

Stay At home 671

Chapter 671 Please Board the Train, Young Mistress Scheer

Scheer had already been expecting the delectable flavor of the steak, but she was extremely confident in the wine brewed by her family's winery. There was no better in the entire Norland Continent, let alone Chaos City.

The wine that Mag had used to cook his steak during the cooking contest the night before was the cream of the crop even among the wine produced by the Buffett Family winery, and the steak cooked with that wine as marinade was incredibly delicious.

She had thought that Mag would have to settle for some lower quality wine to cook his steak today, thereby compromising its flavor.

However, to her surprise, the flavor of the wine as she bit through this steak was even richer and more exceptional than it had been the night before. The supple texture and alluring fragrance of the wine instantly had her completely entranced.

She wasn't an avid alcoholic, but she was particularly partial to the wine brewed by her family's winery, and it had become a daily ritual for her to have half a glass of that wine every night before bed.

Hence, she was very familiar with what a premium-quality wine should taste like.

As such, she had to admit that the wine used in this steak was even better than the premium red wine that she drank every night.

The texture was smooth and rich, without as much as a single hint of bitterness. Even though the steak obscured most of the wine's flavor and texture, she could still tell that this was an amazing wine, and that it had made the steak so much more succulent and delicious than it otherwise would've been.

After swallowing her first mouthful of steak, Scheer immediately turned to Mag, and asked, "Mr. Mag, where did you purchase this wine?"

She knew that if a batch of red wine of this quality were to appear in the market, business for the Buffett Family winery would take a massive hit.

"If I were to tell you that I brewed this wine myself, would you believe me?" Mag asked with a smile.

"If someone else were telling me this, I might not believe them, but if it's you, Mr. Mag, then I think it's very much plausible. After all, you're such an exceptional chef already, yet you still have the spare time to construct a steam engine. For a genius like you, brewing a bit of wine on the side shouldn't be a difficult task." Scheer looked at Mag with a smile, and asked, "Mr. Mag, would I be able to taste a glass of this wine on its own?"

"The wine is indeed great for marinating beef, but it's still rather too early in the morning for alcohol." Mag shook his head with a smile as he replied, "Also, this wine was brewed solely for my steak, so I'm not selling it on its own. In terms of quality, it's naturally still inferior to the wine from the Buffett Family winery."

"I can tell what the quality is like for myself, Mr. Mag. You really are scrupulous when it comes to separating your private life from your professional career; you reject anyone without any hesitation." There was a hint of indignation in Scheer's eyes as she looked at Mag. She had never been rejected by any man on so many occasions before.

"Only by sticking strictly to a set of rules will my restaurant be able to thrive, isn't that right?" Mag replied with a smile. However, he was also cursing the system internally. He also wanted to sell this wine, but the system prohibited him from doing so. Otherwise, he would become rich just from selling wine.

The system existed to provide its host with incredible resources, but also to set up some hurdles on his way at times. Otherwise, life would become too easy for him.

"What a pity. If you ever changed your mind, I'd be willing to purchase a bottle of wine from you at the same price as the market price for the most premium wine from the Buffett Winery." Scheer heaved a forlorn sigh, but at the same time, she was feeling quite relieved. The Buffett Winery was the Buffett Family's largest source of revenue aside from their banks. There were winery branches set up all over the entire continent, and they had no competition in the field of high-grade wine. As such, it came as quite a relief to her that Mag wasn't going to sell his wine on the market.

"If I brew enough wine in the future, I'll be sure to keep a bottle for you, Young Mistress Scheer." Mag nodded with a smile. The most premium wine that the Buffett Winery had to offer started at a minimum of 100,000 copper coins per bottle, so she was offering him quite a lofty price.

Scheer picked up her knife and fork again, and continued to dine on her steak.

Soon, she discovered that not only was the wine a more exceptional brew than what had been used the night before, even the Ironhide Bull beef used in this steak was of better texture and flavor as if the beef had been sliced directly off the body of a freshly slaughtered Ironhide Bull.

The delicious flavor dancing on the tip of her tongue completely woke up her lethargic body, and every single cell in her body was completely satisfied. She felt that tasting such a delicious meal in the morning would set the tone for a fantastic day to come.

Scheer looked down at the empty plate in front of her before looking at up Mag with a smile as she said, "This is so delicious that I want another portion."

Mag looked back at Scheer, and began, "If you'd like another portion—"

"I'll come back for another portion next time. It's not good to be gluttonous, particularly when it comes to such a delicious steak." Scheer shook her head as she dabbed at her lips with her napkin. When she looked up at Mag again, the smile on her face had already faded as she said, "Mr. Mag, I think it's time we talked about the steam engine now."

"Please come with me, Young Mistress Scheer; I'd like to show you something." Mag untied his apron and put it aside before making his way toward the restaurant's entrance.

Scheer was slightly surprised to see this, but she still rose to her feet and followed Mag out of the restaurant before entering the neighboring room.

“What’s this?” Scheer exclaimed as soon as she entered the room.

Within the large room that was around 100 square meters in area, there was a small set of tracks laid down using long metal bars. In the corner of the room, there was a particularly eye-catching long metal tube-like contraption with small wheels on the bottom.

Its rough lines, black metal exterior, and the chimney protruding from the roof of the first section of the contraption made it appear as if it were a dormant ferocious beast. In the second section of the contraption, there were two seats that were a little small, but would still be enough to seat two adults.

“This is a train. It’s the first completed creation of mine that can put a steam engine to practical use. If these trains can be constructed on a large scale, it can perhaps revolutionize transportation in this world,” Mag introduced with a smile.

The train and the railway tracks had been constructed by Mobai in the past couple of days. Following the assembly, it looked more like a children’s toy than a revolutionary piece of technology, but it would suffice for demonstration purposes.

In the past, the invention of the steam engine had transformed the entire world, and one of the main purposes that the steam engines served was to power trains. Steam trains completely revolutionized transportation on Earth, and were used for a stretch of several centuries[1] before superior alternatives were eventually discovered.

For a woman with a business sense as sharp as Scheer’s, what Mag was about to demonstrate to her was something that was completely irresistible.

