

Stay At home 371

Chapter 371: Choice is a Type of Freedom

"I'm going to announce something today."

In the lavish dining hall of the Moreton manor, Jeffree sat before everyone with a grave expression on his face.

Mickey had just surreptitiously picked up his fork, but he silently put it down again upon hearing that. He sat up straight, and looked at Jeffree with awe and veneration in his eyes.

Meanwhile, Cyril sat in his seat, and stared at the plate in front of him with soulless eyes as if he was waiting for judgment to be passed upon him.

The woman sitting beside him was also slightly pale. She aimed a resentful glance at Gloria, and clenched her hands tightly.

In contrast, Herty and Herty both wore gloating smiles on their faces. Usually, when their grandfather delivered an address like this, he was going to scold their uncle's family. This was a common occurrence during the past few years, and it had become an interesting pre-meal activity. They were wondering if it was their uncle that was going to be scolded, or if it was going to be his daughter, Gloria. After all, she had engaged in an argument with their grandfather last time, and was kicked out of the dining hall.

"Master..." Dennes Marquis sat beside Jeffree with a concerned expression on her face.

"Shush." Jeffree shot a glance at her; his voice was tinged with an indisputable tone.

Dennes immediately fell silent, and lowered her head, not daring to speak up again.

Lance was sitting nervously in his seat. He didn't know what Jeffree was going to say, but nothing could change his mind or shake his determination, even if he were to be kicked out of the Moreton manor.

Debra had her eyes downcast, and looked at Gloria with a hint of concern in her eyes. Gloria hadn't suffered any consequences from her argument with Jeffree last time, so was he finally going to reprimand her for it?

Could it be that grandfather is agreeing to my request? Gloria sat in the last row, and stared at Jeffree from underneath her black veil with anticipation in her purple eyes. She wrung her hands together under the table, also as if she were awaiting judgment to be passed upon her.

Tsk, tsk, what's going on today? Why do I get the feeling that a major change is about to take place? There was a hint of curiosity on Aurora's sickly pale face. She looked at the nervous and distraught Cyril, and became even more intrigued.

In the end, Jeffree's gaze fell on Gloria, and he solemnly announced, "I hereby announce that Gloria will become a candidate for the heir to the Moreton Family, so she now has the same rights as Cyril."

Deathly silence followed his announcement. It was so quiet that a pin being dropped could be heard.

Cyril's and his wife's faces paled even further, and they looked at each other as their lips trembled.

“How... How is that possible?!” Herty and Hernie’s mouths both gaped open in shock, and their eyes were filled with incredulity. They turned to look at Gloria, the cowardly little girl who didn’t even dare to show her face, and struggled to come to terms with the fact that she was now also a candidate to become the heir just like their father.

That meant that Cyril’s status as the sole heir now ceased to exist. There was a chance that Gloria could take control over the Moreton Family some day.

“Yes!” Gloria clenched her fist with joy, and she almost jumped up with excitement.

Mickey and Debra were also staring at Gloria with disbelief in their eyes.

“Father, I object to your decision!” Right at that moment, Lance rose to his feet, and he looked at Jeffree with a serious expression as he said, “Father, no matter how unhappy with us you are, you have to remember that I was the one who made that decision all those years ago. This has nothing to do with Gloria, so I hope you won’t vent your rage against me on her; she’s still just a child.”

“I also object, Father. You said that I don’t have the right to become heir to the Moreton Family as I’m a woman, so why have you made Gloria one of the candidates now? I am your daughter! Why are you picking a little brat over me? What makes her worthy to become the heir to the Moreton Family?” Aurora also rose to her feet. She was very worked up as she looked at Jeffree. A hint of color had returned to her pale cheeks, and she balled her bony hands into tight fists as if she were an enraged but malnourished lioness.

“Do you not know why you’re not worthy?” Jeffree glanced at Aurora, and made no effort to hide the disdain in his eyes.

“I...” Aurora looked into Jeffree’s eyes, and she felt like a maggot that had been exposed to the scorching sun. The courage that she had somehow mustered up had been completely erased, and she lowered her head in fear. She slumped back into her seat before aiming a resentful glance at Gloria.

“Do you really think I’m the type of person that would vent my rage on my granddaughter? Have I done anything like that in the past two decades?” Jeffree turned to Lance with a stern interrogatory expression.

“No.” Lance was silent for a moment before shaking his head. He knew that his father was an extremely proud man. Even after Jeffree stripped him of his right to become heir to the family, Jeffree had done nothing else to him, so there was no way that he would harbor ill will toward a child.

“But Gloria is still only just a child. How would she be able to shoulder such a heavy responsibility? How could she be willing to do something like this? Girls should have their own dreams and pursuits, not be forced to carry such a crushing burden.” Lance shook his head again. He didn’t understand why Jeffree had made such a decision.

“Big Sister?” Mickey looked at Gloria with a hint of concern in his eyes.

“Father, this was my own choice.” Right at that moment, Gloria stood up, and Lance turned toward her with surprise on his face upon hearing her declaration. She looked him in the eyes, and said earnestly, “Father, you told me that everyone, including women, has the right of free choice. I want to become an outstanding businesswoman and the heir to the Moreton Family. This is my own choice.”

Cyril looked up at Gloria with shock and rage burning in his eyes. He had thought that Jeffree had only made that decision in a fit of rage so he could pressure him by taking away his status as the sole heir. However, it appeared that things weren't that simple. Gloria seemed to have hatched a plot far in advance.

"Gloria, you have to realize that if you want to become a candidate for the heir to such a large family, you'll be losing a lot of freedom. There will even be many occasions where you will be forced to do things against your will. That's far too unfair to you." Lance looked at Gloria. He was quite happy with her courage, but also a little concerned.

"Father, making this choice is a type of freedom in itself, is it not?" Gloria looked at Lance with a smile.

Lance faltered momentarily upon hearing that before a gratified smile appeared on his face, and he nodded as he said, "Indeed it is. I should be respecting your choice, not forcing my ideals upon you."

"Thank you, Father." Gloria smiled.

"My apologies, Father, and thank you for your decision, as well as your respect for Gloria." Lance extended a grateful salute toward Jeffree.

"From this day forth, the Blue Suede Textiles Shop will be under Gloria's management. Manard will tell you all of the specifics. There is a tall mountain for you to climb if you want to become the heir, and if you can't climb that mountain, then you will be eliminated." Jeffree ignored Lance as he turned toward Gloria. He then picked up his knife and fork, and sliced into his steak.

Chapter 372: Transition And Inheritance

"Thank you, Grandfather." Gloria extended a grateful bow toward Jeffree before sitting back in her seat with irrepressible joy on her veiled face.

Upon hearing that, Cyril's dejected expression immediately lit up, and a hint of elation flashed through his eyes. He looked at Gloria, and a mocking sneer appeared on his face.

Looks like Father has no intention of handing over the Moreton Family to a woman after all, Cyril thought to himself, and was very relieved. The Blue Suede Textiles Shop was the first business that was founded by the Moreton Family, and was an old establishment that had been in the Aden Square for several decades.

However, the only merit that textile shop had was its sentimental value, and its importance in the history of the Moreton Family. It was the most mediocre among all of the Moreton Family's countless businesses, and due to lackluster management, it had been making losses for the past two years. The only reason why it was still open was because Jeffree had insisted on keeping it open.

Now, Jeffree was making Gloria manage that textile shop. She was just a little girl who hadn't even been outside the manor much, so how could she possibly reverse that situation? She would most likely waste a few years there to no avail before losing her candidacy to the heirloom.

Mickey looked at Gloria with admiration on his face, and he asked quietly, "Big Sister, you're so awesome! Are you a boss now?"

“Shh, eat first,” Gloria replied in a quiet voice, but the joy in her voice was quite apparent.

My little girl has really grown up. To think that she dares to speak like that in front of her grandfather; she’s just like her father. Debra appraised Gloria with a warm smile on her face.

