

Stay At home 551

Chapter 551 It's No Big Deal

The Rose Mercenary Squad advanced in the Illusionary Mist Valley in an orderly formation. Monkey quickly flashed through the mist, whistling from time to time to indicate his location.

Immediately behind him were Dennis and Scott, the two heavyweight meat shields who could take the heaviest hits. In contrast, Sivir was at the very rear of the party, defending against any potential attacks from behind.

As part of the outskirts of the wilderness, the Illusionary Mist Valley was an area that they regularly frequented, so they were very familiar with its terrain and environment.

However, the magic beasts in the wilderness didn't always stay in the same place. High-tier magic beasts could pop up even on the outskirts of the wilderness, let alone in the Illusionary Mist Valley. Just a single 5th-tier magic beast could very likely demolish their entire squad, so they could never be too careful.

Their target for the day was the Ironhide Bull. In the past, they had encountered Ironhide Bulls on several occasions, but they were very troublesome to deal with, and no one had offered a high enough price, so they skirted around the Ironhide Bulls instead of taking the risk to hunt them down. However, they were targeting the Ironhide Bulls on this occasion, but were not having much luck. As such, they could only advance slowly.

"Are we even going to find any Ironhide Bull today?" Time gradually passed, and Eva was the first one to voice her impatience.

"Don't worry, hunting has always been an endeavor that requires a lot of patience. In the wilderness, it's imperative to always be on your guard. Otherwise, you could be reduced to prey for other magic beasts before you find your own prey." Sam suddenly thrust his steel trident downward, pinning a poisonous viper that was pouncing toward Eva's ankle to the ground. The viper writhed and hissed for a while before falling dead.

Eva hurriedly withdrew her foot and sidled up closer to Evan as her face paled with fear. She had clearly been frightened, and she nodded as she stammered, "G-got it."

"Whistle"

Right at that moment, a longer whistle sounded from up ahead, and all of the mercenaries' eyes lit up.

"The target has appeared; prepare for battle! Sam, you go set up the traps. Scott, you go and help Sam. Eva, stay with Sam and Scott. Everyone else, disperse and get into the formation that we agreed on earlier. We have to conserve our energy before trapping the Ironhide Bull. The mission requires the capture of an entire Ironhide Bull, so try not to inflict too many wounds on it." Sivir delivered a rapid set of instructions as she charged forward.

Sam contemplated the situation momentarily before rushing toward a col. That area was most suited to setting up a large trap. With Scott's help, it shouldn't be an issue to dig a hole large enough for an Ironhide Bull to fall into.

Sivir rushed toward the source of the whistling, and soon heard a series of heavy hoofsteps thundering toward them. The ground was trembling slightly as if there were a gargantuan creature coming their way.

“It’s coming! Everyone, disperse. Don’t get into a direct confrontation with it. A 4th-tier Ironhide Bull has extremely powerful ramming force, and there are no trees that can act as obstacles in the Illusionary Mist Valley. If it begins to gather speed, it’ll be very difficult for us to escape. It’ll also be quite hard for Sam to set up a trap for such a large creature in a short time, so we have to employ guerilla warfare tactics. We’ll pester it with attacks, then immediately flee so we can exhaust it. Then, we’ll lead it toward Sam and the others. Make sure to look after yourselves.” Everyone disappeared into the mist after hearing Sivir’s instructions. All of them had found perches such as jutting rocks or hills, which would provide some safety for them from the Ironhide Bull.

“She’s a big one, Squad Leader!” Monkey yelled as he rushed onto a nearby hill. A massive five-meter-long Ironhide Bull rushed out from the mist and crashed headfirst into that hill. The entire hill tremored as a result, and rocks began to clatter down from above. Monkey almost fell off from the violent tremors, and even though he tried to evade as best as he could, he was still struck on the head by a tumbling rock, leaving a bleeding gash on his head.

“Monkey, are you alright?” Sivir hurriedly asked. All of the other mercenaries were also quite concerned.

Monkey panted as he replied, “It’s no big deal, but it hurts a little, and the swelling is affecting my vision, so I’ll require some treatment.”

“Alright, you stay there; leave the rest to us.” Sivir was relieved to hear that, and she hurled her boomerang toward the Ironhide Bull.

The boomerang struck the Ironhide Bull on the neck, and it was as if it had crashed into a metal statue. A dull thump erupted as the collision occurred, and the boomerang flew back into Sivir’s hand. However, it had only left a tiny little indentation and a white mark on the Ironhide Bull’s neck.

The most renowned property of the 4th-tier Ironhide Bull was its iron-like hide. It was an exceptional material used for making soft armor, and was close to impenetrable to the 4rd-tier Sivir. In the Rose Mercenary Squad, perhaps only Evan’s magic could pose a threat to it.

However, Sivir’s attack had still attracted the Ironhide Bull’s attention. It turned to Sivir with a pair of wide enraged eyes, and it charged toward Sivir while gathering speed at an incredible rate.

Sivir began to run away in a zigzag route, able to evade the Ironhide Bull every time just before it crashed into her. At the same time, she lashed out with her whip occasionally to further enrage the Ironhide Bull.

Dennis and the others also began to pester it with attacks, making the Ironhide Bull rush toward one target after another like a headless chicken. Even though none of their attacks inflicted any substantial damage, they were able to sap away at the Ironhide Bull’s energy, and they could tell that its speed had already decreased. However, its eyes were only becoming fiercer as it rushed toward Sivir again.

All of the mercenaries had also expended a lot of energy, but all of them wore smiles on their faces. According to how things were current progressing, it wouldn’t be long before the Ironhide Bull would

completely exhaust itself. Sam's traps were most likely close to completion as well, so it looked like they had the Ironhide Bull in the bag.

However, right at that moment, another burst of thundering hoofbeats began to approach, much to everyone's horror and dismay.

Monkey, who had a makeshift bandage around the gash on his head, yelled, "This is bad! We've got another Ironhide Bull coming at us! Look out, everyone!"

"Retreat! Disperse! Goad this one toward Sam!" Sivir's expression changed drastically upon hearing that, and she charged toward the second Ironhide Bull on her own. She had to draw it away in another direction. Otherwise, facing two 4th-tier magic beasts at once would spell disaster for the Rose Mercenary Squad.

"You guys retreat first; I'll go help Sivir!" A grave expression appeared on Evan's face as he rushed toward Sivir. He brandished his wand and specks of blue light appeared in the air.

Chapter 552 Oi, Big Brother Elf

A six-meter-long Ironhide Bull had just emerged from the mist when a boomerang struck it on the head.

Thud!"

A dull thump erupted, and the boomerang flew back at an even faster speed. However, the oncoming Ironhide Bull only decelerated minutely as it continued to charge toward Sivir.

Five massive ice spears lined up in the air before crashing down onto the Ironhide Bull's head.

The Ironhide Bull let loose a ferocious moo and whipped its head to the side, easily shattering the ice spears. However, its speed further decelerated in the process, and it changed its target from Sivir to Evan. It could sense an aura that it detested even more coming from Evan's body, so it began rushing toward him instead.

"Look out!" Sivir cried as she wound her whip around the bull's horns. She tied the other end of the whip around a large tree, but the whip only lasted a split second before it snapped in half. The Ironhide Bull slowed down slightly as a result, but it was even more furious now, and its eyes had turned crimson.

Meanwhile, the other Ironhide Bull was being led by Dennis and Scott toward the traps that Sam had set up.

"Let's run in the opposite direction so they can take care of that one first!" Sivir immediately came to a decision as she hurled her boomerang through the air. At the same time, she began to run in the opposite direction.

Evan nodded while unleashing a few more ice spears. Even though the ice spears couldn't actually harm the Ironhide Bull, they still provided a disruptive effect.