“A train? How can a metal construction like this transport anything without a magic beast to pull it? Would you be able to demonstrate it for me, Mr. Mag?” Scheer had a surprised look in her eyes, but she didn’t lock herself into any premature conclusions.

“Certainly. In fact, you can test it out for yourself. It’s just that the steam engine will take some time to start running.” Mag nodded with a smile before making his way over to the miniature steam train, opening the lid on the boiler, and adding coals into the boiler before setting those coals alight. Steam began to flow toward the cylinders, making the pistons spring into action, and the steam train also began to tremor gently.

Mag climbed into the passenger seat before turning to Scheer with a smile as he said, “Please board the train, Young Mistress Scheer. You’ll be the first person to ride on a steam train.”

Chapter 672 I’m Actually Just a Chef

The steam train was like a magic beast that was gradually awakening, and white smoke began to funnel out from its chimney. The steam began to set the pistons in motion, and a screech rang out from the train as it prepared for its first journey.

“It really is moving!” Scheer’s eyes immediately lit up. The white water vapor billowing out from the chimney was raising the humidity in the room slightly. After a brief hesitation, Scheer climbed into the seat behind Mag’s.

If the steam engine was capable of doing what Mag and Hyde proclaimed it could, then it really was capable of changing the world. If that were the case, then the invention of this so-called train would be the first step of an almighty revolution.

Buffett Banks was still very much on the ascendancy, but she had already identified its limitations and maximal future potential. However, if she could bring the steam engine to the world, then a realm of infinite possibilities would open up to the Buffett Family.

It was one of her small goals to become the president of the Chamber of Commerce, and if she could grab ahold of this opportunity, then that goal would be something that she could easily achieve in the future.

Of course, thinking that far into the future would only make her get ahead of herself. The million-dollar question at the moment was whether this train could actually move or not.

"The train is very safe, but do be careful and sit tight, Young Mistress Scheer," Mag cautioned. As he laid his hand on the control shaft, his heart was also thumping in his chest.

He wasn't some seasoned train pilot. He only knew how steam trains worked, yet had never piloted one.

The method of operating this train with a control shaft was very simple, but he felt as if he wasn't holding just a control shaft in his hand; he felt as if he were holding a magic wand that contained infinite possibilities. There was no way to predict what kind of effect a steam train would have on this magical world, and this lack of predictability was making him quite nervous.

Seeing as I don't have any choice, let me be the one to change this world. Mag took a deep breath before pushing the control shaft forward.

The gears interlocked with each other and the small train tremored violently before the pistons set it in motion. As the wheels began to turn over the railway tracks, the train began to pick up speed and clunk its way forward.

Scheer's eyes widened with shock and incredulity.

There were no magic beasts pulling the vehicle or pushing it from behind, yet this small train really was able to transport the two of them using just the power generated from burning coal.

Scheer had heard many reports from Hyde's team in the past few years, so she had a basic understanding of the steam engine, yet she was still flabbergasted by the scenes that were unfolding before her eyes. It was incredible that this light and wispy water vapor could be capable of producing such a vast amount of energy, energy that could be harnessed and controlled. Scheer's heart was also thumping wildly in her chest as she considered the possibilities all of this entailed.

She was unable to comprehend how this steam train worked, but she knew that this form of energy was consistent and reliable. Perhaps all tasks that required monotonous and repetitive manual labor could be undertaken by these steam engines in the future, and the entire world would be transformed as a result.

Scheer was struggling to imagine how immensely vast of a market that would be.

She knew that she had to be the first one to grab ahold of this technology.

This steam engine was going to give rise to the biggest revolution in the next few decades, and perhaps even the next few centuries.

Coal was something that was completely inexpensive, and there was almost an endless amount that could be mined from the wilderness of Chaos City.

The train wasn't moving very quickly, and the wet and warm steam pouring from the chimney soon filled the entire room due to the limited space, resulting in a rather uncomfortable experience. However, this demonstration was already more than sufficient to show her the potential of the steam engine.

After traveling a lap around the room, Mag pulled the control shaft back to separate the gears, upon which the small train slowly came to a grinding halt. The entire room had been enshrouded in water vapor, making it very warm and humid, but also giving the surroundings a rather ethereal quality.

Mag disembarked from the train before opening the door for Scheer and helping her down as well. Their hair and clothes were all wet from the warm steam in the air, yet both of them were too excited to pay that any heed.

"Mr. Mag, this is truly an innovative invention. Your name will be recorded in history as one of the most brilliant inventors the Norland Continent has ever seen." Scheer looked at Mag with undisguised praise and amazement in her eyes.

"I'm actually just a chef," Mag replied modestly.

"As a chef of your caliber, it's absolutely incredible that you can invent such a masterpiece of mechanical engineering. You are truly a phenomenal genius." Mag had given her far too many surprises, and this steam train was perhaps the biggest surprise yet.

Mag didn't allow himself to get carried away by Scheer's praise. Instead, he kept a level head as he said, "It's indeed very pleasing to receive such glowing praise from Young Mistress Scheer, but I was wondering if you were interested in my steam engine and steam train. In other words, would you be interested in a collaboration with me?"

"Powering vehicles through burning coal alone is indeed an incredible thing. However, it's yet to be seen whether this can be implemented on a large scale, and that's going to require extensive amounts of time and experimentation, which incurs a substantial risk in itself." Scheer looked at Mag and contemplated momentarily before continuing, "Buffett Banks can offer 10,000,000 copper coins to purchase all of your technology surrounding steam engines and steam trains, and we're willing to assume all risks involved."

Even though Scheer had identified the steam engine as the next big thing, she still wasn't 100% confident in its viability. After all, this was something that was completely new and revolutionary, and a massive risk was incurred by investing in it.

Success would result in immeasurable profits, but failure could also lead to severe losses.

As a businessman, risk management was absolutely mandatory.

"10,000,000 copper coins is indeed a very large sum, and it shows that you've acknowledged the massive impact that this technology will have on the world." Mag looked at Scheer and shook his head

as he said, “However, this is not the sort of collaboration I’m looking for. I want to collaborate with you as the Buffett Family has enormous financial ability and a vast network. I’m more interested in the future of this technology rather than to profit from it in a one-off transaction akin to killing the hen that lays golden eggs.”