Even though it’s a difficult beginning, it’s a beginning nonetheless. If she can experience happiness there, then it’s a good thing. Lance picked up his knife and fork. He was aware of the situation of the Blue Suede Textiles Shop, but he was also very surprised that Jeffree would make such a decision at all.

Regardless of whether she would succeed on her journey, everything would be worth it as long as she was happy.

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“President, this is the information on the Catering Association and Bastie Prison incidents, as well as the suggestions offered up by our panel of advisors. Please have a look and make the final decision.” Manard, who had replaced Mars as Jeffree’s secretary, placed two documents on the desk in front of Jeffree.

“Read it out to me.” Jeffree leaned back in his chair, and closed his eyes with an exhausted expression.

“Yes.” Manard immediately picked up the two documents, and read out the two series of suggestions.

“Do as they say when dealing with the Catering Association. Our Chamber of Commerce and board members cannot take responsibility for that incident. Warren and the vice presidents have already been detained, so they’ll have to bear the full brunt of the matter.” Jeffree opened his eyes, and looked at the second document in Manard’s hands as he jeered, “I pay these guys so much, but some of their suggestions are simply absurd. Our Chamber of Commerce is indeed powerful enough to oppose the Bastie Prison, but they’ve forgotten that the Gray Temple and the city lord’s castle stand behind the Bastie Prison. If we offend those two powerhouses, then there will be no place for us in Chaos City.”

“Then, how should we take care of this matter, President?” Manard asked.

“Give them all of our files on Devoe and Goodenia, and fully cooperate with the Bastie Prison’s investigation so we can make up for Cyril’s attempts to bail those two out. We have to ensure that our Chamber of Commerce isn’t swept up in this matter. As for the money that Cyril took, make him spit it up and return all of it,” Jeffree replied calmly.

“But the panel of advisors have analyzed that if our Chamber of Commerce is unable to protect our board members, that’ll damage our reputation, and could even lead some board members to turn to the Buffett Family instead.” Manard was a little concerned.

“Heh, I’ve never told anyone that the Chamber of Commerce would be a safety net for them, nor do I have any tolerance for those who break rules. People should learn the importance of having fear, and also learn to use rules rather than change them. If that little brat from the Buffett Family dares to accept those people, then she’s a fool who poses no threat to us.” Jeffree chuckled coldly.

“Yes.” Manard’s expression changed slightly, and he picked up the documents before quickly walking out the door.

The Chamber of Commerce had encountered countless challenges and threats, but Jeffree was always able to overcome them through his unique perspective and way of doing things. That was why it was able to become such a powerful organization on the Norland Continent.

He was a man who had stood at the pinnacle of the business world in Chaos City, and even on the entire continent, for several decades.

I don't want to see the battle between the Moretons and the Buffetts become a struggle between two women in the end. I hope you won't disappoint me again, Cyril. Jeffree tapped his fingers on his table absentmindedly as he stared out the window, and fell into deep thought.

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“From this day forth, Robert will be your new president. He will take over from Warren and reform the Catering Association. He will establish a fairer and more transparent new Catering Association, and the city lord’s castle will also be heavily involved in the process. A third-party surveillance organization to help our Catering Association will become a true compass for the foodies of Chaos City.”

Within the Catering Association’s conference hall, a representative official from the city lord’s castle announced the inauguration of the new president before shaking hands with Robert.

“Everything for food! I hope all of us can strive toward that collective goal. I hope each and every one of you can feel proud when you look at the mantra on the statue outside.” Robert looked at everyone below the stage with an earnest expression.

A round of applause erupted, but everyone wore different expressions in response to this sudden change.

“With Vice President Robert as the new president, it won’t be long until our Aden Square food competition rankings receive the support of the customers again!” Rood clenched his fists with excitement.

“Indeed. Who would have thought that the former president and all of the vice presidents would be arrested in one night? I can finally see hope for our Catering Association.” Arvin nodded in response, and was also very excited.

“There’s going to be a massive revolution, right? Will we lose our jobs as a result?”

“Will we have to share the blame for what the presidents have done? There was a group from the city lord’s castle that came today, and they took all of our documents. After so many years in the association, who doesn’t have some skeletons in their closet?”

Far more people were panicked and concerned rather than excited.

“Due to the special nature of this transition, we won’t be investigating any average employees, so please do not worry, and focus on doing your jobs, maintaining the normal operation of the Catering Association. I hope everyone can work hard to make the association a better place.” Robert soothed the concerns in everyone’s hearts before announcing the conclusion of the conference.

Chapter 373: Stop! Stop right now!

“Did you hear? A massive crackdown happened at the Catering Association today. I saw a bunch of officials from the city lord’s castle entering and exiting the building this morning, and even the main gate has been locked.”

“I also saw that, but it appears that everything went back to normal in the afternoon. Could it be that even the city lord’s castle is going to stand up for Mamy Restaurant now?”

“If you ask me, the investigation should have been launched long ago. I’ve never eaten at any restaurant from the Aden Square food competition rankings in the past two years. Every time I’ve tried, I’ve been thoroughly disappointed; those rankings are completely pointless.”

The customers lining up outside Mamy Restaurant all discussed spiritedly among themselves. Many of them had seen what had happened to the Catering Association in the morning.

Could it be that the city lord really liked my grilled fish last night, so he decided to investigate the Catering Association? But I didn’t get a chance to say anything last night... Mag had also heard the news, and even though he didn’t know what had happened, he was still feeling a sense of gloating satisfaction with the ordeal that the Catering Association had suffered.

However, Mag was aware that unless the city lord wanted to tear down and rebuild the Catering Association, he would most likely only give them a stern warning, and nothing would really change after that.

As for whether Mamy Restaurant would make it back onto the rankings board or not, he wasn’t very optimistic. After all, if a massive reform really were to take place, no one would care enough about Mamy Restaurant to reinstate it on the rankings board. Mag wasn’t narcissistic enough to believe that the entire world revolved around his restaurant.

“Boss, are we having grilled fish tonight?” Yabemiya stood at the entrance to the kitchen, and looked at Mag with anticipation in her eyes.

“That’s right, we’ll have medium spice grilled fish tonight.” Mag nodded with a smile. He wanted to try the super spicy grilled fish, but he was worried that Sally would be unable to handle it. In any case, the medium spice flavor was already quite good, so he felt like it was the best option.

Hmm? Why are there so many people lined up here? Vivian was surprised by the long line waiting outside Mamy Restaurant.

She had changed into a loose-fitting navy blue shirt today. Last time, the strapping around her chest had ripped open, causing a very awkward situation. In order to avoid suffering the same embarrassment again, she had come well prepared, and she was going to order a super spicy grilled fish!

With so many people in the line, how long will I have to wait? I was the one who alerted Father to the quality of this restaurant. All of those fatsos have been detained, but I still have to wait in line? Vivian was grumbling internally, but before she knew it, she already found herself at the back of the line. She pursed her lips, and thought to herself, *So be it. Seeing as their spicy grilled fish is so delicious, I’ll line up. Otherwise, I would never be willing to stand behind so many people!*

She had finally had a good night of sleep the day before, and woke up at 9am this morning. It was such a wonderful feeling. She had already forgotten how long it had been since she had slept so well and woken up naturally rather than being roused by her pain.

All of that could be attributed to the spicy grilled fish that she had eaten the day before. As such, she had changed into male attire, and come to dine on the dish again. However, on this occasion, she had come out through the front door rather than jump over the wall.

No! I can't! I really can't eat it today! Nearby, Schonard shook his head vigorously, but his legs were taking him involuntarily toward Mamy Restaurant. Furthermore, his gait was a little peculiar. His two legs were spread quite wide, and he walked like a crab with a reluctant expression on his face.