However, after the Ironhide Bull shattered the ice spears with its head, it refrained from chasing after Sivir and Evan. It took a glance at the other Ironhide Bull, which was about to completely disappear into the mist, and hesitated momentarily before pursuing that other bull.

“Crap! It’s not being fooled. Sam and the others won’t be able to deal with two Ironhide Bulls at once!” Sivor’s expression changed drastically as she rushed toward the Ironhide Bull.

Evan disappeared into the mist, taking a shortcut toward where the traps were being set. Following the events that had taken place earlier, Evan was no longer as trustworthy as he once was in the eyes of his comrades. As such, he had to put in some work and rectify the situation if he wanted to stay in the Rose Mercenary Squad.

“Father, can you hear that? There seems to be something going on over there.” Within the mist, Amy pointed in a certain direction.

“Spray-“

Mag pressed down on his insecticide bottle, and a large scorpion on the ground below rolled over with froth gushing from its mouth. Mag nodded with a pleased expression as he also turned in the direction that Amy was pointing in.

Sure enough, he could hear a loud commotion. It seemed that there was a large creature running in that direction, and he could feel the ground quaking slightly beneath his feet. At the same time, he could hear some urgent cries ringing out in the distance. It seemed like a mercenary squad was hunting over there.

“I think I can hear Uncle Minotaur’s voice!” Amy’s eyes lit up.

“Let’s go have a look. It sounds like they’re in trouble.” Mag picked up Amy with one arm while holding the insecticide bottle in his other hand as he quickly forged on ahead.

He had purchased the insecticide from the system-it was capable of killing all venomous creatures. It was an extremely valuable treasure for people traveling in the wilderness, and most importantly, it was harmless to humans. Only the system could produce something like this.

Furthermore, Mag had also purchased a compass. The magnetic field on the Norland Continent was completely different from Earth’s, so he didn’t know how the system had created this compass, and he didn’t pose any questions about that, either. After all, the system had already been enraged by his refusal to purchase its expensive GPS.

The emergence of two Ironhide Bulls at the same time had completely caught the Rose Mercenary Squad off guard, and posed a threat that was too potent for them to deal with. There were barely any obstacles or hiding places in the Illusionary Mist Valley, so they were facing an extremely catastrophic crisis.

Dennis and the others also quickly caught on that there was another Ironhide Bull coming after them. They didn’t know whether Sam’s traps would be able to ensnare both bulls at once. The most likely scenario was that neither of them would be caught.

Of course, their main focus was no longer on capturing these two Ironhide Bulls. Instead, they had to think of a way to escape while making the smallest sacrifice possible.

“They’re coming!” Sam could hear the approaching hoofbeats, and ushered for Scott to get out of the massive hole that he had dug. The hole was over three meters deep and five meters in diameter. Their

prey was arriving a little earlier than expected; otherwise, he would've dug a hole six meters in diameter to make sure that the bull would be trapped in it.

However, there was no time for that, so he could only pile some leaves and grass over the trap to camouflage it. With such dense mist clouding its vision, the Ironhide Bull shouldn't be able to identify the trap for what it was.

"Sam, take Eva and get out here! There are two of them coming; we're no match for them!" Dennis roared as he sidestepped the oncoming Ironhide Bull, and swung his mace viciously into its head. As a result, it was knocked off its original course and headed straight for the pit.

"Two?! That's not good!" Sam's expression changed upon hearing that, and he immediately grabbed Eva's hand before rushing up the hill with her. Just one bull was already quite a handful; two was simply too many.

Eva's face paled with fright. She had been with this mercenary squad for over a year, so she had a thorough understanding of the power levels of magic beasts. As such, she was well aware what two 4th-tier magic beasts entailed.

However, it was clearly too late for them to retreat now. The first Ironhide Bull came charging toward them before falling into the pit. The three meters' depth was only slightly deeper than its height, and as it struggled violently, the walls of the pit began to cave in, making it appear as if the bull could jump out at any moment.

What was even more distressing was that the second Ironhide Bull was also charging toward Sam and the others, completely ignoring Sivr and Evan's attacks.

"Run up the hill!" Sam shoved Eva up the hill before arching his back and hurling his steel trident toward the Ironhide Bull. At the same time, he drew the hatchet that was hanging from his waist and charged toward the bull. Scott also did the same as he hoisted his metal club.

The iron trident struck the Ironhide Bull's head with unerring accuracy, piercing through its skin, but was only able to scratch it. Sam and Scott were then both sent flying by the bull's horns before tumbling to the ground. Both of them were wounded as a result, and threw up mouthfuls of blood.

Meanwhile, Eva had been shoved up the hill by Sam, but only managed to run a few steps before her legs gave out under her. She looked at the oncoming Ironhide Bull and screamed as she closed her eyes.

"No!" Sivr let loose a desperate cry.

"Don't fear, Eva, I'm coming!" Right at that moment, Evan descended onto the hill and landed in front of Eva. He raised his palms into the air and created a thick wall of ice.

"Bam!"

A muffled thump erupted as the oncoming Ironhide Bull crashed into the wall of ice, stopping its momentum cold as if it had crashed into an impenetrable fortress. A pair of horn indentations were left in the wall, but it wasn't shattered.

"Master Evan, you saved me! You're my hero!" Eva's eyes widened with excitement and reverence as she stared at Evan.

“He stopped it!” Sivir and the others were all overjoyed, but also rather surprised. They didn’t think that Evan’s magic would be so powerful.

“I’m glad you’re safe. Don’t mention it.” Evan smiled as he supported the wall of ice, but his eyes were also shimmering with excitement. He could sense that this wall was far more resolute than what he could normally conjure up. Could it be that he had progressed to the 4th-tier in this perilous situation?

Right at that moment, a mellow voice sounded from the other side of the hill. “Oi, Big Brother Elf, I fortified that wall of ice for you, so don’t try to make it sound like you did all the work.”

Chapter 553 Why Do You Insist on Dying...

Evan’s expression stiffened as he turned toward the owner of the voice.

Sivir and the others also looked on with surprise toward the hill. There, they discovered Mag and his daughter. Amy was holding in her

wand from which specks of blue light were flying through the air before falling on Evan’s wall of ice.

Could it be that... Amy cast this spell? The same thought flashed through everyone’s minds. However, Amy was so young and delicate. To say that Amy had stopped the Ironhide Bull was even more implausible to them than if Evan had been the one to do so. After all, a four-year-old 4th-tier magic caster had never appeared on the Norland Continent before.

Why are they here? An urgent expression appeared on Sivir’s face. The emergence of a second Ironhide Bull made it difficult for the Rose Mercenary Squad to even look after themselves. Evan had managed to stop one of them temporarily, but the one that had fallen into the pit was already close to escaping. The situation was still extremely dire.

Evan’s expression was quite strained. He had just instilled an image of power and reliability into the hearts of Sivir and the others, only for this little brat to try and take his accolades. This little brat didn’t even have a full set of teeth yet, but she was proclaiming that she had cast this spell. She was just as arrogant as her father.

“Hmph, don’t go spouting nonsense, little brat. You probably haven’t even mastered the most basic freezing spell yet, while I’m a true 3rd-tier magic caster who is close to the 4th-tier. I’m almost an intermediate magic caster, so there’s a chance that I would be able to unleash such a spell!” Evan glowered at Amy. If he really did progress to the 4th-tier and became an intermediate magic caster, Sivir would have to give something up to him. That was why he insisted on staying in the squad even after being rejected. It appeared that he was very close to his target.

“Get out of here, Mr. Mag! There are two Ironhide Bulls here, it’s very dangerous!” Dennis rushed toward Mag with an urgent expression. He had a very good impression of the two, and naturally didn’t want to see them get swept up in such a perilous situation.

“So you don’t believe me?” A thoughtful expression appeared on Amy’s little face. She nodded, and said, “Alright, then I’ll withdraw my magic and let you experience your true power.”