Scheer’s expression became quite serious upon hearing this, and after a momentarily pause, she asked, “What kind of collaboration do you have in mind?”

“My vision is to enter a three-way collaborative relationship with Buffett Banks and the city lord’s castle. I’ll provide the technology, Buffett Banks will provide the required funds, while the city lord’s castle will provide the resources and protection. Together, we’ll bring the steam engine and steam train technology to the rest of the world.” Mag laid a hand on the slightly scorching metal exterior of the train. He turned his gaze toward the metal railway tracks with a hint of anticipation in his eyes as he said, “If we want to set up a railway network that spans the entirety of the Norland Continent to revolutionize transportation in the entire world, then funds and technology alone will be far from enough.”

Scheer looked at Mag and her eyes gradually lit up. At the same time, a peculiar emotion appeared in her eyes.

Mag was an exceptional chef who had also displayed outstanding talent in the area of mechanics, yet at his very core, he was a businessman, one with a great eye for the future and the bigger picture.

Scheer very rarely developed admiration for anyone, but she suddenly found herself in slight awe and admiration of Mag.

“Are you sure that the city lord’s castle will collaborate with us?” Scheer asked.

Mag smiled as he answered her question with one of his own. “Do you think the city lord’s castle won’t be willing to collaborate with us?”

Chapter 673 You Made me All We

Scheer was silent for a moment as she looked at Mag. The white water vapor in the air still hadn’t completely dissipated, and the man standing before her was enshrouded in this water vapor, making her unable to see him clearly both in a physical and a metaphoric sense.

Mag was also looking at Scheer in silence, awaiting her reply.

“Your proposal is something that’s very surprising to me, but I do have a great interest in your steam engine and steam train. As such, I certainly wouldn’t be opposed to a three-way collaboration with the city lord’s castle.” Scheer looked at Mag with a serious expression, and said, “However, I have a condition: Buffett Banks must be given priority in the usage rights of the steam engine and steam train technology. Otherwise, I can’t guarantee that I’ll be able to obtain enough support from the bank.”

“I suggest you bring up this condition and any other conditions you might have during a three-way conference. In any case, I’m fairly sure that the city lord’s castle wouldn’t fight over the usage rights of this technology with Buffett Banks.” Mag nodded in response, but didn’t agree right away.

“Alright, then I’ll leave it to you to negotiate with the city lord’s castle. I look forward to the day when our three-way conference will be held.” Scheer nodded as she swept back her wet hair. A seductive smile suddenly appeared on her face as she said, “Why did you set up the steam train in such a closed-off place? You made me all wet.”

“Please forgive me, Young Mistress Scheer; I had to do this in order to ensure the confidentiality of the steam engine and the steam train.” Mag gave an awkward smile in response. If Scheer’s words had been heard by anyone else, they would think that he had done something unthinkable to her.

“Let’s go, then.” Mag waved a hand and led the way toward the door. The humidity in the room was still very high, and his clothes were completely drenched, half from sweat and half from water vapor.

Mag opened the door and emerged from the room together with Scheer.

“Boss?”

Sally’s surprised voice suddenly sounded at this moment.

Mag turned around, only to discover Sally and Babla, who just so happened to be passing by this room. They were both looking at Mag with peculiar expressions on their faces.

Mag and Scheer were both completely drenched, and as a result, their clothes were clinging tightly to their skin. Their hair was also rather disheveled, and they had just emerged from a room with no windows, making it difficult for others not to suspect some foul play between them.

Could it be... that there’s some sort of unspeakable secret between Boss and Young Mistress Scheer?

The same thought occurred to Sally and Babla at the same time.

“Hmph, men!” Babla glared at Mag with a disdainful expression. He was Amy’s father, yet not only was he refusing to mention anything about Amy’s mother, he was even having extramarital affairs! What a despicable man!

Scheer took a glance at Sally and Babla before she smiled, and said, “That was quite an enjoyable and memorable private meeting, Mr. Mag. I hope to see you again next time.”

“Alright, see you next time.” Mag nodded in response, but his expression had darkened slightly. Scheer was always speaking in such a suggestive manner. They had clearly just had a business meeting, yet she insisted on using words like “private meeting” to lure others into a more salacious train of thought.

After Scheer got onto her lavish horse-drawn carriage, Mag turned to Sally and Babla with a smile as he said, “Why are you two back so soon? Didn’t you want to stay at Miya’s ice cream shop for a while longer?”

Babla pursed her lips with a disdainful look on her face, and said, “If we didn’t come back so early, we wouldn’t know that someone’s meeting a woman in secret here, and going on private dates behind closed doors.”

“Looks like I have to deliver a report on whom I’m meeting in advance. Otherwise, our little princess is going to get angry,” Mag said with a smile. For some reason, he was detecting a hint of jealousy from

Babla. After locking the door to the steam train room behind him, Mag made his way toward the restaurant.

"I... I don't want to know whom you're meeting!" Babla crossed her arms and harrumphed in a haughty manner.

"Miya asked us to come back to bring some ice cream ingredients over to her. Business has been really good this morning, and she's worried that she'll run out of ingredients later in the day," Sally explained.

"I see. I have to go out to run an errand later anyway, so I'll bring some ingredients over to her on the way. At the rate that she makes ice cream, we should have close to enough ingredients even if there's a full house for the entire day." Mag nodded before entering the restaurant.

"Alright, then we'll get back and help Miya out." Sally nodded as she turned to leave again.

"Big Sister Sally, shouldn't we go in to have a look? Maybe he's seeing other women in there!" Babla turned to Sally with a hesitant look.

"Boss must be showering and changing clothes right now; do you want to watch?" Sally turned to Babla with a hint of an amused smile on her face.

"How could he do such things in broad daylight! I have no interest in watching that." Babla blushed as she shook her head firmly before departing with Sally.

On the horse-drawn carriage, Scheer had already changed into a fresh set of clothes, and her elegant brows were furrowed tightly as she murmured to herself, "I have to discuss this matter with Grandpa. Perhaps his judgment will be superior to mine here."