*Stop! Stop right now! If I eat that again today, my a*shole really will explode! No, no, no... The insanely spicy grilled fish is not to be messed with!* Schonard forced himself to stop, and a pained expression appeared on his face as he turned to leave. However, he hadn't even taken two steps when he turned back around again. He looked up at the restaurant's sign with an enraptured expression, and he was caught momentarily in an internal conflict before gritting his teeth, and joining the line of customers. *Screw it! I'd rather die than not eat such delicious grilled fish today. As long as I don't order the insanely spicy level, I should be ok, right?*

It's that annoying guy again. Is he stalking me? Heh, my father approved of my coming here today, so if that guy tries to blackmail me, I'll teach him a lesson! I haven't touched a sword in many years, but I should be able to take care of a pervert like him with no issue. A hint of disdain appeared Vivian's face as she caught sight of Schonard. She clenched her fists tightly, and prepared to lash out at a moment's notice.

Many customers still remembered this rich boy who had tried to reserve the entire restaurant the night prior. He had ordered an insanely spicy grilled fish the day before, and his head smoked like a chimney as he dined on the dish. Looking at his abnormal gait and peculiar expression, they knew that the insanely spicy level was indeed not something to be messed with.

Schonard had been quite distracted the entire day. All he could think about was the spicy grilled fish, and as he joined the line, he didn't even notice Vivian.

He's not even taking a single glance at me! Vivian had prepared herself for battle, so she was a little disappointed upon seeing that. However, she certainly wasn't going to pick a fight with Schonard herself. Thus, she was a little bored as she looked around her, and then she discovered a curious phenomenon—why had all the customers split up into two lines?

She raised the question to the elderly man that was standing in front of her in the line.

"This must be your first time here at Mamy Restaurant, right?" The elderly man was quite benevolent, and he smiled as he replied, "To explain why the customers of the restaurant have split themselves into two lines, I have to tell you about a delicious dish known as tofu pudding..."

Vivian listened with intrigue as the elderly man recounted how two 10th-tier magic casters had engaged in a fierce battle over a bowl of tofu pudding. Following that was the establishment of the sweet and savory factions, which resulted in the two lines.

“Is the tofu pudding really that delicious?” Vivian was a little skeptical. She had actually ordered a tofu pudding the night before, but the fish was too large, so she canceled the order, and didn’t get to taste the tofu pudding. After hearing the elderly man’s story, she was getting quite curious about the dish.

“Of course. Let me tell you about the savory tofu pudding: it’s refreshingly delicious, and can prime your stomach before a good meal. It’s an exquisite dish that is not to be missed.” The elderly man strongly advocated for the savory tofu pudding.

“Don’t listen to him. The tofu pudding is sweet, yet not overwhelmingly so, and it’s the perfect dessert after a good meal.” A middle-aged man from the other line immediately stated his objection.

“Then... I can just get one of each, and I’ll know which one is better after I taste them for myself.” Vivian felt like there was an easy solution.

“You can if Mag is willing to sell you two.” Both of them rolled their eyes in unison, and didn’t say anything more.

Hmph, it’s not like I don’t have money; why wouldn’t he sell them to me? Vivian pursed her lips. She wasn’t concerned in the slightest.

“Welcome.” Mag opened the restaurant door with a smile. The newly released strength had increased store profits significantly once again, and he had already saved up enough to purchase a second strength point. Furthermore, it appeared to be time to upgrade the restaurant again as well.

Chapter 374: I’ll Get the Insanely Spicy Grilled Fish!

“System, the expenditure used to purchase strength points can also be used to upgrade the restaurant, right?” Mag asked internally.

“That’s right. As long as the expenditure isn’t on purchasing ingredients, you can use it to upgrade the restaurant. What are you waiting for? You can upgrade the restaurant to level two for less than 40,000 gold coins! There are so many rights and benefits waiting for you!” The system’s vehement voice sounded in response, and Mag felt as if it were about to jump out of his head.

“Hold on, I still haven’t thought about when I want to upgrade. How about we discuss some benefits first; can you erase the impact on the mission failure rate from the failure of the food competition mission today?” Mag asked.

“No!” The system’s voice was firm and non-negotiable.

“Then I won’t upgrade the restaurant.” Mag’s response was just as resolute.

“...”

The system was furious. “You can’t be so shameless!”

“I’ve always been this shameless.” Mag chuckled.

“But you have a daughter, and she has a biological mother! You need to set a good example for them!” the system retorted.

“She does indeed have a mother, but I don’t even know what her mother looks like. How about you help me recover my lost memories? At least I’ll have a mental image of who I’m trying to set an example for then.” Mag continued to chuckle.

“The system can’t do that!” Mag’s request met with a firm rejection.

“Then I can’t do anything. I’ll give you some time to reconsider. I feel like the restaurant is quite good as it is, and it doesn’t matter whether I upgrade it or not. I’m earning tons of money a day anyway.” Mag put on a nonchalant expression. He actually did want to upgrade the restaurant, but it was clear that the system was more desperate, so it would be a waste not to extort it for some benefits.

As Harrison walked in, he suggested, “Mag, business is so good for your restaurant, why don’t consider an expansion? Aren’t all of the shops next to your restaurant empty? If you expand the restaurant, all of the customers will have seats rather than having to wait in a line.”

“Hmm, I’ll consider that.” Mag nodded with a smile. He couldn’t determine whether an expansion could take place; that decision was down to the system. Otherwise, it would be an issue if there were a disparity in the decor and construction style.

All of the customers flooded in through the door, and as Vivian passed by Mag, she couldn’t help but take an extra glance at him.

His food is so delicious, and it has such miraculous effects. On top of that, he’s about 80% as handsome as I am; he is indeed no ordinary man, Vivian thought to herself as she stroked her fake mustache in a narcissistic manner before averting her gaze.

Mag had noticed what Vivian was doing, and he raised an eyebrow with a hint of amusement on his face. *What an interesting girl. I wonder which family’s young mistress she is.*

“Are you alright over there?” Mag then noticed Schonard walking in with a peculiar gait, and he extended some words of concern toward him.

“Of... of course I’m fine.” Schonard forced a nonchalant expression onto his face, and stood up a little straighter. However, in doing so, his buttocks tightened, and his casual facade almost crumbled due to the sharp pain that shot up his rear. However, he refused to be embarrassed again after the humiliation he had suffered the night before.

Mag smiled, and asked, “I’m glad to hear that. So would you like another insanely spicy grilled fish today? You’re the only one who ordered the insanely spicy grilled fish yesterday. I must laud you for being a true warrior.”

Schonard swallowed nervously, and as he looked at Mag’s smile, he was struck by an urge to punch him in the face. However, his mobility was restricted due to his physical discomfort, and the spicy grilled fish really was too delicious to miss, so he could only suppress his rage.

All of the customers also turned toward Schonard upon hearing that. There weren’t many people who could draw words of admiration from Mag.

“Hmm? Aren’t you the smoking red lion? You ate the insanely spicy grilled fish yesterday; that was so awesome! When smoke was rising from your head, you really did look like you were insane!” Amy held Ugly Duckling in her arms, and she clapped her little hands with a genuine expression of admiration.

Schonard’s expression twisted upon hearing that. He didn’t know how to respond to this type of praise. However, all of the customers were looking at him, and the half-elf girl was staring at him with reverence, so his ego was instantly inflated once again.

“A true man dines exclusively on insanely spicy grilled fish!”

Schonard felt as if he could hear a voice ring out in his mind. That voice set his blood alight, and he clenched his fists as he yelled, “One spicy grilled fish, insanely spicy level!”

“Will your body really be able to handle that? Maybe you should get a mildly spicy grilled fish instead.” Mag was a little concerned.

“My body is completely fine! I’m as fit as a horse! I want the insanely spicy level! Insanely! Spicy! Level!” Schonard reaffirmed with an extremely resolute expression.