She withdrew her wand, and the blue light instantly faded. The blue light from Evan’s wall of ice also dimmed significantly as if it had lost its soul.

The Ironhide Bull backtracked about a dozen meters before charging toward Evan again. Its speed was slightly inferior compared to before, but it was still extremely fast.

Evan could naturally sense the changes that had taken place in his wall of ice. The thickness hadn't changed, but it was missing something unidentifiable.

However, he didn't have time to pay that any heed. His attention was focused entirely on the oncoming Ironhide Bull. He had a confident expression on his face, for he had managed to stop the bull even when it was charging toward him at superior velocity before, so he would have no issues stopping it now as well. The wand in his right hand was injecting his magical power into the wall of ice in a relentless stream, while his left hand was gently pressed against the wall.

This wall was the most powerful spell he had unleashed and the ideal manifestation of his power!

Master Evan can do it! He's the most perfect man and the most powerful magic caster! Eva's heart was overflowing with reverence and security as she stood behind Evan. Her heart was thumping in her chest as she recalled Evan swooping down like her knight in shining armor and positioning himself between her and the Ironhide Bull. It turned out that she was very important to him, after all-important enough that he would risk his life to save her. Those two were clearly just trying to sow discord in their relationship earlier.

Why do you insist on dying... Mag heaved an internal sigh as he looked at Evan and Eva. Was this guy actually unaware of the extent of his own power? Flexing without the power to back oneself up was the leading cause of death for idiots worldwide.

However, he didn't harbor any friendly feelings for this scummy couple. They clearly made it their mission to repay kindness with a stab in the back, so he would be glad to see the world rid of them.

"Evan should be able to stop it, right?" Sam had a hand clasped to his chest with a concerned look on his face.

"He stopped it at full speed before, so he should be fine now." Scott wasn't very concerned. He was massaging his back with a pained expression as he made his way over to the pit. The Ironhide Bull in there was about to escape, and he had to stop it.

"Don't let it escape!" Sivir had also hurled her boomerang through the air as she cast a concerned glance at Evan and Eva. She could sense that the wall of ice was somehow different, but she also felt like Amy shouldn't be a powerful magic caster.

However, the Ironhide Bull finally managed to wrestle free from the pit before the boomerang could reach it. It headbutted the boomerang aside before charging toward Mag and Amy.

"Crap!" Everyone's expressions changed upon seeing that, and they ran as quickly as they could toward the Ironhide Bull.

At the same time, the other Ironhide Bull crashed viciously into Evan's wall of ice.

In the instant that the collision took place, Evan's confident expression immediately crumbled. A terrifying force traveled along his left arm, filling him with shock and horror. The previously indestructible fortress had suddenly been reduced to a brittle chunk of

ice.

“Impossible!” Eva’s eyes also widened with incredulity and horror at the sight of the shattered wall of ice.

“Crack!”

A crisp crack sounded and the wall of ice exploded into countless ice shards. The Ironhide Bull was slowed down a little, but it still rammed into Evan and Eva with devastating force. Its powerful horns shattered their bones, sending them flying for over 10 meters through the air before tumbling to the ground.

“H-how could this be?!” The mercenaries were all stunned by the scenes unfolding before their eyes.

Chapter 554 Not a Single Drop of Blood

Evan threw up a mouthful of blood. His chest caved in, and his face paled with agony. However, his eyes were filled with horror and incomprehension as he stared at the Ironhide Bull. The wall of ice had managed to easily stop it before; why did it suddenly become so brittle? Could it be... that the little brat actually did help him fortify the wall? Evan was struck by a sense of absurdity as that thought occurred to him.

The Ironhide Bull clearly had no intention of letting them go after sending them flying. It began to charge toward them again, yet both of them were too severely wounded to move, and could only await their deaths.

Eva stretched out her arm and crawled toward Evan. If she could die beside Master Evan, death didn’t seem too bad.

“This is bad!”

Everyone had thought that Evan would be able to handle the Ironhide Bull, but the situation had deteriorated drastically on their end. The seemingly indestructible wall of ice had been shattered, and both Evan and Eva were severely wounded. No one could save them from the Ironhide Bull; everyone could only look on in despair.

Furthermore, the Ironhide Bull charging toward Mag and Amy was just as unstoppable. The frailest people present were all facing imminent death, yet none of them could do anything about it. This realization struck them with a sense of powerlessness.

“Sigh, didn’t your master teach you that even if you can’t defeat your enemy, you have to think of other methods?” Amy looked at Evan with a disappointed expression before pointing her wand at the ground in front of them. A smile then appeared on her face as she said, “For example, you can get this big dumb cow to perform a dance first.”

A layer of ice appeared beneath Evan and Eva’s feet, extending all the way down the hill.

The incoming Ironhide Bull trod onto the ice and slid onto its front knees. It slid along the ground face-first and stopped less than half a meter away from Evan. Its eyes were filled with indignation as it struggled to its feet, but its hooves were slipping on the ice as it was forced to perform an awkward dance, one that didn’t take it any closer to Evan and Eva.

Amy shrugged at Evan, and said, “1st-tier ice-type magic, freezing spell.”

Evan and Eva both heaved sighs of relief upon coming to the realization that they had been saved. However, both of them were humiliated by Amy’s nonchalant words. They had tried everything they could to stop this Ironhide Bull, only to be gored and sent flying by it. However, this four-year-old half elf girl had managed to defeat it while using the most basic freezing spell. It was a textbook slap to the face.

However, if she were only a 1st-tier magic caster, then the wall of ice had to have been unleashed by him earlier. At the very least, it meant that he had unleashed a 4th-tier spell, and was far more powerful than Amy! Evan was still desperately trying to console himself. His agonizing wounds made him want to black out; it was the first time that he had ever sustained such horrific injuries.

Sivir and the others all heaved a collective sigh of relief. They hadn’t expected that Amy would swoop in to save Evan and the others in the nick of time. What was even more incredible to them was that Amy really was a magic caster. Even if she were only a 1st-tier magic caster, she would still be considered a prodigy at her age and for her ability to utilize this freezing spell in such a creative manner.

“This is the most basic usage of the freezing spell. My master told me that there are no weak or powerful spells, only weak or powerful magic casters.” Amy spread open her right hand, and a ball of flames of extreme frost appeared over her palm. The icy flames danced on her fingertip before she launched it toward the Ironhide Bull.

The ball of fire didn’t appear to be traveling very quickly, but it instantly appeared before the Ironhide Bull.

The tiny ball of flames wasn’t even as large as one of the bull’s eyes, but an expression of shock and horror appeared on its face as it frantically tried to escape.

However, the flames had already fallen on its head, and frost instantly enveloped its entire body, sealing it in ice from head to tail. It was frozen in a position with its front knees on the ground as if it had become a statue.

“Those magic waves... She’s an intermediate magic caster!” Evan’s eyes widened with shock as he stared at the frozen Ironhide Bull. As a 3rd-tier magic caster, he could easily assess the power of a spell. Freezing an Ironhide Bull with a ball of icy flames was something that was completely beyond him.

She was a four-year-old intermediate magic caster. She was only a half-elf, but her magical prowess was well beyond his.

Evan felt his heart skip a beat. In his shock, he even forgot the agonizing pain shooting through his chest.

There are no weak or powerful spells, only weak or powerful people...” Those words struck Evan on the chest like a hammer blow.

If a seasoned and revered magic caster were to tell him that, he wouldn’t feel so bad. However, the fact that those words were being spoken by Amy made him feel as if a knife had been plunged into his heart. He suddenly realized how much of a court jester he had to have seemed to Mag and his daughter.

They were not people that he could mess with. Just this little four-year-old girl could easily crush him.

“How could this be?!” Eva was also in complete shock. Even Evan was completely powerless against this Ironhide Bull, but it had been frozen by Amy with ease. As a magic caster, she naturally knew what that entailed. She abruptly turned to Amy, and her eyes were filled with horror.

