

## Stay At home 541

### Chapter 541 You Have to Make Sure Big Sister Flat-chest Gets to Eat the Big Rat

The carriage stopped on a path lined with massive trees, which created a dense forest. The mercenaries in the carriage immediately sprung into action. Minotaur demon Dennis and orc Skol exited the carriage first, standing at the forefront of the party with their weapons drawn. Scott and Sam were responsible for guarding the rear of the carriage, and both of them wore wary expressions as they surveyed their surroundings. Meanwhile, Sydney leaped from one tree branch to another like an actual monkey, and soon disappeared from view.

Evan remained sitting in the carriage while holding his wand and looking around. Eva also remained sitting in the carriage, but she had unconsciously sidled up closer to Evan.

Mag held Amy against his chest with his left arm, while his right hand hovered over his bull-slaying blade. Carrying a longsword could lead people to suspect his true identity, so he decided to temporarily use his bull-slaying blade as his weapon. He looked around curiously, but didn't find anything that looked as if it were worth fighting. As such, he was wondering why Sivir had suddenly instructed Sydney to stop the carriage.

Amy's eyes were also filled with curiosity. This was her first time traveling with a mercenary squad, and a battle appeared to be imminent, so she was very excited.

Meanwhile, Ugly Duckling, who was sleeping in her arms, suddenly opened its eyes as its ears perked up. It sniffed the air carefully before looking around the surrounding forest as if something had caught its interest.

Dennis turned to Sivir, and asked, "Squad Leader, what are we dealing with here?"

The other mercenaries were rather perplexed too, but they weren't skeptical. They seemed to have absolute trust in Sivir's judgment.

"It's a mature Purple Golden Mink. We're in luck. If we can catch this little guy, it'll net us earnings no less than those from the Ironhide Bull," Sivir said with a smile.

"A Purple Golden Mink!" All of the mercenaries were overjoyed to hear this.

"Who would've thought we'd encounter one of those here? I heard someone offered 500 gold coins for a Purple Golden Mink hide. It's even more expensive in weight than gold. We sure are lucky today." Dennis rubbed his hands together eagerly.

"Purple Golden Minks are very alert and extremely fast creatures, so it won't be easy for us to capture it in this dense forest. We can only get Monkey to try and chase it toward us, then capture it. We only have one chance, and if we miss it, the mink will get away." Sivir's smile receded, and was replaced by a serious expression. She pointed to a narrow passageway between hills nearby, and said, "Let's wait there. Sam, you go set up the traps. Everyone else, disperse evenly. Once the Purple Golden Mink appears, don't rush in to catch it straight away. Instead, try and chase it toward a certain direction so Evan can catch it with the help of Sam's traps."

“Remember that the Purple Golden Mink is only valuable for its hide. A complete mink hide is vastly more valuable than a damaged one. Even if we can’t capture it alive, try not to harm it too much.” Sivir’s expression had become quite serious.

“Yes!”

All of the mercenaries began to disperse in front of that natural passageway, creating a pocket. Meanwhile, Sam rushed on ahead and began to set up traps.

Sivir turned to Mag, and said, “Mr. Mag, this is an unforeseen scenario, and we’ll require some time to capture this Purple Golden Mink. The Purple Golden Mink won’t attack anyone unprovoked under normal circumstances, but it’s still rather dangerous as it’s a 2nd-tier magic beast. There’s no guarantee that it won’t go berserk when desperate. Hence, I think it would be best for you and your daughter to stay in the carriage. We’ll continue our journey after capturing the mink.”

Evan stood up and glared coldly at Mag as he pursed his lips in disdain. He then leaped lightly onto the branch of a large tree nearby before traversing through the forest. If it weren’t for the fact that he had to constantly keep one hand on his crotch, his movement would appear far more graceful.

He’s so cool even he’s jumping. I’m so lucky. An intoxicated expression appeared on Eva’s face before she turned to glance at Mag with disdain.

“No problem.” Mag nodded in response. Purple Golden Mink hide was one of the most sought-after coat materials for nobles. Mag knew a bit about them, and they were indeed 2nd-tier magic beasts, so Sivir really was looking out for their safety.

Of course, she must have also been worried that their participation would negatively impact the mercenary squad’s synergy. Purple Golden Minks weren’t very powerful, but they were extremely fast, and even a powerful knight would find it difficult to catch one in a forest. That was why their hide was so expensive.

If it weren’t for the fact that they had just so happened to come across one, the Rose Mercenary Squad wouldn’t try to capture it. After all, the failure rate was very high when attempting to capture a Purple Golden Mink, so they were only trying their luck.

As for Eva, Mag couldn’t even be bothered to look at her. He was afraid that looking at such a retard would kill off all of his brain cells.

Sivir nodded and parked the carriage beside some bushes. She then brought out the whip tied around her waist and snapped it in the air, upon which it wound itself around the branch of a large tree. She then pulled herself abruptly toward that branch and repeated that process to traverse through the trees.

“Big Sister Sivir is so awesome!” Amy looked on with glowing eyes.

“Indeed, she is.” Watching Sivir traverse through the forest reminded him of Lara from Tomb Raider.

“Father, what’s a Purple Golden Mink?” Amy asked.

“It’s a very large type of rat with purple and golden fur,” Mag explained with a smile.

“A large rat?” Amy’s eyes lit up and she turned to Ugly Duckling as she said, “Ugly Duckling, it’s a rat! Can you catch it?”

“Heh, it’s not a rat! The Purple Golden Mink is a 2nd-tier magic beast; a pathetic little kitten like that thing will never be able to catch it.” Eva looked at Ugly Duckling with mockery on her face.

“Meow!” Ugly Duckling seemed to be very displeased to hear that, and extended its tiny paws in a menacing display.

“You’re wrong, Big Sister Flat-chest. Ugly Duckling is not a kitten, but a duckling instead. Also, it’s a duckling that can catch rats.” Amy shook her head with a serious expression.

“Hmph! If even that thing can catch the Purple Golden Mink, then I’ll eat the mink raw.” Eva was trembling with rage after hearing Amy’s words, and she turned away again.

“It’s here.”

A loud cry erupted from the distance as Monkey quickly traversed through the forest. In front of him was a purple and golden figure that was moving so quickly it could barely be tracked by the naked eye.

“Ugly Duckling, you have to make sure Big Sister Flat-chest gets to eat the big rat.” Amy patted Ugly Duckling’s head with a solemn expression.

### **Chapter 542 Go, Ugly Duckling!**

The Rose Mercenary Squad members had already hidden themselves in the forest. The enormous trees and dense forestry created the ideal cover for them as they awaited the perfect moment to strike.

The first one to spring into action was Dennis. His massive figure emerged from behind a tree, and his huge mace whistled through the air, barely missing the Purple Golden Mink before it slammed into a tree.

The massive tree was felled amid a resounding boom, drawing a cry of shock and panic from the Purple Golden Mink as it reflexively sprang away from Dennis.

However, right at that moment, a green figure emerged from behind a tree in that direction, bringing a massive black shield down toward the Purple Golden Mink viciously.

An extremely humanized expression of shock and horror appeared on the mink’s face. However, as a 2nd-tier magic beast whose forte lay in speed and agility, it wouldn’t be caught so easily. It spread open its four limbs as if it were opening up a paragliding suit, and faint golden light shimmered from its limbs, allowing it to forcibly change its direction in mid-air and glide past the shield. It then sprang up forcefully from a tree, leaving deep indentations in the tree trunk with its powerful limbs before leaping toward another tree at an even faster speed.

“You’re not getting away!”

Scott emerged from behind a tree, standing right in its path. He gripped his longsword tightly in his hands before bringing it down with devastating power.

ver.

The Purple Golden Mink was unable to evade, and could only extend its claws, which were enshrouded in golden light, to meet the longsword.

“Ding!”

A crisp ringing sound erupted. The longsword struck the claws, and sparks flew through the air. The Purple Golden Mink tumbled to the ground, and quickly began to flee once again. It was trying to avoid escaping through the passageway between the two hills as it could sense a dangerous aura situated in that direction.