“Alright, then.” Schonard’s determination was clearly unshakeable, so Mag didn’t try to persuade him any further. He turned to the kitchen, and thought to himself, *These young people really aren’t to be messed with!*

*Holy f*ck! I ordered the insanely spicy level again?! No! If I keep eating like this, I’m going to die! I have to cancel! I have to cancel...* Schonard suddenly came to his senses as he looked at Mag’s departing figure, and his expression immediately crumbled.

“You’re so awesome, Big Brother Smoking Red Lion. I can’t believe you ordered another insanely spicy grilled fish; you must really be insane, right?” Amy looked up at Schonard, and contemplated momentarily before her eyes lit up as she said, “I’ll call you Big Brother Insane Smoking Red Lion from now on.”

“You can call me whatever you want.” Schonard looked at Amy with a resigned expression. He suddenly realized why he had ordered an insanely spicy grilled fish against his better judgment.

Only a small part of the reason was that Mag had goaded him; the main factor was the praise that he had received from this little girl.

She was simply too adorable, and her words of praise inflated his ego significantly, causing him to order the insanely spicy grilled fish again...

I hope... I can still see the sun rise tomorrow. Schonard sighed internally, and trudged into the restaurant as if he were walking to his execution platform.

Vivian sat down in a seat, and turned to Yabemiya as she said, “I want a savory tofu pudding, and a super spicy grilled fish. After having the grilled fish, I want a sweet tofu pudding as dessert.”

“Sorry, our tofu pudding is limited to one per customer.” Yabemiya shook her head in response.

“I’ll definitely pay for them, even in advance if required,” Vivian replied.

“Sorry, this a rule of the restaurant; each customer can only order one tofu pudding.” Yabemiya shook her head again.

“Then what if I pay double the price? How will I know which one is better if I don’t taste them together?” Vivian’s brows furrowed as she attempted to negotiate with Yabemiya.

Chapter 375: I’m Sorry, I Can’t

“I’m sorry, this a rule of our restaurant, and we can’t make an exception even if you pay double the price.” Yabemiya shook her head once again.

“You see now? Even if you want to taste both flavors, Mag won’t sell it to you. Just get a savory tofu pudding.” The elderly man from before chuckled as he ate a spoonful of his savory tofu pudding, upon which a blissful expression appeared on his face.

*Arrrgh! I’m so angry! I don’t want to eat here anymore! *Vivian was furious, but she looked at Yabemiya’s bubbly smile and the delicious scent of tofu pudding and grilled fish in the air, and she couldn’t help but salivate profusely. She took a deep breath, and turned to Yabemiya again as she said, “Alright, then I’ll just get a savory tofu pudding and a super spicy grilled fish.”

“Alright, your order will be ready soon.” Yabemiya nodded with a smile, and turned to leave.

“Hmph, they’re lucky that I’m an easygoing person. Otherwise, I’d turn around and... and...” Vivian looked at the spicy grilled fish that had just been placed down on the neighboring table, and she swallowed the rest of her sentence along with the drool that was threatening to overflow.

...

“We’ve really done well today, Boss. If things continue like this, we’ll be able to save up enough to buy roujiamos for the entire winter.”

“One bronze wild boar, two green winged snakes, and one sawtooth tiger; that’s enough for many days worth of roujiamo.” Outside the restaurant, Mond and Kiel looked at Sargerass with excitement on their faces. Both of them had a few small cuts on their faces, but they didn’t appear to have suffered any major injuries.

“The roujiamo is extraordinarily effective for progression. I feel like I won’t have to eat that many roujiamo before I’ll be able to make another breakthrough!”

Cossus, Calzac, and Markza were also very animated. Ever since they had tasted the roujiamo for the first time, the first thought in their mind when they woke up every day was: “For roujiamo! We must fight for roujiamo! We must complete more missions for roujiamo!”

Only through eating more roujiamo could they become more powerful. This was a path to unprecedented power, and they were extremely excited to have discovered it.

“Winter is coming soon, and the weather has been colder this year than in the previous years, which suggests that this winter might last longer than usual. We have to prepare more roujiamo to cope with that.” Sargerass shook his head with a grave expression, and said, “On top of that, a third group of

brothers is expected to join us soon, so we have to make preparations for that. Once the weather starts to get colder, prey will become more and more difficult to find.”

All of the demons’ expressions also became grimmer upon hearing that.

Sargeris raised his fist to the sky, and yelled loudly, “Let’s work hard for our tribe, and for roujiamo!”

“For roujiamo!” the lava demons yelled in unison, and they were full of vigor once again.

“These demons... are a little adorable.”

All of the customers looked outside the restaurant upon hearing the commotion, and many of them wore benevolent smiles as they did so. Those lava demons visited the restaurant every day for roujiamo, and despite their intimidating appearance, they were all gentlemen on the inside. They abided by all of the restaurant’s rules, and even helped to maintain order in the restaurant. In order not to affect the dining experience of the other customers, they voluntarily stood outside to eat, and many customers had developed a fondness for them.

*Roujiamo? Is that what those lava demons are going crazy for? *Vivian looked outside with a hint of surprise on her face. She then flipped open her menu again as she was curious to see just what kind of dish his roujiamo was.

*No matter what it is, it can’t be more delicious than my spicy grilled fish. I could eat that dish every day for the rest of my life. The medium spice was already very satisfying yesterday; I’m really looking forward to tasting the super spicy grilled fish today. *Vivian glanced at the kitchen with yearning and anticipation in her eyes.

“Here is the savory tofu pudding you ordered. Enjoy.” Yabemiya emerged from the kitchen with a bowl of savory tofu pudding, and set it down in front of Vivian with a smile.

“Thank you.” Vivian nodded as she turned her attention to the tofu pudding in front of her.

Reddish-orange juices had been poured on top of the tofu pudding, along with pickled vegetables, coriander, minced garlic, chopped green onions, and a few drops of sesame seed oil. Steam was still rising from the freshly made tofu pudding, and its delectable scent wafted toward her.

“Gulp.”

Vivian couldn’t help but swallow. However, she quickly realized that she had lost her composure, and she coughed to hide her embarrassment. She sat up straighter in her chair, and said, “I actually only want to eat the spicy grilled fish, but seeing as it’s not ready yet, I guess I have no choice but to have this first. Still, I think the spicy grilled fish is the most delicious dish.”

Yabemiya smiled, but didn’t say anything. She found this young man to be quite amusing. He would occasionally ramble to himself, but his personality appeared to be quite good, and he was not an unreasonable person.

Vivian picked up her spoon, and gently dug into the tofu pudding. The spoon sliced through the soft tofu pudding as if it were slicing through water, and the reddish-orange juices on top immediately seeped

into the incision. As her spoon dug deeper into the tofu pudding, its aroma became even more pronounced, and her eyes lit up with anticipation.

Due to her condition, she always had to eat very bland foods, so when she snuck out for meals, she always preferred to find some dishes that were really strong in flavor in order to stimulate her taste buds.

However, even though the tofu pudding's aroma wasn't very strong, it still evoked a powerful craving within her.

The tofu pudding slid down her tongue, and it melted in her mouth along with the savory juices. The complementary ingredients also contributed to enhancing the flavor, and even after swallowing the mouthful of tofu pudding, its delectable flavor continued to linger in her mouth.

*It's so delicious! What is this stuff? How could it be so smooth and tender? It's not water, but it melts in my mouth, and I can taste a faint hint of seafood in it. Those dried shrimp are very small, but they're full of flavor. Even the pickled vegetables here are different from any that I've tasted before. The flavor is just right, and complements the tofu pudding to perfection. *Vivian stared at the tofu pudding with incredulity on her face. Its flavor was completely different from that of the spicy grilled fish, but it was just as captivating.

One mouthful was not enough! She simply couldn't stop after eating the first spoonful!

She shoveled one spoonful of tofu pudding after another into her mouth, and a blissful smile appeared on her face as the delicious taste spread over her palate.

*Spicy grilled fish is the best! But... tofu pudding is also very delicious! *Vivian had already completely forgotten what she had said earlier; her mind was completely preoccupied with the tofu pudding!

