cking face!" A demon that was close to two meters tall aimed a vicious slap at his face, slamming him right into the ground again. The demon then gave him a kick, and grumbled, "I really am angry about Mamy Restaurant's rankings, but it's only because the rankings were too low! I really detest people like you! Your food is trash, but you don't think about improving yourself. All you want to do is slander those who are better than you! People like you deserve to be bashed wherever you go!"

"Exactly! You're the manifestation of justice? Last time, there was a maggot in the roast meat that I got from your sh*tty rotisserie, and you guys blamed me for planting the maggot in the meal! How about now, huh? Where are your bodyguards?"

“Mag’s food is more than a hundred times more delicious than your trashy roast meat! What gives you the confidence and courage to provoke him? You say you want to barf at those names? Whenever I hear ‘roujiamo’ nowadays, I can’t help but drool!”

“There’s no need to waste time with words! Brothers, let’s set aside our differences, and bash this shameless b*stard! Regardless of whether you’re part of the sweet or savory faction, this man is the public enemy! Scoot aside, let me kick him too!”

The customers outside the restaurant erupted into a frenzy, raining down attacks upon Ricky in a torrential downpour.

Ricky was completely dumbstruck by the brutal beating that he was suffering. Anguished, he howled, “Stop! Stop! We’re all allies! Stop! Argh, not the face...”

“Allies my a*s! Don’t try to defile us! The sweet and savory factions have united to combat shameless restaurant owners like you!” An elderly woman prodded Ricky’s stomach with her cane disdainfully.

“I agree! If we continue to give one-star ratings to the opposing faction’s tofu pudding, these shameless bastards are the ones that will benefit in the end! If it’s something made by Mag, then it must be more delicious than everyone else’s cooking!”

“That’s right. Hurting one another like this is not the way to go. We should unite, and give all of the tofu puddings five-star ratings! Let’s show everyone the true power of the tofu pudding!”

The enraged cries from the customers drowned out Ricky’s cries for help. Ironically, he had become the catalyst for the two factions to form an alliance and come to a mutual understanding.

Seeing as Mag sold the same number of sweet and savory tofu puddings every day, their rankings were inevitably inseparable in the food competition. For the sake of the restaurant, cooperation was the only path forward.

“B... Boss...” The rotisserie employee looked on with a dumbfounded expression. His boss had been full of vigor, storming the restaurant just a moment ago, but was now inundated by furious customers to the extent that he was no longer even visible among the crowd.

“There’s another one here!” A burly man plucked the employee by the collar, and threw him into the crowd. Thus, everyone had two targets on which they could vent their rage.

What’s going on? Mag was just about to apologize to the fat middle-aged man, and he was also a little stunned. However, he quickly understood the gist of things from the conversation between his customers.

It appeared that those two were trying to start trouble for him after witnessing the Aden Square food competition rankings, only to fall into the hands of the restaurant’s customers. Thus, they fell victim to vigilante justice, and were plunged into a very tragic situation.

Mag was not going to extend any sympathy toward people who were trying to cause trouble for him. He had to show everyone that he was not to be messed with.

However, Mag was quite touched that his customers would take the initiative to beat up rabble-rousers in his stead. They were only customers, but they were fighting so hard for the reputation and glory of the restaurant at which they dined. That was a very moving notion to Mag.

A smile appeared on Mag's face as he said, "Let's stop there, everyone. We don't want to end up killing him."

All of the customers burst into laughter upon hearing that.

"Help! I'm going to die!" Ricky's anguished cries continued, but the response was only more physical abuse.

Chapter 319: Is Your Forge Still Hiring?

Harrison got in a few kicks before he emerged from the crowd, and panted heavily as he asked, "Mag, what happened to the forge next door? How did those shops collapse?"

The forge beside the restaurant was still a pile of rubble, and a bunch of dwarven stonemasons were cleaning up the wreckage. They were reconstructing the building with an extremely high efficiency, but the gargantuan crater in the ground was still clearly visible, and it appeared as if a battle had taken place there.

"Maybe it was an earthquake." Mag shrugged. He didn't think it was a good idea to spread word about the explosion. If the Gray Temple or the city lord's castle were to learn about the fact that Mobai had invented explosives, they would probably pay as much attention to it as they did with the steam engine.

If Mobai could succeed, then he would create a weapon that even mortals could use but powerful enough to threaten giant dragons. That would create a massive stir throughout the entire Norland Continent.

Mobai would most likely require a long time to invent something like that on his own, but if the Gray Temple and city lord's castle were to invest in the project, a successful prototype would be created in no time.

Mag didn't want that to happen. If that were to eventuate, the world would change far too quickly, and it would become a very unpredictable and volatile place.

"I see. Your restaurant sure was lucky." Harrison nodded. The three neighboring shops had all been damaged, and while the restaurant directly neighbored the forge, it was completely unscathed.

At that moment, Mag caught sight of the approaching Urien, and he smiled as he asked, "Master Urien, when will Amy's lessons be held today?"