Right at that moment, a black boomerang hurtled forth from behind it, evading all of the trees as if it had a mind of its own before flying directly toward the mink.

The Purple Golden Mink wanted to go left, but it could only forcibly change directions again, weaving through the trees to run toward the passageway between the two hills while avoiding the boomerang.

As soon as it reached the end of that passageway, the forest would become even denser on the other side, thereby allowing it to easily slip away.

On a large tree beside the passageway, Sam was holding a green vine while staring with rapt attention at the oncoming Purple Golden Mink.

In another direction, Evan sat on a tree branch with a relaxed expression. His legs were folded in a rather awkward way as he pointed his white wand toward the Purple Golden Mink.

To think that a group of 3rd-tier mercenaries could cooperate so effectively; this mercenary squad is quite a proficient one, Mag praised internally. With the past experience of Mag Alex guiding him, he was able to easily gauge everyone’s power levels during those brief exchanges. The Rose Mercenary Squad members were predominantly at the 3rd-tier in power, with Sivr and Dennis close to the 4th-tier. Skol and Scott were both at the 3rd-tier, while Sydney and Sam were most likely 2nd-tier beings.

With sufficient chemistry, the power a group was capable of unleashing would be far greater than the sum of its individual members. This notion was being exemplified by the Rose Mercenary Squad.

In this dense forest, they were able to force the Purple Golden Mink toward the ideal direction through their seamless teamwork. It appeared that they had the mink in the bag.

“Meow!” Ugly Duckling sat up excitedly and extended its little paws, revealing the sharp claws within.

The Purple Golden Mink was in a complete panic and rushed blindly into the traps set up by Sam. During this brief period of time, Sam had already set up three traps, all of which targeted agile prey like the Purple Golden Mink. As long as it entered the designated area, he was confident in his ability to capture the mink.

Eva also rose to her feet and looked on with a nervous expression.

The boomerang carved a beautiful trajectory through the air before returning to Sivr’s hand. A smile appeared on her face as she looked at the Purple Golden Mink charging toward the traps. However, she

still headed in that direction with her hand resting on her boomerang, ready to hurl it again at any moment.

Monkey was also pursuing the Purple Golden Mink. Before the prey had actually been captured, complacency was absolutely taboo.

However, right as the Purple Golden Mink was about to rush into the traps, an intelligent light flashed through its eyes as it spread open its limbs again, allowing it to change directions in mid-air.

A wooden cage fell from the sky, but landed about half a meter away from it. Two rows of arrows also crisscrossed through the air, but were successfully evaded. As for the final trap, Sam hadn't even activated it yet.

"Stop right there, filthy beast!" Evan had thought that the hunt was over, so his expression changed slightly upon seeing that. However, he still reacted very quickly as he waved his wand toward the Purple Golden Mink, abruptly conjuring up four walls of ice that confined the mink within.

"Master Evan is so impressive!" Eva was squealing like a mindless fangirl.

"Crack."

The Purple Golden Mink swept its claws through the air. Three streaks of purple and golden light flashed, destroying the wall of ice directly in front of it.

"H-how could this be?" Eva looked on in disbelief.

"Die, bastard! Consecutive ice spears!" Evan's also raised an eyebrow upon seeing that. He was quite embarrassed by the fact that he couldn't even trap a Purple Golden Mink. He chanted a spell and waved his wand, upon which five ice spears about a meter in length hurtled through the air toward the Purple Golden Mink at an extremely fast speed.

"Howl!"

Having just crushed the all of ice, the Purple Golden Mink let loose a sharp cry, and its half-a-meter-long body instantly doubled in size. The purple fur that was only found on its head also extended all the way to its tail. Purple golden light created a powerful barrier around itself and it rose up on its hind legs, swatting its forepaws through the air. A series of cracks erupted as the five ice spears were reduced to shattered ice shards.

"This is a mutant Purple Golden Mink with 3rd-tier caliber power! Moreover, it possesses strong offensive power!" Sivr was shocked to see this.

After easily swatting aside the five ice spears, Purple Golden Mink looked up at Evan with a mocking expression before springing toward the nearby carriage, leaving a deep indentation on the tree trunk with its paws. Following its transformation, its speed more than doubled, thereby allowing it to instantly shake off Monkey and Sivr.

"Crap, it's heading for the carriage! Stop it!" Sivr hurled her boomerang through the air as a panicked expression appeared on her face.

The other mercenaries also rushed toward the carriage with grim looks on their faces. Mag, Amy, and Eva were the only people on the carriage. Eva was a healer, Mag was a chef, and Amy was a child. In the face of a berserking Purple Golden Mink, they were most likely in a lot of trouble.

“In this case, you should all just go die.” Contrary to what everyone else was doing, Evan withdrew his wand upon seeing that, and a sinister smile appeared on his face.

“No!” Eva looked at the oncoming Purple Golden Mink, and her expression changed drastically as she stumbled back.

“Go, Ugly Duckling!”

Amy stood up and joyfully released Ugly Duckling toward the oncoming Purple Golden Mink.

### **Chapter 543 Meow~**

Ugly Duckling’s round body flew through the air in a graceful arc before plunging into a pile of leaves on the side of the path, leaving only its chubby bottom, hind legs, and tail visible.

“Pffft~” Amy faltered momentarily before bursting into laughter. She looked at the incoming Purple Golden Mink, and clenched her little fists as she yelled, “Go, Ugly Duckling! The big rat is coming now. If you don’t catch it, we won’t have anything to eat for lunch. In that case, we’ll have to eat y—”

“Whoosh!”

Before Amy could even finish, Ugly Duckling pulled its head out from beneath the leaves and looked at the approaching mutant Purple Golden Mink with rapt focus. Its orange fur bristled, transforming Ugly Duckling into an orange hedgehog. It arched it back and extended its right paw, awaiting its foe.

That little thing will probably get mauled to death in an instant! Eva looked at Ugly Duckling with a resentful expression as she slowly scooted over to another corner in the carriage. If the Purple Golden Mink made it to the carriage, it would definitely attack the closest targets. As long as Mag and his daughter could delay it a little, Master Evan would be able to save her.

With that in mind, Eva turned to look up at Evan’s perch on the tree, upon which her eyes widened with shock. Sivr and all of the other mercenaries were rushing as quickly as they could toward the carriage, but Evan was doing nothing. He was clearly the closest one to the carriage, and as a magic caster, he was the most proficient in long-range attacks. However, he was standing rooted to the spot with a smile on his face as if he were waiting for a good show to begin.

No... Master Evan must be preparing some type of powerful spell, the type that can insta-kill this mutant Purple Golden Mink. Eva shook her head desperately to try and convince herself that Evan was doing something to help her. However, the image of his smile remained in her mind, and horror even more potent than her fear of death welled up in her heart.

It’s so fast!

Sivr and the mercenaries were rushing forward as quickly as they could, but the Purple Golden Mink was like an uncatchable bolt of lightning. Mutant magic beasts often had certain abilities enhanced. This Purple Golden Mink had clearly had its speed and offensive power boosted following its transformation.

If this Purple Golden Mink were allowed to rush into the carriage in its current state, the consequences would be catastrophic.

Even the boomerang was unable to catch Purple Golden Mink, so Sivir knew that they wouldn't be able to stop it in time. The walls of ice that were supposed to have appeared in front of the Purple Golden Mink by now failed to show up, so they could only hope that Mag and the others could buy them some time.

Escape clearly wasn't the correct option. However, in a direct confrontation, Eva and Amy clearly couldn't be depended upon, so Mag became their only hope. They could only pray that his flick from earlier was an indication of exemplary power and control as opposed to a result of dumb luck.

However, right at that moment, Amy suddenly hurled forth an unidentifiable orange object. Only after it fell to the ground did everyone realize that it was that orange kitten.