"As expected, savory tofu pudding really is the best." The elderly man from before nodded with contentment. He reluctantly placed the last spoonful of tofu pudding into his mouth, and savored it slowly before swallowing it.

"Even though the flavor was rather ordinary... seeing as the spicy grilled fish isn't ready yet, I'll get another savory tofu pudding." Vivian put down the bowl that she had just licked squeaky clean as she turned to Yabemiya. Even though her expression was quite calm and collected, the tips of her ears were a little red.

"I'm sorry, I can't." Yabemiya shook her head with a resolute expression.

Chapter 376: Outdoor Dining Area?

Vivian looked at Yabemiya with a serious expression, and asked, "Even if I were to leave now, and never come back again unless you sold me a second tofu pudding, you still wouldn't change your mind?"

"Big Brother Mustache, you can't go!" Amy cried.

"Why? What if I insist on leaving? Are you worried that if I never come again, business will become bad for your restaurant?" Vivian looked at Amy with a smile. She felt as if she had gained the ascendancy.

“No, it’s not that. If you really want to go, then you have to pay for the tofu pudding first. That’ll be 200 copper coins.” Amy shook her head as she extended her little hand toward Vivian.

Vivian’s smile immediately froze on her face. She looked at Amy’s serious expression, and suddenly discovered that she had completely underestimated this little girl.

“Did you not bring money, Big Brother Mustache? That won’t do. Our restaurant only takes cash, and you can leave after you pay.” Amy looked back at Vivian with confusion in her eyes.

To leave or not to leave? Vivian became quite conflicted. She was only trying to threaten Yabemiya so she could get another savory tofu pudding, but this little girl wasn’t scared in the slightest, and was more than willing to let her leave as long as she paid.

Yabemiya was also looking at Vivian with a smile. She wasn’t worried that Vivian wouldn’t be able to pay. After all, she could tell from his attire that he was quite wealthy. Besides, he had paid for the grilled fish the night before as well ¹.

However, the rule of one tofu pudding per person was set in stone, and no exceptions could be made. If he insisted on having a second tofu pudding, and would leave if he didn’t get it, then she would tell him it was just as Amy had said—pay the bill, and you may leave.

No! I’m really angry, but I can’t miss out on that delicious spicy grilled fish today. If I don’t eat it, I might not be able to sleep well tonight, so I have to have it. I’ll just have to swallow my pride! Vivian looked at Yabemiya, who didn’t look like she was anywhere close to changing her mind, and Amy, who still had her little hand extended with a serious expression, and she heaved a resigned sigh. She crossed her arms in a grumpy display, and said, “I actually want to leave, but the spicy grilled fish must be close to being served, right? If I leave now, the fish would go to waste, and that would be a shame. As such, I’ll leave after eating the grilled fish. Forget the tofu pudding.”

“Alright, please wait for a moment.” Yabemiya smiled as she entered the kitchen.

“Big Brother Mustache, you just want to eat the spicy grilled fish, right? I can see it in our eyes.” Amy also withdrew her little hand, and looked at Vivian with a knowing smile.

“Who told you that? How is that possible? You’re wrong!” Vivian was quite flustered as she waved her hands. She inched her face closer to Amy, and said, “Also, why do you call me Big Brother Mustache? That’s such a bad nickname. Call me Big Brother Most Handsome on the Entire Continent. I like that nickname.”

“But I don’t like it; I like calling you Big Brother Mustache.” Amy shook her head before pointing to the kitchen with a proud expression, and said, “Also, Big Brother Most Handsome on the Entire Continent is my father, not you.”

“Er...” Vivian turned toward the kitchen, and was at a loss for words. This little lass wasn’t backing down in the slightest, and she didn’t know how to respond. She looked at Amy’s adorable little face, and conceded her loss with a resigned sigh.

“Alright, whatever makes you happy, then.” Vivian took a glance at Schonard, who somehow managed to appear both grief-stricken and excited at the same time, and she immediately felt better. At the very least, her nickname was much better than his stupid long one.

“Alright, Big Brother Mustache.” Amy nodded, and stroked Ugly Duckling, which was rubbing its body against her leg, and she picked it up before walking away.

I was going to tell you the latest news from the Catering Association, but you’ve taken my Big Brother Most Handsome on the Entire Continent nickname away from me, so I’m not going to tell you anything, hmph! Vivian thought to herself before resting her chin in her hand with a bored expression as she watched Amy play with Ugly Duckling.

One dish after another was delivered out of the kitchen. Even though Mag was the only chef, the rate at which dishes were prepared was a lot faster than even in most large restaurants. Customers soon began to dig into their meals, and a blissful atmosphere permeated the entire restaurant.

“I’ll get 30 roujiamos.” Sargeris immediately made a loud announcement as he walked into the restaurant. His usual seat was already taken, so he stood with his folding chair near the entrance, and didn’t go in any further.

“We should have some seats available soon.” Yabemiya addressed Sargeris with a smile. She had become quite familiar with this demon who ordered several dozens of roujiamos every day.

“That’s alright, we’ll stand outside to eat. My brothers are really hungry, so if you could prepare the roujiamos as quickly as possible, that would be great.” Sargeris shook his head with a bashful smile. He didn’t mind if he got a seat or not.

“Alright, please wait for a moment.” Yabemiya nodded with a smile before quickly making her way toward the kitchen.

“Boss, I feel like we should set up some tables and chairs outside the restaurant. That way, customers who don’t want to come in have a place to sit.” Yabemiya walked into the kitchen, and made this suggestion as she loaded roujiamos onto a platter.

“Hmm, that’s a good idea. But are we allowed to do that in the Aden Square?” Mag nodded with a thoughtful expression. An outdoor dining area was indeed a good idea, but he wondered if it was viable.

“That’s a valid concern. I just feel bad for the lava demons whenever I see them standing outside to eat. After all, they’re already very tired every time they come to our restaurant, but they still have to stand.” Yabemiya nodded with a hint of sympathy in her eyes.

“That’s a problem that we should address.” Mag also turned to look outside upon hearing that. Sure enough, a few lava demons were standing outside the restaurant, and all carried injuries. It appeared that they had just returned from a hunting trip.

Earning the money required for several dozens of roujiamo every day placed a lot of pressure on them. They had to complete many missions in order to earn that money, and if they could take a seat while they enjoyed their meal, then it would surely be a form of consolation to them after their day of hard work.

“Ding!”

Right at that moment, the restaurant's door was pushed open, and a tall and slender woman in a blue dress walked in. The temperature in the room instantly dropped by a few degrees, and even Mag, who was standing in the kitchen, could feel the frosty aura emanating from her body.

Chapter 377: Is She Here For Miya?

Why is she here? Mag looked at the woman who had just come in, and his eyes widened with surprise. She was an extremely beautiful woman who appeared to be around 20 years of age, and her skin was as fair as snow. However, both her expression and disposition were cold to the extreme. Wasn't she the Frost Dragon that he had encountered at the city gates last time?

Mag had an extremely good memory, and he recalled that he had taken an extra glance at her during their first encounter at the city gates, but he didn't recall doing anything to offend her. In any case, Urien and Krassu were both in the restaurant at the moment, so he didn't have to worry about her causing any trouble. He was merely curious why someone like her would visit his restaurant. Could she be here for a meal?

Elizabeth looked at the bustling restaurant, and her brows furrowed slightly. There were all types of strange scents intermingling in the air, which was quite annoying for her.

She didn't like human food, and she didn't like adding a bunch of condiments to food. It made her feel as if she had eaten something strange.

She had come today in order to find the half-dragon girl that she had seen last time. On that occasion, she had gone elsewhere to take care of some other matters. Even though those matters hadn't been completely resolved, at least she wouldn't have to worry about being spied on anymore. As such, she had returned to see if that half-dragon girl was the person that she was looking for.