This is a good beginning. Now, I just have to tell a story to the city lord's castle. After taking a shower and changing into a set of clean clothes, Mag instantly felt reinvigorated. Even though Scheer hadn't made any promises to him earlier, he could clearly see that Scheer was aware of just how valuable the steam engine and the steam train were. As such, there was no way that she would be willing to give up on this opportunity.

As long as the city lord's castle was willing to participate in this endeavor, Mag would be able to successfully tie Buffett and the city lord's castle to himself.

As long as he held the core technology of the steam engine in his hands, even if the events from three years ago were to repeat themselves, those two colossal factions would be forced to stand with him.

This was going to be the beginning of his journey in taking revenge on all those who had attempted, and were still trying, to kill him.

This was the true reason why Mag had insisted on developing the steam engine despite the system's objections.

After grabbing some ice cream ingredients from the kitchen downstairs, Mag made a trip to the ice cream shop on his bicycle first.

There was a long line outside the ice cream shop, and it was a full house inside as well. The line wasn't quite as long as the staggering queues that gathered outside Mamy Restaurant during peak hours, but

there were still over 10 people lined up at a time like this with more people joining the line, so it could be seen that business was going quite well for the ice cream shop.

Mag carried the ingredients into the shop, and responded to all of the greetings the regular customers of the restaurant extended toward him. He handed the ingredients over to Miya before exiting the shop and heading to the city lord's castle on his bicycle.

"Boss Mag, what brings you here today?" When Mag had just reached the city lord's castle, Dicus just so happened to disembark from a horse-drawn carriage. He was just about to make his way into the city lord's castle when he caught sight of Mag, and a thought seemed to have occurred to him as he smiled, and said, "By the way, I heard you won another storefront from Head Chef Beate yesterday. You must be here to process the handover, right?"

Mag shook his head with a smile, and replied, "No, I'm actually here to see you today, Mr. Dicus. I want to discuss some matters regarding the steam engine with you."

Chapter 674 Bro, You're Really Good at Killing Chickens!

When Mag came out from the city lord's castle, it was already close to noon. He had already plastered a hiatus slip onto the door of the restaurant, so he changed his clothes and traveled to several detective agencies. There, he provided some information and also purchased some information as well.

After what happened at the banquet last night, I've attracted a lot of attention. However, I can't disclose the name, Noya Gould, yet. Still, there should be some people who will make the connection and spread the rumor. When that time comes, all I have to do is wait for the people from the Barkly Family to come and find me. Mag ripped the piece of paper in his hands to shreds and tossed it into the gutter. He then entered an alleyway and changed back into his original clothes, and then ate a bland meal of noodles at a random restaurant before preparing to return home.

Right at this moment, the system's voice suddenly sounded. "Ding! New mission: please head to the food market and purchase three required ingredients. Condition: all purchased ingredients must be of the highest quality in the entire market! Reward for mission success: 0.5 of a strength point; punishment for mission failure: 0.5 of a strength point will be deducted."

"Huh?" Mag's feet faltered, and a perplexed look appeared on his face as he asked internally, "System, aren't you responsible for supplying all of my ingredients? Why are you suddenly asking me to buy ingredients elsewhere? That seems to be very out of character for you. Also, even the best produce in the markets is far inferior to the quality of the ingredients you provide. If we suddenly switch to lower quality ingredients in our dishes, the customers are going to be able to immediately notice a difference."

"Only the best ingredients can produce the best dishes, so the ability to pick out the best ingredients is a prerequisite for a brilliant chef. You're very lacking in this area, so this is a supplementary mission that must be completed prior to your trip to Rodu. You must master the ability to pick out the best ingredients on your own. During your time in Rodu, the system won't be providing any ingredients other than condiments to you," the system replied in a serious voice.

"I see." Mag's expression also became quite serious upon hearing this. He could already understand the system's intentions.

In the past, he had always relied on the system to provide the best ingredients for him. Due to the closed-off nature of his restaurant, even if someone were to raise suspicions regarding the avenues through which he procured his ingredients, he could always fabricate an excuse to placate him.

However, if he were to travel to Rodu and cook the king's birthday feast, he definitely wouldn't be allowed to bring his own ingredients into the palace. Instead, he would be forced to use ingredients provided by others.

As such, the ability to pick the best ingredients would obviously become very important.

"A 0.5 strength point reward? That's quite generous of the system. Don't mind if I do." Mag chuckled to himself as he rode on his bicycle toward the food market.

After spending a silver coin to convince an old man stationed at the entrance of the food market to look after his bicycle, Mag walked straight into the market.

The food market in the Aden Square was the largest of its kind in the entirety of Chaos City. Virtually any ingredient that could be found in Chaos City could also be found in this market.

A tall and broad orc stood beside a massive skinned python as he yelled, "Have a look, everyone, this is a freshly slain 3rd-tier magic beast, a Black Rock Python! Beneath its rock-hard skin is supple and delicious python flesh. If you miss out on this one, it'll be a blue moon before you encounter another one!"

The python was as thick as a water tank, and it was over 10 meters long. The entire thing was dripping with blood as it hung from a rack, creating a rather gruesome sight to behold.

"Live Pine Tree Mice up for sale! Perfect for keeping as a pet or roasted for a meal. There are only three left now, so make sure to get them quick!" An elf was holding in his hand a cage, within which were enclosed three squirrel-like creatures. The rodents were whizzing about in the cage in a very adorable manner, drawing the attention of a few kids nearby.

A dark-skinned middle-aged man was holding a banner above his head with buckets filled with freshwater lobsters in front of him while he sobbed, and yelled, "Our boss ran away with his wife so no one's paying our wages, and we can only sell this 1st-tier magic beast, the Skin-Skin Lobster! The price is 300 copper coins per kilogram, and we're selling only while stock lasts!"

Mag looked at the Skin-Skin Lobsters that were comparable in size to Australian lobsters, and discovered that they did indeed have a lot of skin on them. However, the story that the middle-aged man was telling seemed to be a little familiar.

"Look out! The fire chicken escaped from its cage!" Right at this moment, a panicked voice erupted as a fire chicken that was taller than a grown man rushed out from a shop with flames burning all over its body.