“So powerful!”

Sivir and the others faltered in their steps as they stared at the frozen Ironhide Bull, also with expressions of shock and incredulity on their faces. They didn’t think that Amy would be the one to subdue the Ironhide Bull in the end. Now, they finally understood what gave Mag the confidence to take Amy into the wilderness with an Ironhide Bull as his target.

“Look out!” Sivir suddenly returned to her senses. One of the Ironhide Bulls had been frozen, but the other one was still charging toward Mag and Amy. In the blink of an eye, it had arrived less than five meters away from them, and was charging full-steam ahead.

“You should stay still as well, big dumb cow.” Amy turned to the other Ironhide Bull and raised her little hand.

“Leave this big dumb cow to me.” Mag smiled as he strode forward. He laid his hand on the hilt of his blade, and a frosty light flashed through the air. The Ironhide Bull barely glanced past him and charged forward a few more steps before crashing to the ground. It writhed and struggled for a few seconds before falling completely stationary. There was a stream of warm blood flowing from its body all the way down the hill.

The blade was placed back into its scabbard, and not a single drop of blood had stained its edge.

Chapter 555 I Don’t Want Amy to Have a Strange Little Brother

Deathly silence ensued.

Sivir, Dennis, Skol, Scott, Sam, and Monkey stood at the foot of the mountain, looking up at the father and daughter duo up above. Their eyelids twitched, and they gulped in unison.

One of the Ironhide Bulls had been slain, while the other had been frozen. The two of them had descended like death gods, easily dispelling what had seemed to be an impossibly dire crisis.

Amy’s magic had completely stunned them, while Mag’s almost untraceably fast blade strike sent shivers down their spines.

His speed wasn’t all that phenomenal, perhaps about the same as that of a 1st-tier knight. However, the blade strike was almost too fast for the eye to follow.

The tiny bull-slaying blade was somehow able to easily tear through the Ironhide Bull’s body. What was even more incredible to them was that he had managed to kill it with a single strike.

Even the most experienced hunters found the Ironhide Bull to be extremely troublesome prey. They possessed almost no weaknesses, and hunters could only exhaust them before subduing them in a trap.

No one had attempted to land a killing blow on it as it charged past them, as its two horns were like scimitars, able to inflict grievous wounds at any moment.

“Who... Who is he?!” Evan’s eyes widened as he stared at Mag, and his entire body felt icy cold. If he had tried to attack Mag earlier in the day, would he have ended up in the same state as that Ironhide Bull?

He suddenly understood why he was struck by that sense of fear earlier in the day. If Mag really did harbor killing intent toward him, he probably wouldn’t even be able to launch an effective retaliation, not to mention that he had an intermediate magic caster as a daughter.

“Ding! Congratulations, you have completed the mission to capture the Ironhide Bull. You have done so in six hours, therefore successfully completing the mission within 12 hours. You now possess the right to use all ingredients and utensils required to cook beef kebabs, and you also get half a strength point, as well as a mooncake recipe!” The system’s voice sounded amid a virtual fireworks display.

“Perfect!” Mag’s eyes lit up upon hearing that. Both the half a strength point and the mooncake recipe were imperative to him. His power level would be enhanced, and he would be able to make the moon festival celebration a reality at the same time. Those rewards were certainly worth a risky foray into the Illusionary Mist Valley.

“Father is so strong!” Amy clapped her little hands as she looked up at Mag with reverence and adoration.

“You’re very strong as well, Amy.” Mag patted Amy’s head with a smile. He looked down at Sivir and the others with a smile, and said, “Looks like I accidentally stole your prey again, Ms. Sivir. You don’t mind, do you?”

“Without you here, we would have become prey for these two Ironhide Bulls already.” A wry smile appeared on Sivir’s face as she extended a bow toward Mag, and said, “Mr. Mag, you saved our entire Rose Mercenary Squad. Thank you.”

“Mr. Mag, you sure had us fooled! Are you a 4th-tier knight?” Dennis was stunned as he looked up at Mag. He had been well and truly shaken by that blindingly fast blade strike.

“You’re too kind, Mr. Dennis.” Mag shook his head as he said modestly, “I’m only good at killing cows. If it were another magic beast, I might not even be able to handle a 1st-tier one.”

At his current power level, he would indeed have some trouble against 4th-tier magic beasts. However, after slaughtering countless Ironhide Bulls in the test field for the God of Cookery, he was extremely familiar with their structure. As such, he was able to immediately identify the weakness of the oncoming Ironhide Bull and deal a lethal blow.

“So you’re saying practice makes perfect?” The mercenaries all stared at Mag with wide eyes, feeling as if he were messing with them. However, his genuine expression suggested that he told them the truth. Furthermore, his beef kebabs really were extremely delicious. A superb chef like him really didn’t look like he would also be a knight.

“I’ll go treat Eva and Evan’s injuries first.” Sivir rushed up the hill. She had been quite touched by Evan’s selfless gesture in attempting to save Eva. All of the comrades in their mercenary squad stuck by one another through thick and thin, so at the very least, Evan had done the right thing just then.

The other mercenaries also hurried up the hill. Meanwhile, Sam and Scott were lying on the ground at the foot of the hill. They had also been wounded in battle.

“The... There’s medicine in the bag. Tr... Treat Master Evan first...” Eva stuttered with difficulty before falling unconscious.

“Save Eva first; I can still hold on.” Evan looked at Eva with a concerned expression. His face was almost entirely devoid of color.

“You guys go set Evan’s bones and stop the bleeding. We’ll have to take him back to Chaos City and seek out a healer to treat his wounds.” Sivir took the back off Evan’s shoulders and handed Dennis and Monkey some medical supplies. Meanwhile, she carried Eva to an obscure location and took off her clothes to administer treatment.

“Father, what should we do now?” Amy asked.

“We can help out Mr. Sam and Mr. Scott. You can conjure up some ice to put over their injuries and soothe their pain.” Mag carried Amy in his arms as he made his way down the hill. He quite liked Sam and Scott, so he was rather concerned about their wounds.

Sam and Scott had also been gored by the Ironhide Bull. Thankfully, they’d been prepared, and managed to avoid sustaining injuries to their vital regions.

Scott had a broken rib, while Sam’s injuries were a lot less severe—there was only a gash on his stomach that wasn’t bleeding very profusely. Their pain was alleviated significantly with Amy’s help.

Sivir and the others administered some basic first-aid to their wounded comrades. Evan and Evan were in very bad condition, but they were going to survive, so everyone heaved a temporary sigh of relief.

Mag made his way over to Sivir, and said, “I only need one of the Ironhide Bulls here. If you need the other one, I can give it to you. After all, without you guys, we might not have been able to discover any Ironhide Bulls.”

Sivir looked into Mag’s in silence for a short while before replying solemnly, “Thank you.”

“You’re welcome. We’ll have to trouble you again for the return journey, though,” Mag replied with a smile.

“Of course.” Sivir nodded in response. After taking care of their wounded comrades and the frozen Ironhide Bulls, they began to head back to Chaos City.

Dusk was approaching, yet there were still many customers outside Mamy Restaurant.

Some were customers who didn’t know that Mamy Restaurant was closed, while others were trying their luck to see if the dinner service would recommence.

However, all of them had their attention attracted to one person standing in front of the restaurant entrance.

Ricky had a fat arm raised high into the air as he yelled, “Let me say this one more time: owner of Mamy Restaurant, if you’re in the restaurant and if you’re a man, then speak up! As long as you admit that your

cooking skills are inferior to mine and bow to me with a formal apology, then I'll let bygones be bygones. Otherwise, accept my challenge and let's have a cooking contest like real men!"

All of the customers were discussing spiritedly among themselves, wondering if Mag would appear and accept the challenge.