"Welco..." Yabemiya made her way over with a smile, and her eyes immediately lit up at the sight of Elizabeth. Her mouth gaped open slightly, and the rest of her sentence got stuck in her throat.

What a beautiful woman. She's like a goddess, and... why do I feel a hint of a familiar aura from her? It's the same feeling that I get from Mother... Yabemiya was a little perplexed, and she was slightly entranced as she looked at Elizabeth.

*She... really is a half-dragon, but why is her bloodline so strange? She has one golden pupil and one black pupil. If she possesses the Golden Dragon bloodline, then both of her eyes should be golden in color; there's no way a human's bloodline would be able to contend with that of a Golden Dragon. This type of occurrence will only happen with dragons of a lower tier. *Elizabeth was also examining Yabemiya with confusion in her blue eyes. She could also sense a slightly familiar aura from Yabemiya, but it was her first time coming into contact with a half-dragon, so she didn't know if she would feel this way toward all half-dragons or if there was an actual bloodline connection.

Elizabeth stood at the entrance, while Yabemiya stood in front of her with a platter in her arms. The two of them stared at one another as if they had been immobilized.

The frosty aura permeated the entire restaurant, causing many customers to shiver as they turned toward the entrance.

*What a beautiful woman! *

That was the first thought that appeared in many people's minds. She was an icy beauty who was really good to look at, but her frosty disposition made it clear that she was not to be messed with.

*This frosty aura... doesn't stem from magic. Could it be that she's a Frost Dragon? *Sargerass stood near the entrance, and appraised Elizabeth with a surprised expression. As a lava demon, he was very sensitive toward ice, and he tightened his grip on his foldable chair.

Outside the restaurant, cautious expressions also appeared on the faces of the other lava demons. They harbored a natural sense of enmity toward the cold.

*Is that a little girl from the Frost Dragon family? *Urien was sweating profusely as he dined on his grilled fish, and he turned to look at Elizabeth with a hint of surprise on his face. This little girl looks a little like that guy from all those years ago. I think he has a daughter that should be about her age. I haven't heard any news about him for many years, but he's being hunted by so many people, so he must be in hiding at the moment.

"Jeez, can't I have a nice warm meal?" Krassu furrowed his brows, and the frosty aura in the restaurant immediately receded, making the temperature go back to normal again.

*Lord of Fire, Krassu! *Elizabeth immediately took her eyes off Yabemiya, and focused her gaze on Krassu. Her expression changes slightly, and she hesitated momentarily before withdrawing her frosty aura. At the same time, she took a glance at Sargerass, and a cautious look appeared in her eyes.

The dragon island and Ghost Islands neighbored each other. Even though there was a vast expanse of ocean separating them, the two sides would still engage in regular conflicts. During the war among species, countless battles had erupted between them.

The Frost Dragons and lava demons were natural enemies, so they fought very often. Back when the lava demons were one of the top 10 demon subspecies, they had countless powerhouses among their ranks, and could compete with the giant ice dragons.

However, the lava demons had since declined, while the Frost Dragons still retained their high status among all dragons. Thus, the two sides were no longer rivals, though the decline of the lava demons was not unrelated to the Frost Dragons.

As such, both sides still harbored resentment toward each other even to this very day.

However, the lava demons no longer had what it took to oppose the Frost Dragons, and the latter didn't want to stoop down to eradicate a subspecies that no longer posed a threat to them.

But to Elizabeth's surprise, this lava demon was slightly threatening to her. Even though he wasn't displaying any open animosity toward her, if a battle really were to erupt, she wasn't sure if she would be able to come out on top.

*Could it be that the lava demons are experiencing a resurgence? *Elizabeth looked out the door at the other lava demons outside, and discovered that they were also more powerful than the lava demons she had heard about in the past.

“Hi there, we currently have many customers at the moment, so you’ll have to wait for a while for a seat.” Yabemiya quickly came to her senses, and a faint blush appeared on her face. She was a little embarrassed after being entranced with another woman.

“Alright.” Elizabeth hesitated momentarily before nodding. She didn’t like the multitude of aromas wafting through the air in the restaurant, but she still wanted to confirm Yabemiya’s identity. There were most likely many half-dragons in Chaos City, but it would be extremely difficult to find one at the right age with the right bloodline. Furthermore, she had to keep her search a secret as she would be in danger if Fox were to find out.

Prior to truly awakening her dragon bloodline, she wasn’t very different from an ordinary human being.

*A Frost Dragon? Looks like more and more dragons are coming to Chaos City in recent times. Could it be that the negotiation between the dragons and demons is about to commence? In any case, this woman really is beautiful. I have to drag Luna along next time to see her. *Vivian also glanced at Elizabeth with a hint of surprise in her eyes.

Is she here for Miya? Mag wore a cautious speculative expression as he examined Elizabeth. Could it be that Miya’s irresponsible bastard of a father was finally trying to look for her?

Chapter 378: Rip!

“A seat has opened up over there for you.” After a short while, a customer left, and Yabemiya guided Elizabeth toward the newly vacated seat.

“I don’t like sitting together with others.” Elizabeth looked at the seat that Yabemiya was pointing to, and her brows furrowed slightly. At that table, there were two big and burly orcs chomping on roujiamos and a dwarf who was feasting on a spicy grilled fish, opening his mouth to pant from time to time as sweat poured down his face.

“Sorry, but when we have an excessive amount of customers, we are unable to provide independent tables for our customers. If you’d like to, you can perhaps wait for a while longer, and see if a more desirable seat opens up.” Yabemiya could see what Elizabeth was thinking, and she immediately offered an alternative. Even though all customers were the same in her eyes, asking Elizabeth to dine at the same table as orcs and dwarves wasn’t a good option.

Elizabeth was already preparing to leave, but she hesitated upon seeing Yabemiya’s earnest expression, nodding in the end.

“Oh, a new seat has opened up; you can sit over there.” Yabemiya looked around, and her eyes lit up when her gaze fell upon Vivian’s table as the customer sitting across from Vivian was getting up to leave.

Elizabeth took a glance at Vivian, only to find that he was a male human, and a relatively clean one at that. There were two female humans at his table, and both of them appeared quite refined as well. As such, she strode over to that table, and sat down across from Vivian.

Vivian was just about to taste her super spicy grilled fish, and was slightly surprised to see Elizabeth sit down across from her. She looked up at her with a smile, and offered, "This is the super spicy grilled fish; it's super delicious. Do you want to have a taste?"

She had grown up in the city lord's castle, and had seen countless powerful beings during her life thus far, among which there was no lack of even giant 10th-tier dragons. As such, she was not fearful in the slightest in Elizabeth's presence. On the contrary, she was rather fond of such a beautiful Frost Dragon.

Elizabeth glanced at the grilled fish in front of Vivian, and replied in a cold voice, "No."

At the same time, she cast a glance at Vivian as well. If a man dared to speak like that to her under normal circumstances, he would be dead already.

"That's a pity, then." Vivian shrugged nonchalantly. She picked up a morsel of succulent fish with her chopsticks before slowly putting into her mouth. The nostalgic burning sensation, followed by that blissful sense of numbness, immediately followed. Her sense of taste then quickly returned, and the crispy fish skin, as well as its delectable flesh, began to melt in her mouth.

The succulent flavor made Vivian close her eye involuntarily, while the scorching sensation in her throat made her want to scream. Sure enough, the super spicy grilled fish was completely different compared to the medium spice version. She had never tasted anything so spicy in her life, and she couldn't imagine what the insanely spicy grilled fish could possibly taste like.

"Rip..."

Vivian could feel the binding around her chest tearing again, and her expression stiffened, but she quickly relaxed. She had worn her loosest item of clothing today, and even though she had ordered a spicier fish than she had the night before, she wasn't concerned about her clothes being torn open.

It's so spicy that I want to scream, but it's so delicious as well! Vivian exhaled as she stared at the spicy grilled fish in front of her with glowing eyes. She swallowed one mouthful of fish after another, using its delicious flavor to suppress the scorching sensation in her mouth.