A brawny half-naked man came rushing out behind it while wielding a meat cleaver, alerting everyone to the situation with his loud voice. The passersby all rushed away in panic, and the market instantly descended into complete turmoil. The fire chicken was a magic beast, and could severely injure the average person even just by grazing them.

Mag just so happened to be on the path directly in front of the oncoming fire chicken, and his brows furrowed as he looked at the slow elderly couple behind him.

The fire chicken was the main ingredient in his braised chicken, and the first time he had hunted for them, a fire chicken had almost killed him. As such, he knew how dangerous these things were, particularly in a congested market with so many people around.

The management staff in the market was already rushing in this direction, and some of the more powerful passersby were also preparing to step in, but their intervention would most likely be too late for the old couple behind Mag.

A scorching aura was already sweeping toward Mag, and as the fire chicken opened its mouth, a lava-like red glow could be seen shimmering within.

“Let me borrow this for a second.” Mag grabbed a knife from the rack of a nearby vegetable salesman before stepping forward.

The knife flashed through the air, and Mag already appeared on the other side of the fire chicken.

A chicken head went flying high into the air before tumbling to the ground. The oncoming fire chicken only charged forward for two more steps before falling to the ground, and the flames on its body also quickly fizzled out.

“Phew~”

The brawny man heaved a long sigh of relief as he came rushing over while holding his cleaver. If the chicken he was selling were to kill or injure someone in this market, he would be in deep trouble.

“Bro, you’re really good at killing chickens!” The brawny man gratefully gave Mag a thumbs-up.

“Practice makes perfect, I guess.” Mag cupped his fist in a salute before returning the knife to the vegetable salesman, who was still completely flabbergasted by what he saw. Mag smiled, and said, “Your knife is very sharp; thanks for lending it to me.”

“You’re very welcome!” The vegetable salesman hurriedly shook his head in response.

A smattering of applause instantly erupted as everyone looked at Mag with approval in their eyes. Many people had come forward to inquire about the price of that knife.

Mag smiled and nodded to acknowledge the applause before continuing to wander through the market. Mag had been here on several previous occasions, and had been overawed by the variety of magic beast ingredients in this place during all of those instances. If these creatures were living on Earth, all of them would be highly protected species, but here in this market, they were merely ingredients that could be sold without any repercussions.

Chapter 675 The Strategy for Picking a Chicken

Lake Moissan was the largest freshwater lake near Chaos City, and there were many types of fish that could be found within the lake. Strangely enough, there were no magic beasts that frequented this place, so it was extremely safe even to ordinary people.

The Buffett owned a manor to the west of Chaos City, directly neighboring Lake Moissan. There were a few intricate little buildings beside the lake, and the area was surrounded by a bamboo fence.

There was a large tree beside the lake, which was growing in a slightly crooked manner. The tree was also twisted in the middle, and was growing toward the lake, creating a natural canopy that obscured the bright autumn sunlight.

At this moment, there was an elderly man with a head of white hair sitting on a small stool underneath the tree. He was holding a fishing rod in his hand while staring intently at a white buoy floating on the surface of the lake.

Scheer stood beside the old man, and asked, "Grandpa, do you think this is something worth taking the risk to invest in?"

"Shh, you'll scare the fish away," the old man whispered as he tightened his grip on his fishing rod. The white buoy tremored slightly before suddenly sinking into the water as if it had been dragged under the surface by something. At the same time, the fishing line also immediately stretched taut.

"There's a fish on the hook!" A mixture of elation and anxiety appeared on Scheer's face as she urged, "Grandpa, hurry and reel it in!"

"There's no need to rush. This is a big fish, and the bigger the fish, the more patient you need to be. Otherwise, both the line and rod could easily snap. In that case, you'd lose the fish and a fishing rod. That would not be a pleasant experience," the elderly man said with a smile as he began to slowly reel the fish in.

"I need to be patient?" Scheer faltered slightly as she looked at the large fish rising to the surface before sinking into the lake in a repetitive cycle. All of a sudden, she became rather unsure of whether she was the fisherman or the fish in this deal. She didn't know if she was the one in control, or if Mag was actually the one in the driver's seat.

The hooked fish struggled for over 10 minutes in the lake before it was slowly dragged to the shore. The elderly man scooped it up with his net, and found that it was a red carp that was over five kilograms in weight.

"We're going to have a good meal for lunch today! This is the first red carp of its size this year." Ian looked at the large carp in his net with a smile before he turned to Scheer, and said, "Little Scheer, you should join me for lunch today. Your luck has always been quite good."

"If Grandpa says this is a good fish, then it must be a good fish." A smile also appeared on Scheer's face as she followed Ian toward his house.

"In business, it's important to realize that some money should be left for other people to earn. Otherwise, your own business will eventually fail. However, the most important factor is who you're doing it with. If the person doesn't have a good set of moral standards, then you can't collaborate with them even if there's profit to be gained," Ian said with a smile as he walked.

Scheer nodded with a thoughtful expression.

“The newly brewed wine in our winery should be ready to come out of the cellar soon, right?” Ian suddenly asked.

“It’ll be ready in a few days; I’ll get someone to bring you some when it’s ready.” Scheer turned to Ian with a perplexed look as she asked, “But there’s wine with more age in the cellar; why wouldn’t you drink some of that, Grandpa?”

“I prefer the taste of new wine. In contrast, I don’t really like aged wine,” Ian replied as he shook his head.

“Speaking of wine, the wine that Mr. Mag used in his steak is of even better quality than the wine from our winery. It’s just that he refuses to sell it and uses it exclusively for his steaks.” Scheer knew that Ian was an avid wine enthusiast. In order to drink the wine of his desires, he had expended several decades, as well as countless wealth and effort, to create the best winery on the entire continent. This was something that only he was capable of doing.

“Really?” Ian’s footsteps immediately faltered. He had displayed no interest in the phenomenal steam engine, yet he was now acting like an excited child.

Scheer nodded, and confirmed, “The wine that he brewed for his steak has a better flavor and texture than even the most premium wine brewed in our winery.”

“That’s very interesting.” Ian nodded with a smile before continuing onward.