He then took a glance at Lulu and Xixi, discovering that Lulu was still a little pale, but he appeared to be fine. Meanwhile, Xixi looked as if she had already fully recovered. She was proficient in using healing magic, and it looked like her self-regenerative abilities were quite exemplary as well.

"We'll start the lesson at 8am, after getting some food to eat." Urien looked at Amy with a smile, and greeted, "Morning, little Amy."

“Good morning, Master Turtle.” Amy stood up with Ugly Duckling in her arms, and returned the greeting. She then turned to Xixi and Lulu with elation on her face, and asked, “Big Sister Xixi, Big Bear, are you two all better now?”

“We sure are. After having your father’s delicious chicken soup, both of us are feeling a lot better.” A happy smile appeared on Xixi’s face as she patted Amy on the head.

“Father’s chicken soup is the best.” Amy nodded with an affirmative expression, and her eyes were shimmering with pride.

“Thank you, Mag, and the two girls as well.” Xixi extended a grateful bow toward Mag, as well as Yabemiya and Sally, who were standing behind him.

“You’re welcome.” Mag shook his head with a smile. Amy really liked Xixi, so he also had a very good impression of her.

“Don’t mention it.” Yabemiya hurriedly waved her hands, and her expression suggested that she was a little embarrassed.

Sally merely nodded her head in response. Her thought process was very simple: she had indeed helped them the day prior, so she was deserving of their gratitude.

“Time to open for business. Welcome, everyone.” Mag took a glance at the clock before opening the doors to his restaurant.

As for the two people who had been thumped by his enraged customers, he completely ignored them. They had come with the sole purpose of causing trouble for him, so they deserved the treatment that they had received.

Sally and Yabemiya stood on either side of the door—one with a smile on her face, while the other wore a cold expression—and began their work day.

The customers swarmed in, leaving Ricky and his employee behind. However, some customers still gave them an obligatory kick before rushing into the restaurant.

“I... I’ll be back...” Ricky looked up at Mamy Restaurant’s sign. His face was completely swollen, and he began to crawl away with difficulty. Never did he think that he would suffer such a horrific ordeal at the hands of those whom he thought comrades.

“Wait for me, Boss...” The employee also crawled after him. He had no idea what had just happened. He had only chanted a few sentences before being beaten for no apparent reason.

The rankings that had been released in the morning dealt a heavy blow to both the sweet and savory factions, and tension had been about to boil over into a full-blown confrontation. However, Ricky and his employee had successfully drawn all of the antagonism toward them, thereby allowing the two factions to unite, deciding to help one another for the sake of a greater future!

Mag was naturally very happy to see that. His braised chicken and rice and his la zhi roujiamo were already in the top 30, but if his other dishes could also climb up the rankings, then it would be a big help to him.

The system's intentions were quite obvious; it wanted to increase the restaurant's fame. On this occasion, it was the top 30. What about next time? Top 20? Top 10? Those were all things that Mag had to consider.

The morning service passed by in a busy blur. After Urien finished having breakfast, Amy went with him to attend her lessons.

What surprised Mag was that Urien had decided to take Xixi and Lulu under his wing. In fact, he had already been quite surprised that Urien had interfered to protect the two the night prior. After all, Urien wasn't some benevolent old man. Why would he choose to take in the dryad couple?

"Alright, I gave sweet tofu pudding a five-star rating, but that won't shake my love for savory tofu pudding!"

"Hmph, as much as it hurts me to do so, I also gave savory tofu pudding five stars. Our main objective is to get tofu pudding into the top rank!"

The customers at the door conversed grudgingly with one another.

"Boss, they only ate one flavor of tofu pudding each, but they're voting for both. Isn't that cheating?" Yabemiya was a little concerned as she looked at Mag.

"Hm... That's a good point. Even though we didn't ask them to do this, if an investigation were to be launched, it could prove to be problematic." Mag contemplated the notion momentarily, and his head was beginning to throb. He didn't want to stoop to any underhanded tactics to do well on the rankings.

However, after forging an alliance, the sweet and savory factions were casting extra votes for him voluntarily. Mag wasn't sure if that was against the rules, but as long as the braised chicken and rice and roujiamo could remain in the top 30, he wasn't concerned.

Lulu made his way over to the forge, and scratched his head in a slightly nervous manner. He looked at Mobai, who was issuing instructions to the dwarven stonemasons, and adopted a bashful smile as he asked, "Boss, is your forge still hiring? I'm not very bright, but I'm strong and can help you with manual labor."

Chapter 320: A Choice

"Am I hiring?" Mobai dusted himself off, and looked up at Lulu, who was twice his height. He sized Lulu up carefully before shaking his head, and replying, "You look like you're cut out for it, but if you're too clumsy, then you won't succeed in this role. Besides, I've never taken an apprentice or hired any employees before."

Xixi pinched Lulu in the waist to shut him up before taking over the conversation. She took a glance at the ruined forge, and said, "Boss, he's only clumsy with his words, but he's actually really smart. He's a really quick learner, and if you take him in as your apprentice, he'll be able to help you out a lot. You'll be able to craft more weapons and earn even more money with him around. If you don't believe me, you can get Lulu to help you clean up the forge. He's a really snappy worker."