The kitten was absolutely tiny, and in the face of the meter-long Purple Golden Mink, it was as if a role reversal had taken place between cat and mouse. They felt as if the Purple Golden Mink would be able to easily sweep the kitten aside, but the latter stood valiantly in front of the carriage with its back arched and a single paw extended.

Is Mag relying on this kitten to stop that Purple Golden Mink? The same absurd thought flashed through the minds of all of the mercenaries upon seeing that.

"Arrogant bastards who lack self-awareness always die the quickest. This is a Purple Golden Mink that can even destroy my ice spears; that little kitten is no match for it. Do they really think that it's just an oversized rat?" Evan chuckled coldly as he rushed toward the carriage. White light shimmered on his wand again, but he had already missed the best opportunity to stop the mink, so the only fate that awaited Mag and the others was death. Only in their dying throes would these lowly beings realize just how important and regal he was, and repent for the way that they had treated him.

As for Eva, she was just a lowly woman with plain looks and a mediocre figure. She was only useful for those lonely nights when he was unable to repress his libido. However, she seemed to be yearning for more in their relationship, and this was a perfect opportunity to get rid of her.

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The Purple Golden Mink shot toward the carriage like a bolt of lightning. Its purple and golden fur was shimmering with a metallic sheen, and its adorable features were looking quite sinister. Two long tusks had sprouted from its mouth, and its eyes had turned crimson red. It spread open its large mouth like a wild dog as it prepared to swallow Ugly Duckling in a single bite.

It had also clearly noticed Ugly Duckling, and a hint of fear appeared in its eyes as it slowed down a little.

However, that fear quickly disappeared, and its eyes turned back into their crimson color. It became even more violent, and stomped its paws into the ground, accelerating again while crushing a large stone in the process. It leaped into the air and opened its cavernous mouth as it dove at Ugly Duckling.

In the face of the Purple Golden Mink, Ugly Duckling wasn't fearful in the slightest. Its ears perked up and it stood up on its hind legs as it yelled, "Meow-"

Its meow was very tender, and Mag almost burst into laughter upon hearing it. Ugly Duckling's heroic image had been completely ruined by that mellow cry. He had thought that Ugly Duckling would reveal a side to itself that would surprise him in this perilous situation. After all, it had been raring to go this entire time.

However, it appeared that it wasn't actually brave, but simply downright stupid instead. It would probably dare to extend a paw even toward a giant dragon, let alone a Purple Golden Mink.

Mag had already clasped the hilt of his blade in his hand. At such a short range, he was confident that he would be able to kill the Purple Golden Mink before it managed to attack Ugly Duckling.

His swordsmanship was very fast.

Eat it! Eat the whole thing so you waste more time! Eva's eyes were wide with anticipation as she cowered in the corner of the carriage.

Sivir caught her boomerang and hurled it through the air again. At the same time, she strove to charge forward a little faster, but there was a hint of sympathy in her eyes. There was no way that this little kitten was going to survive, so she could only hope that it could buy her some time.

However, right when Mag was about to attack, the Purple Golden Mink's body suddenly stiffened in mid-air as it heard Ugly Duckling's cry. It was as if it had heard the tolling of the clock of death, and unbridled shock and horror appeared in its eyes as it turned to Ugly Duckling. It spread open its four limbs again to try and change directions in mid-air, frantically attempting to flee from Ugly Duckling.

However, it had built up too much momentum, and couldn't get away in time. Ugly Duckling was still perched on its hind legs as it patted the mink on its head with a tiny paw.

"Splat."

The Purple Golden Mink immediately fell dead to the ground.

#### **Chapter 544 Ugly Duckling is Not Actually an Ordinary Duckling**

"Ding!"

The boomerang struck the ground near the carriage, and its handle was still trembling at a high frequency.

Everyone's footsteps faltered as they looked at the scenes unfolding around the carriage. They were all staring with incredulity at the dead Purple Golden Mink and the tiny orange kitten.

The mutant Purple Golden Mink was at least a 3rd-tier magic beast, but it had been killed by a tender meow and a gentle tap to the head! Or perhaps it had been frightened to death?

Just what is that little kitten? Everyone was perplexed.

How?! Evan stopped on a tree branch, bewildered as well. He was already prepared to subdue the Purple Golden Mink after it killed the three people in the carriage. In doing so, he could get rid of Mag and his daughter, as well as Eva. On top of that, he would then be able to unleash his true power to intimidate his fellow mercenaries, but those plans had been foiled by a small kitten.



A hint of joy initially appeared on Eva's face at the realization that she had survived, but she then looked at Ugly Duckling and thought back to what she had said, upon which her expression became quite strained.

"Meow-" Ugly Duckling pranced forward and laid its tiny paw on the Purple Golden Mink's head. It then turned back to Amy with a gloating expression as if it wanted to be praised.

"You were awesome, Ugly Duckling!" Amy clapped her little hands with elations before turning to Eva with a smile as she said, "Big Sister Flat-chest, Ugly Duckling caught the big rat. Are you going to eat it now or later?"

"You... I..." Eva's body was trembling with rage. She was the one who had made that bet, so she couldn't even turn Amy down. As such, her face was as red as a tomato from fury and humiliation.

What is that thing? It's definitely not some ordinary orange cat. Could it be some type of primordial mythological beast? But how could it have been picked up by some random guy collecting herbs, then? That's hardly an epic backstory. Mag also wore an expression of surprise on his face. Ugly Duckling was able to frighten a mutant 3rd-tier magic beast to death with just a tender meow. Mag would be an idiot if he still thought it to be just an ordinary fat cat.

However, in his memory, there weren't any powerful magic beasts with the appearance of an orange cat.

In any case, one thing was for sure: the egg that they had purchased back then was actually a treasure.

As for just what this little orange kitten would grow up to become, Mag didn't know the answer himself. However, with the way that it was eating, it was most likely going to become a ball.

The crisis had been dispelled, so Mag removed his hand from the hilt of his blade. He looked at Ugly Duckling, which had rushed over to the carriage wheel and was begging for a hug from Amy. Perhaps it would become a powerful ally of Amy, just like the purple-striped griffin had been to Mag Alex.

Mag carried Amy down from the carriage, while Amy cradled up Ugly Duckling in her arms. She had a serious expression on her little face as she said, "Well done, Ugly Duckling."

"Are you alright?" Sivir pulled her boomerang out of the ground before turning to Mag and the others.

"We're fine. I'm not sure about the girl on the carriage, though." Mag shook his head with a smile as he pointed to Eva, who was still slumped in her seat on the carriage.

"Eva?" Sivir quickly made her way over to Eva with a concerned look.

"I... I'm fine." Eva rose unsteadily to her feet as she shook her head. Her legs were still trembling slightly from residual fear. She had thought that she was going to die here.

However, there was no hint of gratitude in her eyes whatsoever, as she turned to look at Mag and Amy. Instead, her expression harbored a hint of resentment. Why was it that even their kitten could kill a mutant Purple Golden Mink? Was she actually expected to eat the mink raw?

All of the mercenaries also gathered around to appraise Ugly Duckling with amazement in their eyes. It was able to frighten a 3rd-tier magic beast to death even at such a youthful stage of its development;

this little thing was most likely the baby of some sort of high-tier magic beast. They wondered how it had ended up becoming Mag and Amy's pet.

"What kind of magic beast is your kitten, Little Amy? It's so powerful?" Dennis stroked his own hair as he looked at Amy with a bashful smile.

Everyone also turned to look at Amy upon hearing that. Even Sivr was quite curious about the orange kitten in Amy's arms.

It was very difficult to encounter the baby of a magic beast, and even more so to find one birthed by a high-tier magic beast. Under normal circumstances, if a magic beast mother were attacked and knew that it wouldn't be able to escape alive, it would kill its babies or destroy the eggs prior to hatching.

This little kitten was very fond of Amy, clearly indicating that it had grown up by her side. Such an affectionate magic beast would surely become the ideal helper of its owner in the future. It had absolute loyalty toward its owner, and was a heavily sought-after companion for everyone.

"It's not a kitten; it's actually a duckling. Also, it's not some magic beast; it's Ugly Duckling," Amy replied with a serious expression.