"Hmph! Spineless cowards don't deserve to cook in the Aden Square!" Ricky's ego became even more inflated as the smile on his face widened. He didn't believe for a second that Mag had truly gone out to source ingredients. He had to be petrified of his challenge, and was in hiding. Otherwise, why would he close down such a successful restaurant for an entire day?

Ricky looked around at all of the customers in front of the restaurant, and was struck by just how much money Mamy Restaurant had to be earning. A thought occurred to him as he yelled again, "If you think such a small bet isn't worth your time, then I'll up the stakes. The one who loses must do three things: kowtow to the winner and call them 'daddy' three times, give all of their restaurant's recipes to the winner, and relinquish ownership rights of their restaurant to the owner!"

Right at that moment, Mag's voice sounded in reply. "I accept your challenge, but I only accept the third condition. I don't want Amy to have a strange little brother like you."

Chapter 556 Don't Try to Take My Father From Me

"Boss Mag is back!"

All of the customers' eyes lit up as they dispersed to open up a path. Mag strolled along the path with his bicycle, and all of the customers stood by as if they were welcoming their king.

Mag looked at Ricky with a calm expression. He had some recollection of this fatso whom he had slammed flying with his door last time, but he didn't think that he would be back to cause more trouble. Furthermore, he was challenging him to a cooking contest.

He had just learned how to cook roast beef kebabs, and this guy was challenging him to a contest of roast meat?

Mag had initially wanted to refuse a pointless challenge like this. However, the system had suddenly given him a new mission.

"Accept Ricky's challenge and defeat him! Successful completion of the mission will earn you half of half of a strength point! (Note: an entire half of a strength point must be earned before it can be used)."

Mag was a little perplexed by the concept of 0.25 of a strength point, but it was still a portion of a strength point, and this mission had almost zero difficulty, so Mag gladly accepted it. Furthermore, he had to teach this arrogant fat bastard a lesson. Otherwise, everyone would think that it would be alright to stomp all over his restaurant.

Furthermore, he was also rather tempted by the conditions offered by Ricky. If he were to win the challenge, he would be granted ownership of a restaurant that had once made it into the top 30 on the Aden Square food competition rankings board, as well as all of the furniture, utensils, and appliances in

the restaurant. That was quite a massive bet. He could use that to expand his restaurant, or either rent or sell it. In any case, it would net him quite a significant profit.

“Looks like Boss Mag really did go to procure ingredients. I knew that Boss Mag wouldn’t back down from a challenge!”

“As expected of Boss Mag, but did he procure ingredients so he could cook roast meat this time?”

“The roast meat from Ricky’s Rotisserie is actually quite good. Their roast meat is second only to the roast meat in Ducas Restaurant. I wonder if Boss Mag has a trump card up his sleeve; I don’t want to be unable to dine at Mamy Restaurant in the future!”

“I feel like we’ve got a good show on our hands! It sure was worth the trip!”

All of the customers instantly burst into conversation at the sight of Mag, whose boots were stained with mud, thereby indicating that he had just returned from the wilderness. Some people were also rather concerned for him. However, most of them were looking forward to a spectacular contest. After all, cooking contests weren’t common occurrences in the Aden Square.

Ricky’s eyelids twitched at the sight of the newly arrived Mag. He didn’t anticipate Mag to accept his challenge so decisively. Furthermore, from his appearance, he really did look as if he had been out for the entire day. Mag’s words also put a blush on his face. The contest hadn’t even begun yet, and this guy was already making fun of him. He was very displeased with Mag’s air of absolute confidence.

Before Ricky had a chance to reply, Amy cautioned, “Uncle Fatso, don’t try to take my father from me! Father is mine and mine only, so don’t even think about it!”

“Pwahahaha, Amy is so adorable!”

“She really is Mag’s daughter; her tongue is just as sharp as his, but she’s still so adorable!”

The customers all burst into laughter. Even Ricky’s employee was struck by the urge to laugh, and he had to suppress it by looking up into the sky and pinching his own leg.

“You... You... You...” Ricky was about to retaliate with some words of his own, but he was trembling with rage and unable to muster up a coherent sentence.

Mag was very pleased with Amy’s performance. He looked at Ricky with a serious expression as he said, “I accept your challenge, but how are we going to decide on the time and location? And what are the specific stakes here? We have to settle all that first, and then draft up an official document. If you have no objections, we can decide on those details now.”

Ricky took a deep breath to calm himself down. He looked at Mag’s calm expression, and his mind was already racing. This guy appears to be completely unprepared; are you telling me that he can also cook roast meat? Impossible! I’ve done thorough research on him, and none of the dishes in his restaurant have anything to do with roast meat. He doesn’t even have a roasting oven in his kitchen. Even if he’s a genius, good roast meat cannot be cooked with talent alone, and is not something that can be mastered in a day or two. This guy must be faking his calm facade to try and maintain his dignity in front of his customers. If that’s the case, then I’ve got this contest in the bag! This restaurant regularly appears in

the Aden Square food competition ranking board and is clearly more profitable than my Ricky's Rotisserie, so the stakes are weighed in my favor.

"I stand firm by the three conditions that I stated earlier. The winner gets ownership rights over the loser's entire restaurant, including the building, utensils, furniture, appliances, and staff. As for how the contest will be held, I think the fairest way to do things would be to pick five people among the customers present as judges who will vote to decide which of our roast meats is better. The one with the most votes will win. You can decide on the time and location." Ricky was brimming with confidence.

"Alright, then let's hold the contest in an hour from now right in front of Mamy Restaurant. We'll have an outdoor contest. However, I need to take a shower and change into some fresh clothes. You can get your people to carry your stuff over here in the meantime. Once time is up, we'll begin." Mag wasn't interested in Ricky's recipes, nor did he want a fat idiot as a son. However, he was interested in claiming the ownership rights over his restaurant.

"An outdoor contest?" A hesitant expression appeared on Ricky's face. The roast meat recipes from his rotisserie had been passed down for three generations, and had always been kept confidential. But now that Mag was requesting an outdoor battle, wouldn't the entire process be revealed for everyone to see?

Mag's proposition also sent a stir running through the customers present. In the past, cooking contests had always been held within a restaurant, and the customers could only see the complete dishes. However, Mag was proposing something different in the form of an outdoor cooking contest. That would undoubtedly make the process more interesting for the spectators. Furthermore, they were also very interested in seeing how Mag was able to produce such delicious food.

The contest was going to be held in an hour, so the waiting time wasn't very long. This was surely going to be an epic contest that was worth staying around for.

An outdoor cooking contest will definitely attract more attention. Perhaps this will be a good way to enhance Ricky's Rotisserie's popularity. Furthermore, even if he does know how to roast meat, there's no way he can match my recipe that has been passed down for three generations. A series of thoughts flashed through Ricky's mind before he finally nodded, and said, "Alright, an outdoor contest it will be!"

Chapter 557 Sharp-tongued Food Critic

News of the imminent showdown between the owners of Mamy Restaurant and Ricky's Rotisserie spread like wildfire. In one corner was the new restaurant making a meteoric rise up the Aden Square food competition rankings board, while in the other corner was a well-established rotisserie that had been in the Aden Square for several generations. This was shaping up to be an enthralling contest.

Of course, the most important factor was that this was going to be an outdoor contest. This meant that all of the spectators could witness the entire cooking process. A cooking contest of this nature had never taken place in the Aden Square before, and everyone was very intrigued. Those who were free all flocked to Mamy Restaurant, and soon, a massive crowd had gathered.

Some of them were regular customers of Mamy Restaurant, while some were drawn to the scene by the reputation of Ricky's Rotisserie, but most of them were simply there for a good show.

“We’ve got sunflower seeds, peanuts, ice water, and limited-edition stools for sale! You’ll regret missing out on these!”

Xixi and Lulu were traversing through the crowd while advertising their wares, making regular sales as they did so.