...

In the city lord’s office, Dicus was looking at City Lord Michael with an excited expression on his face as he said, “City Lord, if Mr. Mag really has developed the steam engine and devised practical uses for it, this could change many things and take infrastructure development in our Chaos City to the next level.”

Michael sat behind his desk, his brows furrowed in deep thought. After a prolonged silence, he shook his head, and said, “Don’t jump to any conclusions before we see the actual product. If the Buffett Family is willing to participate in the collaboration, then they’ll be assuming most of the risk.”

“Should we go to Mamy Restaurant right now, then?” Dicus was barely able to contain his excitement. He had been closely following the progress of Hydle’s research team in the past few years, and was well aware just how much the steam engine could change the world.

“There’s no hurry; I have a couple of upcoming meetings to attend, so we’ll go later tonight.” Michael shook his head as he rose to his feet and made his way over to the door. As he passed by Dicus, he stopped and smiled as he said, “I know you’re very excited, but don’t tell anyone about this for now, not even Hydle and his team.”

Dicus faltered slightly upon hearing this before quickly nodding in response. “Yes.”

...

Mag made a lap around the food market and had made a rough assessment of which ingredients could be found in which location, as well as what the level of quality was like.

It's a real shame that these ingredients are going to waste. With the mediocre culinary standards of this world, there most likely aren't many people who can truly do these ingredients justice, Mag thought to himself wistfully. The diversity of ingredients in this market was making his eyes water; at the same time, he was very much looking forward to creating his own recipes after becoming a chef who was truly proficient in his craft.

Is that a human-sized lobster? I wonder if it'll taste good as a spicy dish... Mag speculated internally.

After organizing his scattered thoughts, he had already decided on the ingredients that he was going to purchase. The system had stipulated three dishes, and taking into consideration the fact that he would be able to source his own ingredients once he reached Rodu, he decided on the spicy grilled fish, braised chicken and rice, and black pepper steak.

The iridescent scale grass carp was a crossbred fish that the system had conjured up, so it didn't exist in this world. After looking through all of the fish being sold in the market, Mag decided on a type of fish known as the kirin carp in the end.

This type of fish had thick and heavy scales, yet its flesh was very tender and succulent, and its bones were quite large. Mag looked on as the shop owner killed the fish, and he was already devising a plan to remove some of the smaller bones from the fish. There should be no issues with using it to cook spicy grilled fish.

The braised chicken required fire chicken, and when Mag set out in his quest to find the right chicken, the shop owner whom he had just saved from getting into major trouble was more than happy to help him out. He went into extensive detail about how to pick the best chicken, telling Mag about everything from the feathers to the feet, giving Mag an extremely practical insider's perspective on the subject.

Chapter 676 Why is a Man Like You Trying to Friendzone Me

"As expected, you're still much more professional than I am when it comes to picking out chicken." Mag gave the man a thumbs-up with an admiring light in his eyes.

"You're far too kind, Brother. If it weren't for you stepping back there, I would've been in a lot of trouble right now." The man gave a bashful smile before handing over a fire chicken drumstick to Mag. "This is the drumstick from that chicken you just killed. That chicken was the best of the bunch and satisfies all of the criteria I just told you about. Try it out and see if it tastes different compared to normal chicken."

It was quite clear that the man wasn't going to take no for an answer, so Mag took drumstick in the end after a brief hesitation. "Alright, I'll give it a try."

"Good. Come find me again if you need to buy chicken next time; I'll be sure to pick out the best one for you." The man nodded with a bashful smile.

"Thank you." Mag concluded the slightly strange conversation with a smile before departing. He had obtained both the fish and the chicken. Afterward, he went to source potatoes and other secondary ingredients, all of which were the freshest that the market had to offer.

Ironhide Bull beef wasn't always readily available in the food market, but Mag was in luck, and soon discovered a stall where two well-built men were selling Ironhide Bull. By the time he got there, most of

the meat had already been sold, thereby indicating the clear mismatch between demand and supply for this prized meat.

A man with two scars on his face and his left arm in a sling yelled, "Come and have a look, everyone, this is beef from the 4th-tier magic beast, the Ironhide Bull. Our mercenary squad had to take a great risk to capture this thing, and two of my brothers have sustained some serious injuries. This is meat that we had to risk our lives to obtain, and you're certainly not going to see this every day."

The other mercenary also had some scars on his body, but they were clearly new, which indicated that they had indeed gone to great lengths to secure their prey.

Mag looked at the two of them, and he couldn't help but recall the Rose Mercenary Squad that he had encountered during his trip to hunt an Ironhide Bull. Sivir had delivered the money from selling the Ironhide Bull to his restaurant, and that was the last time that he had seen her.

These mercenaries were willing to risk their lives to hunt down an Ironhide Bull. As expected, the mercenary occupation was truly one where people wagered their lives for profit.

The mercenary's words attracted the attention of many of the customers in the market. The meat of 4th-tier magic beasts was very uncommon in this food market, and even though it was being sold for quite a high price, there were still many customers who were willing to spend good money to taste such a delicacy.

Mag made his way over to the stall, and he raised his eyebrows slightly in response to what he saw. He then turned and strode toward the entrance of the food market as he said internally, "System, this Ironhide Bull was slain yesterday, and they didn't even completely drain it of blood, so it can only be referred to as inferior quality beef. There's only one Ironhide Bull in the entire food market, and when I get to Rodu, I can just ask them to prepare a fresh Ironhide Bull for me. That means I've completed the mission, right?"

"Ding! Following the system's verification, it is confirmed that all of the ingredients purchased were the best that the market had to offer. Due to the low quality of the Ironhide Bull beef and the lack of available options, the system deems that you have indeed completed the mission!

"Ding! 0.5 of a strength has already been delivered. Would you like to activate it now?"

"Absolutely not!" Mag immediately refused. He didn't want to be electrocuted into a spasmodic idiot in front of all of these people.

With this additional half of a strength point, I now have a total of four strength points, which means my body has reached the level of a 4th-tier knight. With Mag Alex's sword techniques, I should be able to protect myself relatively well on the Norland Continent, Mag thought to himself as he clenched his fists. From now on, he wouldn't have to hide behind Amy anymore. Instead, he was going to become Amy's guardian.