"Hmm? Ugly Duckling?"

Dennis faltered upon hearing that. No matter how he looked at it, it was clearly a cat that bore no resemblance to a duck whatsoever. Furthermore, it looked quite adorable as well

-in his opinion, it was not ugly in the slightest.

All of the other mercenaries also wore peculiar expressions, unable to keep up with this little girl's thought process. However, it appeared that she didn't even know what magic beasts were, and had most likely always treated this thing as a normal kitten. After all, Mag was only a chef, and even they couldn't identify what kind of magic beast this was, so there was no way Mag could know what it was, either.

"But I can tell you all a secret about Ugly Duckling. You have to promise to keep the secret before I tell you, though." Amy looked at everyone with a mysterious expression.

"Secret?"

All of the mercenaries were intrigued. Could it be that Amy actually knew what this kitten was? Thus, all of them agreed to keep the secret. Even Evan inched closer to them, eavesdropping on the conversation.

"Ugly Duckling is not actually an ordinary duckling..." Amy looked at the intrigued mercenaries and lowered her voice as she continued, "It's actually a little swan. When it grows up, it'll become a beautiful white swan. It'll be able to fly into the sky then."

"Hah?"

All of the mercenaries were dumbstruck on hearing that. First, she was telling them that this kitten was a duckling, and now, she was telling them that it was a swan? No matter how they looked at it, it bore no resemblance to a swan at all!

“Mr. Mag, your pet killed this mutant Purple Golden Mink, so it belongs to you. Its hide can be sold at the mercenary union for a good price.” Sivir looked at Mag with a calm smile.

Dennis and the others were feeling quite envious, but they didn’t state any objections to Sivir’s decision.

Evan stepped forward and argued coldly, “Sivir, we were the ones who engineered everything to trap this Purple Golden Mink. This guy was only lucky; why should we give him such a precious mutant Purple Golden Mink hide?”

### **Chapter 545 The Truth**

“Yeah, Big Sister Sivir. You guys did all of the work, and the Purple Golden Mink could have been frightened to death by you and Master Evan in the end. They had nothing to do with this, so why do they deserve the mink hide?” Eva also chimed in to support Evan. She turned to him with lovestruck eyes and tried to approach him.

All of the mercenaries turned to Evan and Eva with surprise on their faces. They had witnessed everything that had taken place, so they knew that Eva’s argument was completely implausible. Following its transformation, the Purple Golden Mink could outrun even Sivir’s boomerang, and Evan’s magic posed no threat to it. How could it have been frightened to death by those two?

However, Eva was the youngest member of their mercenary squad, so she had always been treated like a delicate little sister. Furthermore, as the only healer in their squad, everyone had been treated by her at some point. As such, they didn’t want to refute her, and could only turn to Sivir.

As for what Evan had said, they were indeed the ones who had engineered the trap for the Purple Golden Mink, but it was also true that the orange kitten was the one that had killed the mink. In doing so, it had saved Eva’s life. That had to have been a factor of consideration for Sivir, thus prompting her to give the Purple Golden Mink to Mag. However, what they didn’t anticipate was how ungrateful Eva was toward her saviors. Thus, the atmosphere became rather awkward.

Mag turned to Evan and Eva with a cold expression. These two were a match made in heaven; both of them were absolute scum!

If it weren’t for him and Amy, that mutant Purple Golden Mink would definitely have killed Eva. No one else noticed this detail, but Mag had clearly seen that Evan had a chance to attack the Purple Golden Mink, a chance that he refrained from using. As a 3rd-tier magic caster, even if he couldn’t completely trap the Purple Golden Mink, he would definitely have been able to create some obstacles in order to buy time for his fellow mercenaries.

However, he didn’t do that. Instead, he stood on the tree as a bystander, and even wore a smile on his face as he did so.

If Mag and Amy had been the only ones on the carriage, then Mag would’ve only thought that Evan was a petty man. However, there was also a fangirl who absolutely adored him on the carriage with them, but he was prepared to watch her die and seemed to be enjoying the show. That clearly illustrated what a piece of scum he was.

And now, this scummy couple was trying to steal his spoils of war?

If he were only dealing with Sivr and the others, Mag would perhaps be more polite and split up the mutant Purple Golden Mink based on everyone's efforts. After all, that was how mercenary squads normally split up their spoils of war.

However, he changed his mind. He would rather feed the mink to a dog than give some to these two.

"Big Sister Flat-chest, do you want to eat this big rat? I didn't think you'd actually go through with it. I can ask Father to skin it, then you can try and eat it raw and tell me if it tastes good." Amy looked at Eva with expectant eyes. She then swung Mag's arm from side to side, and implored, "Father, we should give this big rat to Big Sister Flat-chest."

"I... I..." Eva glowered at Amy, and was at a loss for words.

"You just so happened to have a magic beast pet that's a natural predator to the Purple Golden Mink, and it's just a pathetic little kitten. Without it, would you have even been able to touch the Purple Golden Mink? If it weren't for our Rose Mercenary Squad, you wouldn't even have seen the mink, let alone kill it. You should know your place and assess just how little effort you put in throughout this process." Evan turned to Mag with a cold expression. His handsome features had turned quite dark, and he was brandishing his wand to exert pressure on Mag.

Sivr's brows furrowed, and she was just about to say something when Mag stepped forward with a mocking smile, and retorted, "How little effort I put in? The Purple Golden Mink was frightened to death by Amy's Ugly Duckling. Furthermore, it had been completely unscathed, and following its transformation, it became faster than all of you. Even if I wasn't the one that had set up the traps, so what? And what does it have to do with you? Do you think you put in a lot of effort by standing on the tree branch and spectating with a cold smile as your fellow mercenaries were plunged into peril?"

A panicked expression immediately flashed across Evan's face as he unconsciously took a step backward.

Eva's face also paled upon hearing that. She could still recall the smile on Evan's face as he stood on that tree branch, and now that the truth had been revealed by Mag, her attempts at self-consolation were completely crushed. Thus, she turned to Evan with a hint of confusion and hurt in her eyes.

All of the mercenaries' expressions also changed upon hearing that. The situation just then had been too urgent, so no one had noticed what Evan was doing. However, thinking back now, Evan did indeed have many opportunities to stop that Purple Golden Mink, but he did nothing throughout the process. If Mag's accusations rang true, then just what was Evan doing? They didn't even dare to delve into that train of thought too deeply. Mutual trust was the glue that held a mercenary squad together. If they couldn't even trust one of their comrades, then the consequences could prove to be catastrophic in the future.

Mag wore a mocking smile as he looked at Evan. Defeating someone with words and reason was the most convincing way to win a battle. Mag Alex's forte lay in physical battles, while Mag excelled in wars of words. However, he wouldn't stoop as low as to hurl verbal insults at a piece of scum like Evan. Instead, he was crushing him in a graceful and eloquent manner; that was a sign of true skill.

To a team like theirs, trust was an extremely important element. If there was a potential backstabber lurking in the team, how was anyone supposed to rely on them during a battle?

Sivir's expression had also become quite grave as a contemplative expression appeared in her eyes. Back when she was pursuing the Purple Golden Mink, she had also been confused with regard to why Evan had refrained from attacking. It appeared that Mag had seen something, and Eva's reaction clearly reaffirmed his accusations. As such, her heart was feeling quite heavy.

Evan forced himself to calm down before issuing a heated retort. "Nonsense! During the battle, I unleashed an ice wall spell, then an ice spear spell, but I didn't think that the mutant Purple Golden Mink would be powerful enough to destroy my magic. Hence, I was preparing to unleash an intermediate spell to bring it down. However, it was too fast, and I didn't have time to unleash the spell before it escaped from my effective attack range. You're just trying to sow discord among our squad!"

### **Chapter 546 I Definitely Won't Eat Rat Meat**

So Master Evan was preparing an intermediate spell, not just spectating. Has he mastered even an intermediate spell? That's so cool! Eva's eyes lit up again as she looked at Evan. All of the disappointment in her heart was instantly wiped away, and she turned to Mag with a fierce expression. "Exactly! What gives an outsider like you the right to speak ill about Master Evan? He's clearly not the type of person you proclaim him to be!"