The contest was due to begin in half an hour, but many people had arrived well in advance to claim a good spot. If they were lucky, perhaps they would be picked as one of the five judges. As such, many of them were getting quite bored, and bought some sunflower seeds, peanuts, and ice water to snack on while passing the time.

Not long after, employees from Ricky’s Rotisserie arrived with two horse-drawn carriages. Under Ricky’s instructions, they began to unload the heavy kitchenware from the rotisserie as well as a large mountain goat.

All of the customers looked on with curiosity. Many of them had had roast meat on many occasions, but they had never seen a live performance of how roast meat was made. As such, they were very much looking forward to the contest.

“Huh? Isn’t that Mamy Restaurant? Why are there so many people gathered outside?” Robert looked on from a distance with a curious expression. He hesitated momentarily before making his way toward the restaurant.

A lavish horse-drawn carriage stopped in front of Ducas Restaurant, and Scheer emerged in a red dress. She was just about to get down from the carriage when she caught sight of a large crowd of people in the distance. She raised an eyebrow, and asked curiously, “What’s going on over there? Why are there so many people?”

“Young Mistress Scheer, the owners of Mamy Restaurant and Ricky’s Rotisserie are going to have a cooking contest there. Those are all spectators. Although, in a contest of roast meat, our Ducas Restaurant is still number one in the Aden Square and in Chaos City!” The restaurant owner emerged with a confident smile on his face.

“Mamy Restaurant? That’s the new restaurant that has been quite popular, right?” A hint of surprise appeared on Scheer’s face.

“That’s right, but they’re only barely making it into the top 30 on the Aden Square food competition rankings. Our Ducas Restaurant is still the number one.” The restaurant owner nodded with a smile, but there was a tense look in his eyes. Scheer and the Buffett Family were major customers of Ducas Restaurant, spending tens of thousands of gold coins there annually. If they were to dine at another restaurant instead, it would result in a massive loss for Ducas Restaurant.

This restaurant has only been open for just over a month, yet all five of their dishes made the top 100, and one of them even made the top 30. That’s very interesting. Scheer contemplated momentarily before sitting back down in the carriage as she said, “Let’s go have a look as well. I’m rather curious to see just how this restaurant owner cooks to be able to earn so many loyal customers in just over a month. In that aspect, even I cannot compare with him.”

“I’ll be sure to keep your booth reserved in case you decide to return, Young Mistress Scheer,” the restaurant owner said respectfully. He looked on with a complex expression as the lavish horse-drawn carriage departed from his restaurant. His Ducas Restaurant had reigned supreme in the Aden Square for so many years. Who would have thought he would feel threatened by such a small new restaurant one day?

Right at that moment, a slightly sharp voice sounded from nearby. “You look a little down in the dumps, Alva. Has your Ducas Restaurant released any new dishes lately? I haven’t been here for a long time.”

Alva’s brows immediately furrowed as a hint of contempt appeared on his face. However, that expression had already been replaced with an amicable smile as he turned to face the middle-aged man beside him, and said, “Greetings, Mr. Febid. Sorry to disappoint you, but my restaurant has not released any new dishes lately.”

Febid was a tall and thin middle-aged man in a long charcoal coat with a black hat on his head. He was holding a brown cane with a tobacco pipe in the pocket of his coat. He had a hooked nose with a mustache that was curled at the tips, and was appraising Alva with a pair of extremely intrusive brown eyes. A mocking smile appeared on his face as he said, “A restaurant with no creativity will be eliminated sooner or later. If you can’t even release a new dish every month, then you might as well fire the head chef. Using the same dish to dominate the number one ranking on the Aden Square food competition rankings board is an insult both to the rankings board and to the customers.”

“Yes, you’re right. Our head chef is currently doing his best to create new dishes. His efforts should bear fruit shortly.” Alva nodded, but cold sweat was already beginning to bead on his forehead.

A new occupation had appeared in Chaos City and on the entire Norland Continent in the past few decades. That was the occupation of food critic.

They made their living from writing reviews about restaurants all over the land, drawing large foodie fanbases and earning high income. Febid was one of those food critics, and was quite renowned even in the entire Norland Continent food circle.

Febid’s popularity didn’t arise from the fact that he had managed to discover many obscure forms of delicious cuisine, nor from how delicious he made the dishes sound in his reviews. Instead, his popularity arose from his sharp tongue. Almost all of the restaurants he had reviewed had fallen victim to that sharp tongue of his. Even Ducas Restaurant’s most renowned whole roast pig received a review of “far too greasy, promotes inhumane slaughter of piglets!”.

All restaurants reviewed by Febid were negatively impacted to a certain extent. As such, Febid had become the food critic most detested by all restaurant owners. If it weren’t for the fact that he lived in Chaos City, he would most likely have been knocked out and stuffed into a rucksack before being thrown in a river.

Alva was scrambling for a way to get rid of this omen of ill fortune, and his eyes lit up as he glanced in Mamy Restaurant’s direction as he said, “Mr. Febid, our Ducas Restaurant is most likely going to disappoint you today, but I can suggest a good restaurant for you to dine at tonight. You’ve heard about Mamy Restaurant over there, right? They’re the most popular new restaurant in the Aden Square. After only over a month in the business, all five of their dishes made it into the top 100. The owner of this

restaurant is having an outdoor cooking contest with the owner of Ricky's Rotisserie. Both restaurants have bet the ownership rights of their respective restaurants. Are you sure you're not going to have a look?"

Chapter 558 Are They All Waiting For Free Kebabs?

Compared to the raucous commotion outside the restaurant, the interior of the restaurant was quite calm and peaceful, with the exception of Yabemiya, who was pacing from side to side with an anxious look on her face. Ugly Duckling was asleep on the counter with its tail hanging down in a leisurely manner.

A while later, Mag had finished showering, and emerged in a clean chef's suit. Amy also came downstairs with him in a clean floral dress. Both of them looked very smart and tidy.

After an entire day spent in the wilderness, a warm bath had alleviated their exhaustion. Mag was looking forward to the upcoming cooking contest.

He had only taken the rib-eye meat from the Ironhide Bull, leaving the rest of the carcass as well as the skinned mutant Purple Golden Mink to the Rose Mercenary Squad. They could sell those carcasses to maximize profit, while Mag only required the rib-eye beef for his cooking. As such, that was the best arrangement for both sides.

"Boss, are you really going to compete with him in roasting meat? I've never seen you roast meat before." Yabemiya immediately turned to Mag with a concerned look.

"I've roasted meat before; I did it earlier today," Mag responded with a warm smile. It appeared that Yabemiya wasn't very confident in him.

"Big Sister Miya, Father's roast meat was super, super delicious! I had it for lunch, and Father says he's going to make roast meat that's even more delicious for us tonight. We brought back a really large piece of beef with us." In contrast, Amy was a lot more confident and joyful.

Yabemiya looked at Mag's confident smile, and her nerves were soothed significantly as she thought to herself, Boss is the best chef in the world; no dish can stump him. Even if it's roast meat, he'll surely be able to cook the best roast meat there is.

"I believe in you, Boss. Do you need me to help with anything?" Yabemiya asked as her signature energetic smile returned to her face.

"Now that you mention it, I really do need your help with something. This is going to be an outdoor contest, so we have to move all of the kitchenware outside." Mag nodded in response as he made his way toward the kitchen.

"Why hasn't Mamy Restaurant's owner come out yet? An hour is almost up, and he hasn't even brought out his roasting oven yet."

"I know, right? Look at Ricky over there; he's got his oven assembled, and he's already started a fire. He's got a few wooden planks set up around the oven, though; is he trying to prevent others from stealing his cooking techniques?"

“That makes sense. His roast meat recipe and procedure are strictly confidential, so it’s only normal that he wouldn’t want others to see him cooking. I wonder if Boss Mag will do the same. If so, this outdoor contest wouldn’t be very interesting to watch, after all.”