After exiting the food market, Mag went straight back to the restaurant. The time was just past 2 pm, right in the quiet juncture between lunch and dinner.

Mag had just poured a glass of water for himself when he heard the sound of knocking on the door.

Mag put down the glass and opened the door, only to find Blour standing outside while holding Anna's little hand.

"What brings you two here?" Mag asked with a smile. During this recent period of time, Blour would often bring Anna over for meals. The little girl was very clever and adorable, and had become one of Amy's good friends. Mag was also quite fond of her, but this clearly wasn't the time for a meal.

"Boss Mag, I have to go out on a trip, and it'll be rather difficult to take Anna with me. She doesn't want to stay at the elven embassy, either, so I could only bring her here. Would you be able to look after her for me for a few days?" Blour asked with a resigned expression.

"Uncle Mag, I want to learn cooking from you. Is that alright?" Anna looked up at Mag with a determined expression.

"Well..." Mag looked at Anna, and then turned his gaze back to Blour.

"This isn't my idea; she insisted on coming here." Blour shrugged in resignation.

Mag turned back to Anna and looked into her eyes. Even though she was still very young, her eyes were filled with determination, and there seemed to be a light shimmering in them.

"Anna, do you really want to learn how to cook?" Mag asked with a serious expression.

"Yes." Anna nodded firmly without any hesitation.

A smile appeared on Mag's face as he nodded, and said, "Alright, if you want to learn, then you can learn cooking from me from today onward. I'll continue to teach you as long as you still wish to learn."

"Thank you, Uncle Mag." Anna spread open her arms and threw herself at Mag.

Mag squatted down and opened his arms as well before enveloping Anna in a gentle hug. He patted her pack, and gently said, "Cooking is going to be very tiring and difficult, though, so you have to learn to persevere and be strong."

"Yes, I will." Anna took a step back, and there were already tears shimmering in her eyes, but she nodded firmly and refused to let her tears fall.

Heh, she seems to be more interested in this guy than someone as absurdly handsome as me, Blour thought indignantly as he saw the admiration on Anna's face.

"Alright, come in and have a glass of water first. I have some things that I have to discuss with Blour." Mag carried Anna over to a nearby chair and placed a glass of water in front of her. He then ushered Blour over to the door, and whispered, "How long will you be away for? I'm going to journey to Rodu in half a month as well, and I can't take Anna with me, either."

"Barring any mishaps, I should be back within five days. If something happens, then I'll have to get you to permanently look after Anna. I know that you're a good man, Boss Mag," Blour said with a carefree expression.

"Why is a man like you trying to friendzone me[1]?" Mag rolled his eyes as he looked at Blour for a while before shaking his head as he said, "I'm only going to give you six days."

“Alright.” Blour smiled as he waved farewell to Anna, and said, “Goodbye, Anna.”

“Bye bye.” Anna also waved farewell to Blour in response.

Chapter 677 Apprentice Chef Anna

Mag and Anna sat with a glass of water between them and stared at each other in silence for over 10 minutes.

In the end, Anna couldn't help but break the silence. “Uncle Mag, are we going to start cooking now?”

“Yes. Cooking is a craft that will take a long time to master. You haven't learned cooking before, so we'll start off with some cutting skills. Those skills will lay the foundation for your cooking.” Mag nodded in response. It was not going to be an easy task to teach a five- or six-year-old little girl who had never even held a chef's knife before. At the very least, it was going to be far more difficult than teaching Yabemiya to make ice cream.

“Alright.” Anna stood up and nodded with an expectant look in her eyes.

I hope she can keep up this level of enthusiasm, Mag thought to himself. Having enthusiasm was a good thing. After all, he had almost been driven insane when chopping up vegetables in the test field for the God of Cookery, and he knew just how boring practicing cutting skills was.

“System, give me a small apron and a set of knives suitable for Anna,” Mag said internally as he strode toward the kitchen.

“According to the system's judgment, the trainee is too young and does not possess the physical prerequisites to become a chef. The system advises that you do not take her as your student!” the system warned.

“Physical prerequisites? Is that why you chose a disabled person like me in the beginning?” Mag rolled his eyes in response.

“Your body was crippled at the time, but this body possesses an enormous amount of potential, which is why it was chosen by the system,” the system retorted.

“Well, I think Anna has immense potential to grow up to become an exceptional chef, so I'm going to teach her how to cook. There's no issue with that logic, is there?” Mag countered with a smile.

“Erm...”

The system fell silent.

“Hurry up and state your price; I don't have time to waste here,” Mag urged.

After a brief silence, the system said in a pained voice, “A small apron and a set of small knives will cost a total of 1,001 copper coins. Due to your recent string of good performance, I'll reluctantly give you a discount and bring the total price down to 1,000 copper coins.”

“Deal.” Mag couldn't be bothered to barter on this occasion, so he immediately nodded in agreement.

“Ding! 1,000 copper coins have been successfully deducted. The apron and knives are being crafted and will be delivered in three minutes. Please provide a delivery location.”

“Just deliver it next to the counter. Make sure not to deliver it to the wrong place again or I’m going to ask for a refund!” Mag warned in a cold voice. This accursed system was regularly delivering things to incorrect locations.

Mag cast his eyes around the kitchen. This was a kitchen designed for a grown man, and everything was too high up for Anna to reach.

Mag’s attention was then drawn to a small stool in the corner. This was the makeshift stepladder that Amy used to wash her hands in the kitchen.

Seeing as Anna was serious about learning to cook and not just playing games, she would have to get used to this kitchen.

With that in mind, Mag came to a decision.

Mag ushered Anna into the kitchen, and instructed, “Anna, go step on that little stool and see if you can reach the cooking bench.”

Anna climbed onto the little stool obediently. She was about an entire head taller than Amy, so she was able to comfortably reach over the cooking bench while standing on the stool. In that case, chopping ingredients wouldn’t be an issue for her.

“Good. From this day forth, that will be your cooking bench.” Mag nodded with a content expression.