“Well...” A contemplative expression appeared on Mobai’s face upon hearing that. He looked at Lulu, then at Xixi, and finally nodded as he said, “Alright, then I’ll give him a chance. But I make no guarantees about whether I’ll hire him or not. My business is not very profitable, and I can’t afford to have lazy workers.”

“Thank you, Boss. Lulu will be sure to satisfy you.” An elated smile appeared on Xixi’s face. She clenched her fist, and encouraged, “Go, Lulu, you’re the best! I’m sure you’ll succeed in the role.”

“I’ll do my best,” Lulu replied with a smile of his own. Xixi was working at the magic potion shop, so he couldn’t just sit around and expect her to feed him. If he could get a job at the neighboring forge, that would be perfect.

Mag had only just emerged from the restaurant, and was quite happy to see that. It appeared that the dryads were really intending on living in Chaos City permanently.

It was a good thing. At the very least, Amy had two more playmates.

“Alright, clean up everything here. Just do what they tell you to do,” Mobai instructed. He then turned round, and strode directly toward Mag.

“Alright,” Lulu replied before making his way toward the wreckage. Even though he hadn’t fully recovered, cleaning up some debris wasn’t an issue for him. Meanwhile, Xixi returned to the magic potion shop, and began her first day of work there.

Mobai approached Mag, and asked, “Mag, your business is going really well. Ever thought about expanding?”

“Hmm?” Mag had only come out for some fresh air, and he faltered upon hearing that. He had indeed thought about expanding the restaurant. After all, with his current customer base, 64 seats simply weren’t enough. He didn’t want to compress his customers’ dining space, so the only viable option was to expand.

However, Mag didn’t have any control over the restaurant’s expansion. After all, the restaurant had been built by the system, so it was naturally responsible for expansion as well.

With the system’s crappy personality, there was most likely no way it would agree to an expansion until he could upgrade the restaurant.

Furthermore, his biggest headache wasn’t the system. Instead, it was the location of his restaurant, which was situated in the northwestern corner of the Aden Square. A little further to the west would take one to the Bastie Prison, so if he were to expand westward, he would be toppling the walls of the prison to open his restaurant there, which was clearly not a viable option. However, Mobai’s forge was situated directly to the east.

Mobai’s forge had been running for several decades, so he definitely wouldn’t be willing to give it up for the restaurant’s expansion. However, it was a bit peculiar that he would take the initiative to ask about an expansion.

“So this is what I’m thinking. Back in the day, I actually purchased all four of those shops together. I was planning to expand the forge if business was good, but over four decades have passed since then, and I

haven't even gotten around to it." Mobai smiled as he pointed to the shop near Urien's, and said, "I apologize for what happened this morning, and I thank you for the inspiration that you have provided me with. As such, I plan on reconstructing my forge next to the magic potion shop. If you would like to expand, I can sell these three shops to you for the market price."

"You sure are a rich man, Mobai." Mag was a little surprised. The shops next to the forge had always been empty, but he never thought that the reason behind it was that they belonged to Mobai. He then asked internally, "System, can we expand the restaurant?"

"The restaurant's level is too low, so expansion cannot be facilitated. Please upgrade the restaurant as soon as possible in order to unlock more rights."

"I see..." Mag wasn't really surprised by that response. However, the system's reply at least indicated that expansion would become available following the upgrades of the restaurant. In that case, they would be able to house more customers at a time. As mentioned before, they had the prison to their left, so they could expand only to the right; as such, the three shops that Mobai was offering to him were very important.

After all, the Aden Square had been constructed according to the city lord castle's plans. Expanding into the square was illegal, and his restaurant would most likely get torn down the next day, so he couldn't afford to take such a risk.

"I don't have enough money and staff at the moment, so I won't be able to expand the restaurant for now. However, I certainly have thought about it, and I would be very grateful if you could reserve those three shops for me for a while," Mag replied with a smile. He really didn't have the money to purchase those three shops yet, and besides, he didn't have the power to expand his restaurant anyway.

"No problem. Just tell me when you want them. I'll get people to build an empty construction on the three sites so it can fool the inspectors. They've been in disuse for several decades already, so I'm not in a hurry to let go of them." Mobai nodded with a smile. After conversing with Mag for a while longer, he returned to the wreckage of his forge, and began to discuss constructing a new forge with the dwarven craftsmen.

What a friendly city. A faint smile lingered on Mag's face as he looked at the busy dwarves. If the restaurant expanded to take over the three neighboring shops, it would be able to seat about 300 customers at once. His cooking efficiency would also increase over time, so there was a lot more profit to be made for the restaurant.

"System, is your God of Cookery upgrade wheel ready yet? It's been five days," Mag asked internally.

"Six of the options on the wheel have been decided. Seeing as you've completed all of the system missions, you have the right to choose the seventh option. You can choose a recipe for any dish as well," the system replied.