“Don’t worry, Boss Mag is super punctual. He always opens exactly on time, never even one minute too early or too late. There are still 15 minutes left; that’s plenty of time.”

As time passed, the unrest among the crowd began to spread. Ricky’s Rotisserie was almost fully prepared, while the doors of Mamy Restaurant continued to remain firmly shut.

Is this guy trying to bail out? Ricky stood in front of his oven, looking at the entrance to Mamy Restaurant with a cold smile. He wasn’t concerned in the slightest. An official document had been drafted and signed by both sides, so he was protected by the law. If Mag tried to bail out, it would count as a forfeit, and he would automatically be granted ownership rights over Mamy Restaurant.

This contest isn’t a monumental one, but it has attracted a lot of attention as it’s an outdoor contest. Aside from gaining ownership rights over the loser’s restaurant, the winner’s restaurant will surely experience a surge in popularity following the contest. Scheer sat in her carriage and looked on at the spectators around Mamy Restaurant. There were already more than 1,000 people. A crowd of this proportion was not commonly seen in the Aden Square.

The owner of Mamy Restaurant set the contest venue right in front of his own restaurant, and set the time of contest one hour away; he’s clearly a smart man. A smile appeared on Scheer’s face. She really liked dealing with smart people. This restaurant should be able to quickly reach a standard that would allow it to join the Chamber of Commerce.

She had heard that the restaurant owner had had an altercation with two of the board members in the past, but those were still locked up in Bastie Prison at the moment, and they were both allied to Jeffree. As such, she wouldn’t be opposed to working with this restaurant owner.

The owner of Ducas Restaurant was also on Jeffree’s side, so she needed a restaurant that could shake Ducas Restaurant’s position on her side. The well-established restaurants were all used to being dominated by Ducas Restaurant, but this new restaurant was experiencing a meteoric rise, thereby making it a very interesting prospect to her. After seeing the crowd gathered outside the restaurant, she became even more convinced that this was a restaurant she should throw her support behind.

Hard work and dedication on their own weren’t enough in the business world. To succeed, one had to be smart as well. The same applied to the gastronomic industry. There was no lack of delicious cuisine, but there was only one Ducas Restaurant. She could see the same elements that resulted in Ducas Restaurant’s success present in this restaurant as well, so she was very interested in meeting its owner.

Right at that moment, the doors of Mamy Restaurant creaked open. The commotion outside immediately died down as everyone turned toward the entrance in unison.

The doors slowly opened, and an adorable half-elf little girl with her hair braided in twin pigtails emerged from within. Her bright blue eyes took in the large crowd outside the restaurant, upon which a surprised expression appeared on her little face. She pushed the door open wider and yelled into the restaurant, “Father, there are so many people outside! Are they all waiting for free kebabs?”

The crowd fell even more silent. Everyone wore a peculiar expression on their face. They were indeed hoping to be picked as judges so they could sample free kebabs, but for such an adorable little girl to expose their intentions was a little embarrassing.

“No, they’re here to see if our restaurant’s new dish will be worth purchasing.” Mag smiled as he emerged from the restaurant, followed by Yabemiya, who was carrying a metal roasting rack.

“Put it over there.” Mag pointed at a patch of empty ground near the oven of Ricky’s Rotisserie. He was also rather surprised that so many spectators had gathered. He had set the contest venue in front of his own restaurant for convenience’s sake, and decided on a time of one hour later as he didn’t want to waste so much time on such a trivial matter. After all, the restaurant was resuming normal business hours the next day.

However, it would be a lie to say that he wasn’t trying to advertise his own restaurant through this impromptu publicity stunt. He had grown up in a businessman’s family in his past life, and the thought process and mindset of a businessman had already been deeply ingrained in him.

Mag turned to Ricky with a smile, and asked, “Before we begin, we should pick a few judges, right?”

Chapter 559 Sharp-tongued Food Critic? Heh...

“That’s right, we’ll pick five judges and let them decide this contest. Do you have anyone in mind?” Ricky’s expression was still quite relaxed as he turned to Mag, but a solemn look had appeared in his eyes. He was confident in his abilities, but he was betting the manifestations of the blood, sweat, and tears of three generations, after all.

Outside Mamy Restaurant, everyone remained silent as they looked on, intrigued. They were all wondering who would get chosen as judges for this contest.

Of course, they were hoping that this honor would fall to them.

“Seeing as this is a contest with high stakes, the judges have to be more professional. That way, the end result will hold more credibility.” Mag looked around the spectators with a smile, and said, “Does anyone have any relevant professional credentials here? You may step forward for consideration.”

“That works.” Ricky nodded in agreement with Mag’s proposal. This idea was clearly better than finding five random people off the streets to do the judging. The only downside was that his friends and employees in the crowd wouldn’t serve any purpose. However, he was confident in his ability to beat Mag fair and square.

“Boss Mag, President Robert of the Catering Association is here!” Harrison yelled.

Everyone parted to reveal Robert.

“President Robert, would you be able to act as one of our judges for today?” Mag asked with a smile.

President Robert! Ricky’s eyelids twitched upon seeing him. His Robert’s Rotisserie had been stripped from the Aden Square food competition rankings board right when Robert had been instated as the new president. If he were to act as one of the judges, that could prove to be detrimental to him.

Everyone also turned to look at Robert with curiosity, wondering if he would agree or not. As the premier food organization in Chaos City, the Catering Association's president would definitely ensure fairness in the judging. However, they didn't think that an impromptu contest like this would've drawn the president to the scene. That made the contest even more intriguing.

"I don't support cooking contests with such high stakes, but both of you have entered the contest willingly, so I won't interfere. As the president of the Catering Association, I'd be honored to act as a judge in this contest." Robert made his way forward with a serious expression on his face.

"Thank you." Mag nodded with a smile. He wasn't afraid of any authorities; the only thing he was worried about would be having five judges who had all been bribed by Ricky in advance. Robert clearly wasn't someone who would take a bribe from Robert.

"Renowned food critic, Mr. Febid, is here!" Soon, another voice sounded from within the crowd, attracting widespread attention in the process.

"I can act as a judge for your contest." Everyone again dispersed to reveal a middle-aged Febid in his charcoal cloak, a brown cane in his hand, and a pair of leather boots on his feet. He sized Mag up with a mocking smile on his face, and remarked, "Your chef's suit is quite clean; you look like a mackerel covered in flour."

A burst of laughter erupted from within the crowd. Febid was quite renowned in Chaos City, particularly among foodies. He was known for his sharp tongue, and everyone was surprised to see him here.

As expected, he was exercising his sharp tongue from the get-go. His inclusion on the judging panel would surely make the contest even more interesting.

A smile also appeared on Ricky's face. He wasn't very fond of this harsh food critic who had left negative reviews for his rotisserie on many occasions, but it appeared that he harbored more animosity toward Mag for some reason. That was undoubtedly good news for him.

"You've got a nice getup as well. Even a duck doesn't have an a*ss as perky as yours." Mag smiled as he looked at the bulge in Febid's rear where his long coat had bunched up.

"Maybe a duck could compare with him if it tried to stick its ass out." Amy was also looking at Febid's coat with a serious expression.

"Now that they mention it, his coat really does remind me of a duck out of water."

"Hahaha, I'm dying of laughter! Boss Mag and Little Amy are so evil!"

"I feel like Febid has been defeated by a restaurant owner for the first time ever!"

An even louder burst of laughter erupted among the crowd.

An enraged flush appeared on Febid's face, and even his mustache was quivering with fury. Normally, all of the restaurant owners had to suck up to him even if he were to insult them. As such, he had never received such a barbed response before. He took a deep breath to calm himself down, and then pursed his lips as he said, "Chefs let their food do the talking; you won't get extra points for having a sharp tongue."

“You’re right. A chef can make a living off their cooking skills even if they’re not good with words, but food critics like you are good for nothing without your sharp tongue.” Mag’s smile remained on his face.