Mag was feeling rather speechless as he looked at Eva. This woman was completely hopeless.

"Alright, that's enough. Let's keep going; we have to get to the Illusionary Mist Valley before noon." Sivir looked into Eva's eyes with a serious expression, and said, "Eva, Mr. Mag and the others saved your life just then. You have to be grateful to your benefactors; that is the mercenary way, and a value that our Rose Mercenary Squad has always upheld. I hope you can remember that."

"I..." Eva looked at Sivir and opened her mouth, but lowered her head in silence in the end.

Evan glanced at Sivir before getting onto the carriage. He aimed a vicious glance at Mag before also closing his eyes in silence.

All of the other mercenaries also got onto the carriage. No one said anything further about this depressing situation.

Sam made his way toward Mag with a smile, and offered, "Mr. Mag, do you need me to skin this mink? I'm pretty good at that kind of stuff."

"Thanks for your offer, but there's no need. As a chef, I'm also pretty good at this." Mag shook his head with a smile. He also refrained from saying anything else on the matter. After all, what did it matter to him that this scummy couple was harming each other? He drew his sharp bull-slaying blade and began to skin the mink. Soon, a complete mink hide had been skinned with no blood staining the fur, nor any excessive blood and flesh on the back.

The golden hide was very smooth and soft, with a beautiful streak of purple extending all the way to the tail down the middle, emanating a metallic sheen.

An ordinary Purple Golden Mink hide could fetch around 500 gold coins. However, such a perfect mutant Purple Golden Mink hide could fetch at least 1,000 gold coins or even more.

Mag really did need some money. With the hiatus that he was taking, he would be missing out on hundreds of thousands of copper coins in restaurant earnings. As such, he didn't mind having an external source of income to supplement that loss.

"That's so impressive; it's even cleaner than if I were to skin it. You'd definitely be able to sell it for a good price." Sam looked at Mag with amazement in his eyes as he handed over a water pouch for Mag to clean his hands and blade.

"Thank you." Mag carried the hide and the skinned Purple Golden Mink onto the carriage before sitting down in a corner with Amy in his arms. The carriage continued onward.

Eva looked at the gory skinned Purple Golden Mink, and reflexively scooted away with a hint of fear and concern in her eyes. What if this guy actually forced her to eat the big rat?

"Mr. Mag, are we going to be eating this Purple Golden Mink for lunch?" Dennis asked.

"I was planning on that, but a certain someone said that if Ugly Duckling could catch this rat, then she'd eat it raw. We'll have to ask her for her opinion before deciding if we can have this thing for lunch. After all, she reserved it in advance." Mag turned to Eva with a benevolent smile as he asked, "Isn't that right, Madam Eva?"

However, his smile looked like the smile of a demon in Eva's eyes. The grizzly skinned Purple Golden Mink made her want to puke, and she didn't even want to touch it, let alone eat it raw. She was really regretting the stupid bet that she had made now.

"No, I don't want to eat something so terrifying." Eva shook her head with pale countenance.

"Big Sister Flat-chest, you're making me very disappointed. How could you go back on your promise like that? I still wanted to know if the big rat tastes good raw." Amy looked at Eva with a disappointed expression as she held Ugly Duckling in her arms.

Eva's cheeks were flushed with humiliation, but she still shook her head firmly. She was not going to eat the Purple Golden Mink raw no matter what.

"Looks like we can have it for lunch, then." Mag smiled as he looked at the Purple Golden Mink's supple flesh with an expectant gaze.

He had tasted roasted bamboo rat in his past life, and he could still recall its succulent flavor. The Purple Golden Mink's flesh was clearly of an even higher standard, and would taste very good roasted.

With his extensive practice in the test field for the God of Cookery, he had developed exemplary mastery in controlling heat and condiments. As such, Mag was confident that he could cook all types of roast meat to a high standard. Even though it wouldn't taste as good as the roast beef kebabs, it shouldn't be too bad.

"That's the first time I've heard of roasting Purple Golden Mink. There are 10 of us in total, though, so one Purple Golden Mink won't be enough to go around. How about we catch some more prey along the way? What would you like?" Dennis asked with a smile.

“Beef would be best,” Mag replied.

“Will normal wild cows do?” Sam asked.

“Sure.” Mag nodded in response.

“Easy! There’s a mountain with a lot of wild cows on the way to the Illusionary Mist Valley. I’ll get you one once we get there,” Sam promised with a smile.

“Thank you.” Mag’s eyes lit up. It sure was good to travel with experienced and knowledgeable hunters.

Ugly Duckling lay in Amy’s lap for a while before rolling around on the Purple Golden Mink hide. It either really liked the hide, or it was showing off its spoils of war.

While passing by a mountain, Sam instructed Monkey to stop the carriage. He and Dennis went into the forest, and Dennis soon emerged with a large black wild cow on his shoulders. The cow had all four legs bound, and was looking around with horror in its eyes, too scared to even move.

“Squad Leader, the Illusionary Mist Valley is just up ahead. How about we have lunch before continuing?” Dennis asked as he tossed the cow onto the ground.

“Alright.” It was probably going to take a long time just to skin and dissect this large cow, so Sivir decided to agree to Dennis’ suggestion.

“There’s a stream just up ahead. I’ll clean up the cow there.” Mag rose to his feet and pointed at a nearby stream. The water in the stream was very clear, and it all flowed into a calm pond, which reflected the blue sky like a mirror.

“Alright.” Dennis hoisted the cow up with one hand before making his way over to the pond.

The carriage also stopped near the stream.

“Mr. Mag, do you need our help killing this thing?” Dennis asked as he kicked the struggling cow onto the ground.

“No need. It would be great if you could get me some firewood, though. Leave the rest to me.” Mag shook his head before making his way over to the cow. He grabbed it by the horns with his left hand and slit its throat with his bull-slaying blade, which he was holding in his right hand. Blood gushed onto the ground as he took a glance at Evan, who was still sitting on the carriage.

Evan also happened to be looking at Mag. Their eyes met, upon which his heart skipped a beat for some reason. He could see killing intent in Mag’s eyes, and even though it was clearly a cow that had been slain, a hint of fear welled up in his heart for some reason.

“Eva, are you not coming?” Sivir asked Eva as she jumped down from the carriage.

“I’ll have some other food for lunch. I definitely won’t eat rat meat or anything cooked by that guy.” Eva shook her head with a resolute expression.

## **Chapter 547 How Can Roast Beef Smell Like This?**

"I'll go pick some wild fruits." Evan jumped down from the carriage and rushed into the forest, quickly disappearing from view. He clearly didn't want to taste Mag's cooking, either. Furthermore, the glance that Mag had directed at him earlier had struck him with an indescribable sense of fear, making him want to get away from Mag.

Mag didn't object to it. He didn't want to cook for them anyway, so this was ideal.

After draining the cow of blood, a thought suddenly occurred to Mag. He turned to Sam, and said, "Mr. Sam, you seem to be very familiar with this area; would you be able to get me a bamboo stalk? I want to make some skewers for beef kebabs."

"Sure, I'll get one for you right away." Sam nodded before turning to climb up the nearby mountain.

"Beef kebabs? Mr. Mag, beef should be eaten in large mouthfuls. Making it into kebabs will take away from the effect, won't it?" Dennis was a little concerned.

"Don't worry, there'll be enough kebabs for everyone. This cow definitely has enough beef to go around." Mag smiled as he began to dissect the cow. His blade glided through its flesh, not coming into contact with its bones at any point in time. His motions were smooth, efficient, and elegant, putting on a brilliant display of mastery.

Those are some really impressive knife skills. It must have taken him many years to get to that level. Sivir was full of praise at the sight of Mag's blade proficiency. Her eyes glazed over slightly as she looked at Mag's expression of rapt focus and concentration. She couldn't help but be reminded of someone else when she looked at Mag.