Heat spread through her entire body, and water vapor soon began to rise around her. That was frosty energy that was being forced out of her meridians, and there was clearly less energy being expelled compared to the day before, but the effect was still very apparent.

What is that? Elizabeth looked at Vivian, who was completely immersed in her spicy grilled fish. She had already grown accustomed to the aroma wafting within the restaurant, and even though it was a little bothersome at first, after getting used to it, she discovered that it wasn't actually unpleasant. Instead, it was a little... alluring?

That was right, it was alluring!

This was an aroma that she had never encountered before. She didn't know what kind of food was releasing this aroma, but it was the first time that she discovered that human cooking could be so alluring, even to the extent that she was beginning to salivate.

The most pronounced aroma that she could smell was most likely coming from that platter of red fish. The sharp spicy aroma was not to her liking, but the other captivating scents that intermingled with it struck her with the urge to give it a try.

Looks like cooked fish smells completely different from raw fish... Elizabeth thought to herself. She looked on as Vivian feasted on her spicy grilled fish with a blissful expression, and she swallowed involuntarily. It appeared that this dish really was very delicious.

“What would you like to order?” Yabemiya strode over to Elizabeth with a smile. She felt as if there was an indescribable connection between herself and Elizabeth, one that she had never experienced from anyone else. However, she didn’t know how to ask about it, so she could only keep her questions to herself.

Elizabeth pointed at Vivian’s grilled fish, and replied, “I’ll get one of those.”

“Didn’t you say you didn’t want this?” Vivian looked up with a perplexed expression. She stuck out her tongue, and she felt as if it no longer belonged to her.

“I changed my mind.” Elizabeth gave a very direct reply.

Well, at least you’re not pretentious... Vivian was speechless. If it were her, she would have definitely invented an excuse to make herself feel less awkward.

“Do you have a problem with that?” Elizabeth asked.

“Nope.” Vivian shook her head, and continued to dine on her fish.

“That’s the spicy grilled fish. It has four levels of spiciness, and comes in three sizes. You can have a look at the menu before making a decision. If you don’t like spicy food, then I suggest...” Yabemiya provided an introduction as she pointed to the menu on the table.

“I’ll get the same one that he’s got,” Elizabeth replied.

“That customer ordered a super spicy grilled fish; are you sure you would like that?” Yabemiya asked. She was a fan of spicy food, but the medium spicy grilled fish was already quite spicy to her. The super spicy and insanely spicy levels were presumably a further step up from that.

“Yes.” Elizabeth nodded, and didn’t say anything else as she looked at the ring on her right thumb.

“Sure, please wait a moment.” Yabemiya nodded before turning toward the kitchen.

Dragons don’t usually eat cooked food, right? If she’s never had any spicy food before, but she’s trying the super spicy grilled fish now... her clothes look pretty tight... Vivian glanced at Elizabeth, and a hint of curiosity appeared on her face.

A short while later, Elizabeth’s grilled fish also arrived.

Elizabeth looked at the grilled fish that had been placed in front of her, and picked up her chopsticks in an awkward manner, almost as if she had never used them in her life before. She struggled momentarily before finally extracting a morsel of fish, and placing it into her mouth.

Many customers in the restaurant were looking at her. Even Mag had stopped what he was doing in the kitchen, and turned to look at her with a curious expression. Everyone was wondering how a giant dragon would react after tasting the spicy grilled fish, especially an icy beauty like her.

What the hell is this?!

A scorching sensation instantly exploded in her mouth, and her face immediately became flushed. A burst of heat quickly circulated through her body, and it felt as if there were countless pairs of hands tickling her at once. What was even more alarming to her was that her dress of snow and ice was slowly tearing at the seams!

“Rip!”

A sharp tearing sound erupted.

Chapter 379: What Is in These Dishes?

In the restaurant, everyone turned to stare at Elizabeth, and their eyes lit up as they heard the tearing sound.

A flash of silver light suddenly erupted, and a massive white snowflake appeared beneath Elizabeth’s feet. The light disappeared as quickly as it had appeared, and Elizabeth vanished from her seat along with it.

“Hmm? Where did the beautiful big sister go?” Amy looked around in amazement with Ugly Duckling in her arms.

“Where did she go!?” Many of the customers also looked on with surprise and a hint of disappointment. No one knew why Elizabeth had suddenly disappeared.

Did she teleport herself away? Mag was also a little surprised. He took a glance at her empty seat before focusing on his cooking again.

She has decent mastery of the frost domain; looks like she really is that guy’s daughter. She’s a lot easier on the eyes, though. Urien smiled, but didn’t say anything.

Vivian faltered momentarily before mumbling in a forlorn voice, “Aww, she ran away. What a pity.” Her words echoed the thoughts of many customers in the restaurant.

In the air outside the restaurant, a white light flashed, and a giant ice dragon appeared before blasting a ball of flames out of its mouth. An ear-splitting roar then erupted, and the front half of its translucent snowy white body turned red.

“Did that Frost Dragon just spit out a ball of flames? How does that even work?”

“What a beautiful Frost Dragon. But that girl just so happened to disappear right after taking a bite of that grilled fish, immediately after which that fire-spitting Frost Dragon appeared. Could it be that she’s the Frost Dragon?”

“I think that’s most likely the case. Did Mag lace the grilled fish with something? How was it able to force a giant dragon to reveal its true form?”

All of the customers discussed spiritedly among themselves as they looked at the Frost Dragon outside.

Thank heavens she knows how to teleport. Otherwise, if she were to reveal her true form in the restaurant, the entire place would explode! Looks like I have to be more careful with giant dragon customers from now on. Mag’s heart also jolted slightly upon hearing the thunderous dragon’s roar. A giant dragon over 30 meters in length was simply far too enormous.

What is this stuff? Why is it so stimulative? If it weren’t for the fact that I teleported myself out of there quickly enough, my clothes would have melted! What did the owner put in that dish? As expected, humans really are sly creatures. They cannot be trusted, and their food cannot be eaten. Elizabeth was furious as she hovered in mid-air. If it weren’t for the fact that the Lord of Fire was in the restaurant, she would have completely demolished it.

The scorching sensation was still flowing throughout her body, and even though most of it had been repressed by her snow and ice, there was still a small portion that was surging in her veins. She could clearly sense some moisture slowly escaping before emerging as water vapor from her body. It was a very strange sensation, but after growing accustomed to it, it actually became a very satisfying sensation.

In any case, this fish is really delicious! It’s impossible to describe this flavor. It’s more delicious than the best spirit fruits on dragon island, and more succulent than the freshest dragon fish. How could an ordinary fish be this delicious?!

Elizabeth was rather perplexed as she thought to herself. Even though the burning sensation in her body was a little uncomfortable, the taste of that fish was simply unforgettable. It was like nothing that she had ever eaten, and she couldn’t help but turn back to look at the restaurant again.

Should I go back in? Elizabeth was a little conflicted. If she went back in there to finish the dish, there was no guarantee that she wouldn’t have that same wardrobe malfunction again. However, she simply couldn’t bear to leave such a delicious grilled fish behind.

It was as if tasting that grilled fish had opened up a new door to her, making her completely give up on her fixation on raw foods. In comparison to this grilled fish, the foods that she had once thought to be delicacies suddenly seemed extremely bland and unappealing.

The emergence of a massive fire-spitting Frost Dragon had obviously attracted the attention of many people in the Aden Square.

Giant dragons weren’t exactly rare in Chaos City, but they usually appeared exclusively in their human form, and very rarely appeared in the sky in their dragon form before letting loose a thunderous roar as she did. She could easily draw attention from the Gray Temple through those actions, which could prove to be quite troublesome for her.

“She... She still hasn’t paid.” Yabemiya furrowed her brows at the sight of the empty seat. However, she then heard the dragon roar erupting outside, and her gaze was drawn out the window. Her eyes

widened at the sight of the massive Frost Dragon hanging in the sky, and her mouth gaped open in disbelief.