A sharp-tongued food critic? Heh, he’d stood at the pinnacle of that niche in his past life! After all, he was probably the only one who could receive divine retribution and be thrown into an alternate world just for his food reviews.

In comparison, this Febid had much to learn.

Even though Mag had become a chef and owner rather than a food critic, he was not a saint who would listen to others diss him without retaliation. As such, the sharp tongue that he had repressed for so long was showing signs of awakening from its dormancy.

“Hmph!” Febid was too enraged to even speak, and could only harrumph to express his fury. He glared at Mag before standing off to the side in silence. However, he had already made up his mind. He was going to write up a really “good” review for this annoying restaurant owner’s dishes.

Meanwhile, Ricky was overjoyed. Other people clambered to suck up to food critics, while Mag was doing the complete opposite. It appeared that he had Febid’s vote in the bag.

Next, two more judges were chosen. One was a professor from Chaos School with some notoriety as a part-time food critic. The other judge was the owner of Shir Rotisserie, a man who was had a wide renown for being kind and fair. His rotisserie was also in the top 50 on the Aden Square food competition rankings board, so he was a professional when it came to roast meat.

“There’s one final slot left. Is there anyone who would like to step forward?” Mag asked.

With just one spot left, the average foodies didn’t dare to raise their hands. They didn’t feel worthy to stand with such an esteemed panel of judges, and the entire scene fell into a slightly awkward silence.

Right at that moment, a voice sounded from nearby. “Can I give it a shot?”

Even though it was a question, the tone of voice carried a non-negotiable element.

Chapter 560 You’ve Got a Good Eye

Everyone turned their attention toward that lavish horse-drawn carriage, and all of them were surprised to see the beautiful woman in the red dress.

“Half a dragon coin and half a gold coin... That’s the Buffett Family emblem!”

“It’s Scheer Buffett! She’s the person that’s truly in power in the Buffett Family! She wants to become a judge for this contest?”

“I was right to have waited an entire hour; this judging panel is incredible!”

Many people soon identified the beautiful woman standing on the horse-drawn carriage, and all of them were very surprised.

Mag was also looking at Scheer with a hint of surprise on his face. This legendary woman from Chaos City’s business circle was even more beautiful than he had imagined.

She had a pair of exuberant red lips, while her brown curls gave one the false impression that she was more mature than her actual age suggested. She stood on the carriage, exuding the air of a professional and domineering businesswoman, completely devoid of the timidity commonly seen in young 17- or 18-year-old women like her, and the sections of her long slender legs peeking out from beneath her red dress drew attention from many men in the crowd.

“Alright, this beautiful young lady will be the final judge for today.” Mag nodded with a smile. He was planning on meeting this legendary young woman from the Buffett Family anyway, so this was clearly a good opportunity for him to make her acquaintance.

“You’ve got a good eye.” A captivating smile appeared on Scheer’s face as she got down gracefully from the horse-drawn carriage before making her way to the front of the crowd.

“I’ll be counting on you, Miya.” Mag turned toward Yabemiya with a nod as she set up the required kitchenware.

“No problem, Boss Mag. I’ll bring out tables and chairs for the judges.” Yabemiya nodded as she made her way toward the restaurant.

“There’s no need for you to do that when there are so many men standing around.” Mag shook his head with a smile as he turned to appraise Ricky’s employees.

“Grab three tables and place them side by side in a row, then bring out five chairs.” Ricky waved a hand, and his employees quickly got to work, creating a makeshift bench for the judging panel.

Robert sat at the very center, with Scheer and Febid sitting on either side of him. After all of the five judges were seated, everyone directed their attention toward Mag and Robert, eagerly awaiting the commencement of the contest.

Compared to the complex oven that Ricky had assembled, Mag’s rectangular oven appeared very crude and simplistic. There appeared to be a few steel bars on the oven, making people wonder how Mag was supposed to use something like that.

“Do you need more time to prepare?” Ricky asked. Aside from the simplistic oven, Mag also had a table beside him, upon which all kinds of condiments had been placed. At the center of the table was a black box. No one knew what the black box contained, but Mag hadn’t set up any barricades around himself to obstruct everyone’s vision, so the answer would most likely be revealed soon.

“Exactly an hour has passed. Let’s begin.” Mag looked at his watch to find that it was 6 pm on the dot.

“Alright.” A serious expression appeared on Ricky’s face as he waved his hand through the air. Two of his burly employees brought forward the black mountain goat they had prepared and proceeded to slaughter it.

“That’s a 1st-tier magic beast, a Black Skipping Mountain Goat!” Someone in the crowd was able to identify the goat.

“Those things are quite hard to catch. Even purchased from breeding farms, they’re quite expensive. Both the flavor and texture are far superior to those of normal mountain goats. I didn’t think Boss Ricky

would use it to make his roast meat today. I wonder what kind ingredient Boss Mag will use in response.”

Robert and the others looked at the black mountain goat and nodded in approval. The Black Skipping Mountain Goat wasn't exactly a high-class ingredient, but goat-type magic beasts were quite rare to begin with, and the most easily obtainable among them was the Skipping Mountain Goat. As such, it was a very good choice for Ricky to use it as the main ingredient for his roast meat.

Ricky glanced at Mag with a smug expression. He had come prepared for this contest. He had prepared the Black Skipping Mountain Goat in advance, whereas Mag probably didn't even have a suitable meat for roasting at his disposal.

Mag looked at the black mountain goat that was struggling for its life with a calm expression before opening the black box on the table beside him. Cold air rose, and a cut of rib-eye beef was revealed.

Mag had taken this portion of rib-eye beef from the fridge. The system had just granted him the right to access that ingredient, and the beef provided by the system was of a superior standard to the beef from the Ironhide Bull he had slain himself. Furthermore, it was clearly significantly fresher, so he decided to use it instead.

He reached for the cut of beef before placing it onto his chopping board. The beef was riddled with even marbling, and one could tell that it was an extremely tender cut of meat just from looking at it.

“That's...” Febid's eyes widened with incredulity as he stared at the beef on the chopping board, and he exclaimed, “That's beef from the 4th-tier magic beast, the Ironhide Bull! And that level of freshness indicates that it was freshly slain!”

“Who would have thought that this restaurant owner would be able to get his hands on such a prized cut of meat? There aren't even that many mercenary squads that would mess with an Ironhide Bull. Only with an extremely high price on offer would any squad dare to take on the mission.” The white-bearded professor on the judging panel was also quite surprised.

“H-how could this be?!” Ricky's expression changed slightly, and he was struck by a hint of panic upon hearing that. He had thought that Mag would be entering the contest completely unprepared, but the latter had produced meat from a 4th-tier magic beast!

“Looks like he may be even more prepared than the instigator of the contest. As expected, this restaurant owner is very interesting.” Scheer looked at Mag with eyes that were narrowed with curiosity.

A stir also ran through the spectators upon hearing that. Not everyone could afford to eat 4th-tier magic beasts, particularly a rare and powerful one like the Ironhide Bull. In contrast, Ricky's Black Skipping Mountain Goat wasn't even worthy of an honorable mention.

The ingredient is merely the icing on the cake. The most important factor contributing to the flavor of roast meat is still the skill of the chef. There's not even a drop of oil on his roasting rack, and he hasn't even lit a flame yet. He probably doesn't even know how to roast meat properly; how is he going to beat me? Ricky's confidence was restored as those thoughts ran through his mind. He began to skin the mountain goat himself, aiming for perfection in every single procedure.

Mag also wore a serious expression of concentration as he picked up his Chinese chef's knife. The tip of the knife glided through the beef, quickly slicing the two-kilogram portion of beef into two-centimeter cubes. Each and every cube was of the exact same size, and all of the cuts were completely even and smooth as if the beef had been processed by a machine.

His exemplary knife skills drew many gasps of amazement from the spectators.