The surrounding mercenaries also wore expressions of praise and amazement. Perhaps Mag wouldn't be able to beat them in a fight, but his expert bladesmanship and control were exemplary.

"Father, can I also have a lot of kebabs?" Amy asked expectantly.

"Yes, you can have as many as you want." Mag nodded with a dotting expression.

After dissecting the cow, Mag made a rough estimate of everyone's capacity for food. Aside from the rib-eye beef, he also sliced off another two large slabs of tenderloin beef before washing it all in the stream. He then began to pull out all types of condiments from his backpack, and there was even a foldable kebab oven in there.

This was something that Mag had purchased after extensive bartering. He could find ingredients for roast meat in the wilderness, but he had to prepare his own oven, which had to live up to his standards. Otherwise, a lack of proper cooking utensils could ruin the dish.

"Mr. Mag, all other mercenaries pack as little as possible and only carry the bare essentials with them, but you... you're carrying a kitchen with you!" Dennis looked at Mag with a peculiar expression.

"Well, I have my daughter with me, so I'll naturally have to prepare some more things," Mag replied in a justified manner. He poured a cup of water for Amy from a water jug before feeding Ugly Duckling some water from the stream. Then, he pulled out a large paper bag to marinate the beef in.



“You sure are a good father, Mr. Mag. My son is about the same age as your daughter, and he’s constantly nagging me to take him into the wilderness, but I’ve never taken him even once.” Scott sighed with emotion.

“He’ll know what you’re a good father when he grows up, Mr. Scott.” Mag turned to Scott with a smile. After all, not everyone had a 4th-tier magic caster as a child. As such, taking them into the wilderness would incur a massive risk.

“I hope so.” A smile also appeared on Scott’s face.

Mag began to prepare the beef in what was clearly a thoroughly rehearsed process. All of the mercenaries sat on the ground and chatted among themselves while looking at Mag with surprised expressions. They had never seen anyone prepare roast meat in the wilderness, and the complexity of the process came as a shock to them.

After all, if they wanted to roast meat, they would simply brush some oil over it before placing it over a fire. Right before the meat was fully cooked, they’d sprinkle a pinch of salt over it, and that would be the extent of the condiments applied. Sometimes, the meat was tasty, and other times, it would be overcooked. However, the flavor wasn’t really important to them. In the wilderness, safety and sustenance were the key considerations.

If they made such extensive preparations as Mag did every time they wanted to have a meal, they wouldn’t have any time to do their missions. However, they had never been treated to a meal cooked by a professional chef in the wilderness, so all of them were thoroughly looking forward to it.

Sam quickly returned with a green bamboo stalk. Under Mag’s instructions, he chopped the stalk into skewers, and skewered the marinated beef and Purple Golden Mink meat. The remaining wood was thrown into the fire, while a makeshift roasting frame was constructed from rocks.

The mercenaries had all stopped talking, and their eyes were fixed on Mag. Watching him cook was like watching a spectacular performance; each and every step was a brilliant spectacle. They didn’t understand why a simple roast meat dish required so many complex procedures, but they were all looking forward to the end product.

He’s just showing off; there’s no way the kebabs would be any good. Eva washed down a mouthful of coarse cornbread with some water as she glowered at Mag from the carriage.

Evan returned to the carriage with a few mandarins in his hands, two of which he passed to Eva with a smile as he said, “Have some mandarins, Eva; I just picked them.”

“Thank you, Master Evan.” Eva accepted the mandarins with a joyful expression, and cradled them carefully to her chest as if she had received a pair of precious treasures.

“You’re welcome.” A hint of disgust flashed through Evan’s eyes, but he still maintained his smile. However, his brows furrowed as he caught sight of Mag, who was being surrounded by his intrigued fellow mercenaries. His gaze fell on Sivir, and veins began to bulge on his forehead as he slowly clenched his fists.

Everything was prepared. Mag tested the temperature of the flames with his hand before placing a bunch of kebabs over the roasting frame.

The beef began to sizzle over the red-hot flames, and its surface quickly began to change color. Oil began to bubble and fizz as the delicious aroma of beef wafted through the air.

The mercenaries' eyes lit up as they caught a whiff of that scent, and they couldn't help but inhale deeply to capture more of the aroma.

Mag was tending to over 20 kebabs at once, but his motions were still calm and unhurried. When the kebabs were cooked to about medium-well, he began to apply the sauces that he had mixed in advance over their surface.

The sauce made the aroma of the beef even more alluring as the kebabs were placed back over the fire.

"That smells so good!" Dennis was staring at the kebabs with incredulity in his eyes.

"What an alluring smell! How can roast beef smell like this?" An entranced expression appeared on Sivir's face.

"This aroma... How is this possible?!" Evan and Eva were also stunned as they looked at Mag's kebabs.

### **Chapter 548 Delicious Beef Kebabs!**

"Wow, it smells so good! The kebabs look like they're really delicious!" Amy looked at the kebabs over the fire with an expectant gaze.

Ugly Duckling's interest had also been piqued. Its ears perked up and it craned its neck, trying to identify the source of this alluring aroma.

The sound of involuntary gulping began to undulate as the mercenaries stared at the kebabs on the roasting frame. They were struggling to suppress the urge to pounce on the kebabs like wild animals.

"Alright, the first kebab will be for my adorable Little Amy." Mag picked up a kebab from the middle and handed it to Amy with a smile.

"Thank you, Father!" Amy's eyes immediately lit up as she put Ugly Duckling onto the ground before joyfully accepting the kebab.

"It's very hot, so blow on it first before eating," Mag cautioned.

"Alright." Amy nodded obediently as she blew on the kebab with a careful expression. She then opened her little mouth and bit down on the topmost cube of beef.

All of the mercenaries looked on with bated breath. The succulent cube of beef was bit open, and Amy's intricate features immediately lit up. Her bright blue eyes shimmered with joy as the indescribably delicious flavor exploded in her mouth. She quickly chewed on the beef before swallowing, leaving a trace of residual oil and sauce on the corners of her lips.

"Gulp!"

The sound of gulping was heard once again.

Is it really that delicious? This is torture!! All of the mercenaries looked at each other with slightly awkward expressions, but they soon all turned to stare at Mag's kebabs with yearning in their eyes.

That little brat must be faking her reaction. It definitely doesn't taste good. The mandarins brought to me by Master Evan are the most delicious things in this world. Eva faltered slightly upon seeing that, but she soon convinced herself that her mandarins were better. She placed a section of mandarin into her mouth, but was struck by the feeling that it seemed to be a little sour.

Evan also wrenched his gaze away from Mag's kebabs, and surreptitiously gulped as he also had some mandarin.

"Come and have a kebab, everyone. The roasting will take some time, but these ones are ready." Mag smiled as he distributed the kebabs to everyone; there was just enough for two per person. He also placed a kebab in a clean little bowl for Ugly Duckling, which was desperately crying for a taste, before putting a new batch of kebabs over the flames.

"Oh my God! How could there be such delicious roast beef in this world?! It's simply incredible!" Dennis bit off three cubes of beef in a single bite as he stared at the kebab in his hand with incredulity in his eyes.

"This must be food for the gods! How could it be so delicious? How could roast beef be so tender? And this flavor is ridiculously good!" Sydney, who was perched on a tree branch, simply couldn't stop eating. He closed his eyes to savor the taste and felt as if he were dreaming

Scott and the others also wore similar expressions. Just one bit was enough for them to be completely immersed in the kebab's delicious flavor. They found it incredible that a small beef kebab could hold such allure.

Sivir looked at everyone before her gaze was also drawn to the kebab in her hand. She blew on it gently before biting off the top cube of beef. The beef was still a little hot, and she hadn't even chewed yet, but the flavor of the sauce had already captivated her taste buds.

She began chewing, and the delicious roast beef instantly melted in her mouth. The flavor of the marinating condiments had already been sealed into the beef, and it combined with the rich taste of the sauce to create an irresistible combination. Sivir couldn't help but close her eyes in bliss as she savored the kebab.