So this is a real giant dragon! Is she my brethren? No... I'm only a half-dragon. I'm not worthy to be considered the brethren of a giant dragon. A hint of anticipation appeared in Yabemiya's eyes, but that was soon masked by self-pity, and she lowered her head, even making an effort to hide the horns on her head as she did so.

She wasn't a giant dragon; she was just a half-dragon. There was no way for her to fly freely in the sky like a giant dragon. She was only a freak with dragon horns and a dragon's tail.

Perhaps this only happened because I'm not yet accustomed to human cuisine. If I change into a loose set of clothes, everything would be fine. Elizabeth struggled with an internal conflict for a long while before making a decision. Light flashed through the air, and she transformed into her human form again. However, on this occasion, her tight-fitting blue dress had been replaced by a loose set of blue robes that were slightly similar to what Vivian was wearing. She stepped forward in midair, upon which a large snow flower appeared beneath her feet, and she reappeared in the seat across from Vivian in the restaurant.

"You're back." Vivian was slightly startled by the return of Elizabeth. She raised an eyebrow, and inspected Elizabeth's new clothes as a peculiar look appeared on her face.

"Wow, did you go home and get changed this quickly?" Amy was staring up at Elizabeth with wonder in her eyes. To think that she didn't even have to walk to get home; that was amazing!

"A Frost Dragon would never run away for no reason. This is my fish, and I'll finish it no matter what." Elizabeth wore a serious expression as she picked up her chopsticks again. Her expression turned slightly grave as she placed another morsel of fish into her mouth.

This feeling; it's making me suffocate! But it's so delicious that I can't bear to spit it out! What kind of dish is this? What did that man put in this fish? Who is he? Countless questions flashed through Elizabeth's mind as she turned toward the kitchen to look at Mag.

Chapter 380: May I Have a Drop of Your Blood?

After eating another insanely spicy grilled fish, Schonard emerged from the restaurant pressing his hands against the wall to support himself. He was far too busy gasping for air to notice the city lord's daughter or anything like that, and as he panted, he wondered what he was doing with his life. At the same time, he was quite concerned whether he would be able to walk the following day.

"The super spicy grilled fish was so good!" Vivian also emerged from the restaurant at the same time, and she wiped her mouth with the back of her hand. She was feeling extremely satisfied after her meal of grilled fish, and her eyes were sparkling with excitement.

I have to take Luna here on her day off. She's been really busy recently, so she definitely wouldn't have had time to come and dine here. Even if she did come, she wouldn't pick such an expensive grilled fish dish. Vivian looked back at the restaurant before departing in high spirits.

I don't know what the owner put into that fish, and with so many customers there, he would definitely deny any wrongdoing anyway, but that grilled fish really was delicious. To think that human food could be so tasty; looks like Father wasn't lying to me, after all. Elizabeth also walked out of the restaurant soon after with mixed emotions. Her complexion was tinged with a hint of redness; before she knew it, she had also eaten an entire grilled fish.

Even though her bodily reactions were still a little violent during the dining process, she was mentally prepared, so no other awkward situations arose.

The fish was imbued with extremely powerful and invasive fire-type energy, but it hasn't impacted my body negatively in any way. Instead, it seems to have dilated my meridians, and... Am I sweating? Elizabeth ran a finger across her forehead, and was surprised to see the beads of sweat that were collected on it.

As a Frost Dragon, she had almost never shed a drop of sweat in her life. Even in a battle, it would have to be an extremely fierce one for her to sweat at all.

However, she was sweating after eating that grilled fish. It was truly a special experience.

She looks really busy. Looks like I'll have to wait for her outside. Elizabeth glanced at Yabemiya, who was busy attending to customers. She had observed Yabemiya while she was eating, but was still unable to determine what bloodlines ran in Yabemiya's veins. The easiest way to get an answer would be to ask her directly; she wasn't used to wasting too much time on someone who's not important to her anyway.

As the restaurant closed down for the night, a customer got up, and asked forlornly, "Mag, the final Aden Square food competition rankings are going to be released tomorrow; are you sure you can't get your Mamy Restaurant reinstated?"

"That's outside of my control. Perhaps a miracle will happen." Mag shook his head with a smile. He actually wasn't hoping for anything anymore. No matter how much of a revolution would take place in the Catering Association, no one would pay special attention to a restaurant that had been operating for only a month.

"See you tomorrow, Boss, Little Amy." Yabemiya and Sally bade farewell to Mag and Amy before departing.

"Hmm, isn't that...?" After the two of them emerged from the restaurant, they soon noticed Elizabeth, who was standing not far away from the restaurant's entrance. She wore a long ice crystal dress, and had her back to the restaurant as she looked up into the sky. She seemed to be contemplating something, and her profile was so beautiful under the moonlight that an onlooker could easily be entranced.

"I have a few questions for you." Elizabeth turned to Yabemiya; her voice was non-negotiable.

"She has the right to choose whether she wants to answer or not." Sally stepped forward, and looked at Elizabeth with a calm expression.

Elizabeth looked back at Sally with a slightly grave expression. Even though Sally was only a waitress at the restaurant, it was undeniable that she seemed to pose a threat to her. "I don't think she'll refuse."

“You can ask me anything you want, and I’ll answer your questions to the best of my abilities.” Yabemiya also stepped forward, and she looked at Elizabeth with a hint of panic and anticipation in her eyes.

She had envisioned coming into contact with a dragon countless times in the past. She’d always imagined that her father would appear before her, or send someone to find her.

Even though Elizabeth was a Frost Dragon, so there was almost no chance that they were related, even just talking to Elizabeth evoked within her a sense of belonging to the dragon race.

Sally glanced at Yabemiya, and didn’t say anything, but she still stood firmly by her side.

“I want to know what kind of dragon your father is.” Elizabeth cut straight to the chase. She wore her usual cold expression, but there was a hint of anticipation and anxiety in her eyes.

“I...” Yabemiya opened her mouth to reply, but her voice suddenly cut off. After a long while, she cast her eyes downward, and shook her head as she said dejectedly, “I don’t know the answer to that. I’ve never seen my father, not even once.”

“You’ve never seen him?” Elizabeth’s eyes lit up, and she took an involuntary step forward as she asked, “That what about your mother? Does she know what kind of dragon he is? Or does she know any special traits of his?”

“My mother passed away five years ago. She didn’t know what kind of dragon my father is, either. She only learned of the fact that he was a dragon when he left her.” Yabemiya’s expression became even more sullen as she shook her head.

Sally looked at Yabemiya with a hint of sympathy in her eyes. She then glanced at Elizabeth with a confused expression. What was this woman trying to do? Could it be that her agenda had something to do with Miya’s identity?

Yabemiya’s thin and frail body seemed to have endured countless hardships, and Elizabeth’s heart tightened at the sight of her dejected expression. Looking at Yabemiya made her feel as if she was seeing a mirror image of herself. When the entire world had fallen, she could only carry it on her shoulders alone. She was silent for a short while before saying, “My apologies.”

“It’s alright. All of those things are in the past. I’m very happy now, and I don’t think life has been unfair to me. At the very least, I was able to meet Mag, Amy, Sally, and so many lovely customers.” Yabemiya raised her head, and a bubbly energetic smile appeared on her face, wiping away all of her sorrow.

Elizabeth’s expression faltered upon seeing Yabemiya’s smile. The smile wasn’t forced in any way, nor was it a tool used to mask her depression. Instead, it was filled with a yearning and anticipation toward life, just as if there was nothing worth feeling sad about.

What kind of person was she? How could she endure so much adversity, yet completely leave all of those negative experiences behind? How could she remain optimistic despite her difficult past? She was a someone that was worthy of admiration, yet also evoked a sense of sympathy.

Elizabeth fell silent for a moment before asking, “May I have a drop of your blood?”