The rib-eye beef was extremely fresh and tender. The marbling didn't make the beef excessively greasy. Instead, it simply made the texture even more tender, and seemingly gave the beef layers of flavors to savor. The sauce was very rich, but didn't overpower the natural taste of the beef. Instead, it simply worked to bring out as much flavor from the beef as possible.

Was it delicious? No! It was ridiculously delicious!

Sivir felt as if she had been teleported to a large grassy plain. Herds of wild cows took leisurely strolls over the lush grass. There was a little girl sitting on a cow's back and red-haired man carrying a long saber following along behind her. The little girl's joyful giggles could be heard throughout the entire grassy plain, while the man wore a warm smile even though his face was riddled with scars.

Night fell, and they set up a fire. The man began to roast large slabs of beef over the flames, while the little girl sat beside him with an expectant look. The man handed her a slab of slightly charred beef, and she devoured it with a joyful expression. That was the most delicious beef in this world.

A tear slid down the corner of Sivr's eye. She turned away and surreptitiously brushed the tear away. She looked at the kebab in her hand, and then at Mag and Amy, who were happily enjoying kebabs of their own. She could sense the aura of paternal love within the kebabs, and it struck her in the most delicate part of her heart.

She exhaled gently as if she were blowing on the kebab, and a smile appeared on her face. She bit off another cube of beef and closed her eyes, basking in its delicious flavor as well as the paternal love that had been sorely missing from her life for many years.

One kebab after another was fully cooked before being distributed to the eagerly waiting mercenaries. Blissful smiles appeared on everyone's faces, and they couldn't help but praise Mag for his brilliant cooking.

Mag also wore a smile on his face. He was struck by a sense of accomplishment at the sight of everyone being won over by his cuisine. This wonderful feeling was something that he experienced every day in this world, but had been completely missing in his past life.

"Try this kebab, Evan. It's incredibly delicious." Scott made his way over to the carriage and passed a kebab to Evan with a smile.

"I won't eat strange things like this." Evan swatted the kebab aside with a dark expression. The kebab landed tip-first, pinning itself onto a large tree nearby.

Scott knew that Evan was still in a foul mood from what had happened earlier, so he didn't say anything. Instead, he offered the kebab in his other hand to Eva as he said, "Eva, would you like to have a taste?"

"I definitely won't eat anything made by that guy even if I starve to death! The mandarins picked by Master Evan are the most delicious things in this world!" Eva shook her head with a resolute expression as she cradled the mandarins in her hands.

#### **Chapter 549 The System Must Give You a Stern Warning**

"Poor children; they've made a very stupid choice. They won't have another opportunity to taste Father's cooking ever again." Amy looked at Evan and Evan with a slightly sympathetic expression before taking another large bite of beef, upon which a joyful smile reappeared on her face.

Mag looked at the kebab that was pinned to the tree, and was feeling rather forlorn that the fruit of his labor had been wasted like that. However, a mocking smile appeared on his face as he turned to look at Eva and Evan, both of whom were gulping involuntarily. It had to be quite painful for them to deny their cravings like that, right?

After more than an hour, almost half of the cow had been consumed. Mag cooked almost without rest the entire time, and only got to have a few kebabs at the end.

The two-centimeter cubes were perfect for a mouthful, and the tender beef was enveloped in rich sauces, melting to create the most delicious flavor in his mouth. All of his taste buds and every cell in his body were captivated by the flavor as an overwhelming sense of satisfaction welled up in his heart. This was by far the best beef that he had ever had.

This is just the most ordinary wild beef. If we change it to premium Ironhide Bull beef, the texture and flavor would be even better. This is pretty much a dress rehearsal for the release of my new dish, and the reaction was quite good. Looks like this will become a popular dish in the restaurant. A smile appeared on Mag's face as he looked at the kebab in his hand. Furthermore, he had repaid everyone for taking Amy and himself to the Illusionary Mist Valley, as well as for the Purple Golden Mink hide. After all, each person had to have had more than 10 kebabs. Mag had already decided to set the price at 300 copper coins per kebab. Such delicious kebabs had to be more expensive than tofu pudding at least.

"This is the best meal I've ever had during my years as a mercenary!" Dennis expressed genuine praise as he wiped the oil and sauce from his lips.

"Burp! This is the best meal I've ever had, period!" Scott burped with a bashful smile.

"Mr. Mag, can you join our Rose Mercenary Squad? You can be responsible for cooking and leave everything else to us." Monkey jumped down from a nearby tree branch and looked at Mag with an expectant gaze.

"That would be perfect! That way, we'd be able to have delicious food every day, even if we're out in the wilderness." Sam clapped his hands together with elation.

All of the other mercenaries also looked at Mag with anticipation in their eyes. Even Sivir was quite tempted by that prospect.

"My apologies, but my main occupation lies in restaurant-management and cooking. Sourcing ingredients is not a common activity that I engage in, so I won't be able to join your mercenary squad. If you'd like to eat my food again, you can come to the Aden Square and look for Mamy Restaurant; that's my restaurant." Mag shook his head with a smile. He had no intention of becoming a mercenary.

"I see..." All of the mercenaries were quite disappointed to hear that. Monkey scratched his head and opened his mouth to say something.

"Alright, Mr. Mag still has to look after Little Amy, so becoming a mercenary clearly isn't a viable option for him. Besides, we don't have time to spend two hours on a picnic in the wilderness every day. Let's go to visit Mr. Mag's restaurant on our days off." Sivir smiled as she turned to Mag, and praised, "Mr. Mag, you truly are an exceptional chef."

"You're far too kind." Mag nodded modestly, but his mood had improved significantly from her compliment.

"Alright, then I'll definitely go to Mr. Mag's restaurant on my day off. We're all friends now; can you give me a discount?" Monkey asked with a hopeful smile.

"I never offer discounts to my customers, but I can ensure that you'll feel like every copper coin you spend in my restaurant is worth it," Mag replied with a smile.

"If someone else said that, I'd think that they were bluffing, but I believe in you, Mr. Mag!" Dennis nodded with an earnest expression.

“Alright, we’ve wasted a lot of time here already, it’s time for us to keep going. It’ll only take half an hour for us to get to the Illusionary Mist Valley from here. Everyone, take a rest and prepare for battle.” The smile faded from Sivr’s face as she issued stern instructions.

“Yes,” the mercenary squad responded in unison. They checked through their own equipment before loading the rest of the cow onto the carriage and prepared to set off.

Evan said that he was going to do some scouting first and went on ahead.

Mag began to pack up his cooking utensils and condiments before washing his hands and making his way back onto the carriage with Amy and Ugly Duckling. They were about to get to the Illusionary Mist Valley, which meant that their battle was about to begin. He was determined to capture an Ironhide Bull today as the mission reward was simply too alluring.

“Ding! The system must give you a stern warning: the Ironhide Bull capturing mission must be completed by you alone. If you rely on someone else’s help to complete the mission, the system will deem it as mission failure and hand down the punishment!” The system’s stern, implacable voice sounded.

“Alright, I get it. I’m not preparing to enlist their help, anyway. With so many of them here, it’ll be difficult to split the spoils of war.” Mag rolled his eyes internally. From what he had seen, he could deduce that Sivr was the most powerful member of the Rose Mercenary Squad. However, even her power level hadn’t reached the 4th-tier yet. She was already quite powerful for someone her age, but, objectively speaking, she wouldn’t even be as powerful as Amy in a battle.

“The system must give you another stern warning: the use of irregular weapons is prohibited during the course of the mission!” The system’s voice became even more stern.

“Mr. Sam, how are the Ironhide Bulls distributed in the Illusionary Mist Valley? Are they found all over the place?” Mag chose to ignore the system this time.

“Of course not. Ironhide Bulls will appear in the Illusionary Mist Valley, but due to excessive hunting in the past few years, they’ve become exceedingly rare, so it’s down to luck whether you’ll encounter one or not. Also, the Illusionary Mist Valley is a gigantic place, and is constantly enshrouded in mist, so visibility is very low. Aside from Ironhide Bulls, there are also other magic beasts that dwell there, making it a very perilous place. Those unfamiliar with its terrain could easily get lost in the mist, which would often prove lethal.” Sam shook his head as he looked at Mag with a serious expression, and advised, “As such, I suggest you don’t take Little Amy deep into the Illusionary Mist Valley.”

“Alright, I’ll be sure to keep that in mind.” Mag nodded with a grim expression. It appeared that the situation in the Illusionary Mist Valley was a bit more complex than he had thought.

“Oh, by the way, I think I forgot something back there. Can we stop for a while so I can go grab it?” A thought suddenly occurred to Mag just as the carriage had set off.

“Do you need me to turn the carriage around for you?” Monkey asked.

“That’s alright, it’s not too far from here. I’ll be back soon.” Mag put down his backpack and retracted his steps after jumping down from the carriage. He had spent 100 gold coins for that portable oven, so it would be a shame to leave it behind.

After rounding the corner, Mag was just about to make his way toward the oven when he noticed a figure standing next to a tree nearby. He had plucked the kebab down from the tree and was looking at it with a conflicted expression.

### **Chapter 550 If You Lose, You Have to Call Me Daddy**

That figure was none other than Evan, who had said that he was going on ahead to do some scouting. He was holding the kebab that he had just plucked from the tree, and was sniffing at it with an entranced look. His attention was entirely focused on the kebab, so he didn't notice Mag in the distance.

Do I eat it or not? Is it really as delicious as they say? Evan wore a conflicted expression on his face. After hesitating momentarily, he gave in and bit off a cube of beef, upon which his eyes immediately lit up.

The beef was still slightly warm, and its tender texture had been perfectly preserved by the rich delicious sauce. Beef that was this delicious had gone beyond his realm of imagination.

Is this really beef? This flavor is incredible! How could there be such delicious food in this world? How could such delicious beef exist?! Evan roared internally. He had completely forgotten the fact that this beef had been cooked by the man who had thoroughly humiliated him. He had also forgotten that this kebab had been swatted into a tree by him. Such delicious beef was absolutely unique in this world.

"Does it taste good?" A voice suddenly sounded.

"It's delicious!" Evan nodded with a genuine expression. However, his entire body then immediately stiffened as he turned around to discover Mag looking at him with a mocking smile.

Deathly silence ensued as Evan held the half-eaten kebab with an expression akin to that of a deer in headlights while Mag looked back at him.

He had aimed all those insults at Mag and swatted the beef kebab flying. He had vowed that he wouldn't eat Mag's cooking, but now, he had snuck back to taste the kebab that he had swatted into a tree. Furthermore, he had been caught red-handed by Mag, and—most embarrassing of all—he had admitted that the kebab was delicious.

Evan wanted to kill himself or crawl into a crevice in the ground and stay there forever.

"Enjoy your meal, then. I'm off now; they're still waiting for me." Mag had gotten the answer he desired, so he packed up his oven before departing. This feeling was even more satisfying than if he were to slap Evan in the face.

"This bastard..." Evan glowered at Mag's departing figure, and the veins on the back of wand-wielding hand bulged. However, he hesitated momentarily before putting down his wand. In such close quarters, Sivir and the others would definitely be able to detect a battle. Furthermore, they were familiar enough with him to be able to easily identify his magic.

Mag also removed his hand from the hilt of his blade. As he expected, Evan didn't dare to attack him. However, he still quickened his pace a little en route back to the carriage. After all, everyone was still waiting for him.

Thus, Evan was the only one left on the scene. He wanted to throw the kebab away in disgust, but his hand froze in mid-air. After a long period of internal conflict, he finally took another bite.

“I’m so mad! But... it’s so delicious! How could this beef be so delicious...” Evan felt as if he were in heaven and hell at the same time as he finished the kebab in his hand. As he tossed aside the empty skewer, he was left wanting more. A conflicted expression reappeared on his face. If that bastard told Sivir about what he had done, he would have no dignity left in front of her.

“What’s up, Mr. Mag? Did you pick up some money on the way back? You look very pleased.” Dennis looked at the amused expression on Mag’s face with curiosity.

“I didn’t pick up any money, but I did see a greedy little monkey, which I found to be quite funny.” Mag shook his head with a smile, and didn’t reveal what had happened. It wasn’t that he was trying to protect Evan’s dignity; it was just that he simply didn’t feel like wasting time on such a trivial matter.

“It wasn’t me!” Monkey turned to defend himself with a serious expression, drawing raucous laughter from everyone on the carriage.

Thus, they continued their journey. Sam could see that Mag hadn’t given up on his plan to enter the Illusionary Mist Valley, so he gave Mag a detailed introduction of what he had to look out for in the valley, as well as all types of lifesaving methods he could employ in dire situations.

Mag listened carefully and committed everything to memory. Aside from Ironhide Bulls, 5th-tier magic beasts would occasionally appear in the Illusionary Mist Valley. Those were still extremely dangerous, and perhaps even lethal to Mag and Amy as they currently were. After all, Amy was still only a 4th-tier magic caster, and the oracle stone’s enhancement effect was far from reliable. Thus, it was a good idea to listen to an experienced hunter like Sam.

Half an hour later, the carriage arrived at the foot of a valley that was shrouded in mist. Sivir turned to Mag, and said, “Mr. Mag, we’ll be parking our carriage here. If you need a ride back to Chaos City tonight, you can wait for us here.”

“Alright, thank you.” Mag helped Amy and Ugly Duckling down from the carriage and nodded with a smile. It had taken them so long to get here, so he really did require a ride back to the city.

The mercenaries got down from the carriage and packed up their equipment before bidding farewell to Mag and Amy. Monkey led the way into the valley, and soon disappeared from view. The rest of the mercenaries went in after him.

That bastard is definitely going to die if he enters the Illusionary Mist Valley! Evan had also joined the group by now, and he glowered at Mag before entering the valley.

Sivir turned to Mag with a serious expression, and said, “If you only require a certain cut of meat from the Ironhide Bull, I can perhaps help you. There’s no need for you to take such a risk. Amy is still just a child.”

“Everyone has something that they need to do. As a father, I’ll be sure to take good care of her.” Mag placed a hand on Amy’s head as he gave a resolute response.

Sivir couldn’t help but recall her memories of the man who liked to place his hand on her head. He had always taken good care of her and struck her with a sense of security and reliability, just as Mag did. She nodded, and said, “I wish you good luck.”



Then, she entered the valley after her fellow squad members.

“Bye-bye, Big Sister Sivr.” Amy waved farewell to Sivr.

“Goodbye!” Sivr also waved at them before disappearing into the mist.

“Father, are we going to catch a big cow in that valley?” Amy looked up at Mag with excitement in her eyes.

“That’s right. That’s our most important target for today. We’re going to make even more delicious kebabs with the big cow in this valley.” Mag nodded with a smile.

“Even more delicious? More than what we had for lunch?” Amy’s eyes lit up with disbelief.

“That’s right, even better than what we had for lunch.” Mag nodded in confirmation as he led Amy toward the valley with her little hand in his. At the same time, he said internally, “System, can you get me a GPS or a compass?”

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In front of Mamy Restaurant, Ricky sat on the stairs, and yelled, “It’s still not open? Just how long is he going to run away from me for? I know that my Ricky’s Rotisserie is renowned throughout the entire Aden Square, but I didn’t think that this guy would abandon his restaurant just to run away from me!”

“Is this guy actually retarded?” The customers outside were all looking at Ricky as if they were appraising a mentally disabled child.

Ricky was enraged by everyone’s condescending looks, and he gritted his teeth as he announced loudly, “If that’s the case, then I’m going to up the stakes. I’m going to bet all of my dignity on this contest. If I lose, I’ll kowtow to him 10 times and call him daddy three times! If he loses, he has to do the same thing!”

“Oh? That sounds interesting!” The customers that were about to leave were all intrigued upon hearing that.