After hearing the system’s delivery notification, Mag smiled, and said, “Come with me, Anna; I have a couple of small presents to give you.”

“Alright.” Anna followed Mag out of the kitchen with a curious expression.

Mag pulled out a small pink apron and an accompanying pink hairnet from beside the counter.

“They’re so beautiful!” Anna’s eyes immediately lit up at the sight of the apron and hairnet in Mag’s hands.

“There’s going to be a lot of splattering oil in the kitchen, so we need to wear aprons at all times in order to keep our clothes clean. Try it on and see if it fits, Anna.” Mag tied the apron around Anna’s waist with a smile.

Anna was wearing a small blue dress, which complemented her pink apron very well.

After having the pink hairnet slipped over her little head, Anna was starting to look very much like a little chef.

“Hmm, it looks very good, and fits you really well too.” Mag nodded with a content expression.

“Thank you, Uncle Mag.” Anna looked down at the little apron, and a smile appeared on her face.

“Aside from the apron and the hairnet, I also have another present for you.” Mag pulled out a dark brown wooden box from beside the counter before squatting down in front of Anna and removing the lid on the box.

“Wow!”

The shiny knives were reflecting a lot of glare, but Anna’s eyes were wide open as she stared unblinkingly at the small knife set within the box.

“Are these... Are these really all for me?”

Anna looked up at Mag with disbelief in her eyes.

“Of course. Owning a knife set of your own is your first step to becoming a chef.” Mag nodded with a smile.

“Thank you... Thank you.” Tears immediately welled up in Anna’s eyes as she bowed deeply toward Mag.

“I’m super strict when it comes to cooking, so you won’t be thanking me for too long.” Mag patted her little head with a smile. This little girl had such good manners that he couldn’t help but be fond of her.

“No way! I’ll be sure to learn to the best of my abilities.” Anna shook her head with an earnest expression as she hugged the box of knives tightly to her chest.

“Then let’s start with basic cutting skills. Cutting skills are the skills required to cut ingredients into specified sizes. For example, in the Yangzhou fried rice, all of the ingredients have to be cut to the same size as grains of rice.” Mag opened the fridge and looked at Anna before closing the fridge again.

He brought out two of the potatoes that he had purchased earlier from the food market and washed them before placing one of them in front of Anna, while the other was placed on the chopping board in front of him. He pulled out a knife from the rack, and smile on his face was replaced by a serious expression as he said, “Now, we’re going to chop this potato into rice-sized pieces.”

“How do we do that?” Anna stood on the little stool and looked up at Mag with rapt focus. It was incredible to her that such a large and round potato could be chopped into rice-sized pieces.

“Look carefully.” Mag picked up his knife and brought it downward, cutting off a thin slice of potato. This was immediately followed by a second and a third slice, and slices of potatoes of a completely identical thickness appeared on the chopping board, looking as if they had been precisely measured by a ruler before being cut by a machine.

The knife clattered onto the chopping board in a rhythmic motion, and while the speed of the slices wasn’t very fast, it created a mesmerizing and comforting rhythm.

Soon, all of the thin slices of potatoes were chopped up into strands, and then into rice-sized golden granules.

“Wow, that was amazing!”

Anna’s eyes widened as she looked up at Mag with admiration shimmering in her eyes.

Chapter 678 I’ll Be Responsible for Eating!

At the entrance to the elven embassy, Yngwie looked up at the beautiful woman riding on horseback, and said, “Young Master, you shouldn’t make this trip back.”

“What do you mean? Isn’t Young Master Blour still in the embassy?” Blour looked down at Yngwie with a carefree smile as he assured, “Don’t worry, I’m just making a trip back. I might not even do anything. Maybe I won’t even bump into them.”

“Young Master, if your cover gets blown, not only will those bastards not allow you to leave, there will be many people from the elven race who will be after your life. That’ll be really bad for our Baibilly Family as well.” Yngwie was still very concerned.

“Don’t worry, even if I die, I’ll make sure not to drag the family into this.” Blour raised a hand and tightened his legs on either side of his horse, upon which the horse raced into the distance.

Yngwie stood in front of the door for a long while before heaving a forlorn sigh.

“If I were 300 years younger, I’d probably go with him...”

...

Receiving praise for his dishes was already a run of the mill occurrence for Mag, yet there were very few people who were able to appreciate the way in which he cooked.

As such, Mag’s ego was feeling very much inflated as Anna stood beside him with undisguised admiration and reverence in her eyes, such that even the knife in his hand was feeling lighter than usual.

After his knife came to a rest on the chopping board, a large round potato had already been chopped up into rice-sized granules, each almost completely identical.

Mag turned to the amazed Anna, and said, “For your first task, you’ll be practicing by chopping potatoes. Once you can chop a potato into granules of even size, then you’ll have completed your first task.”

“Yes!” Anna nodded obediently before picking out a slightly smaller Chinese chef’s knife from the box. She pressed her small hand over the potato before carefully extending her knife toward it. She had only just exerted some force when the potato slipped out from under her hand, and rolled into the nearby sink.

“Oh!”

Anna faltered slightly before hurrying down from her little stool. She got up on the tips of her toes and grabbed the potato from the sink before placing it onto her chopping board and trying again.

Mag stood off to the side and looked on in silence without giving her any tips or advice. For a complete newbie like her, it was best to allow her to experiment on her own. At the very least, it wouldn’t make the process an overly drab and boring one.

Furthermore, Anna’s strength and fine-motor skills had both exceeded his expectations. A normal five- to six-year-old human child would struggle just to be able to hold the knife, yet Anna was able to do so with ease, and the way in which she was chopping vegetables was very convincing as well. All she had to do was to find the right way to execute her knife skills through trial and error.

She has a vast amount of experience from traveling abroad and the body of an elf. With these advantages, she should be able to master some simple dishes very soon. Mag nodded with a content expression before withdrawing his gaze as he set about preparing ingredients for the dinner service. He had taken a break during the lunch service without any prior announcement, and the customers were most likely not very pleased.

Over two hours later, Mag was still preparing ingredients while Anna continued to stand on her stool while chopping potatoes. A small mound of potato granules had already built up on the large plate next to her, and the granules were all quite uneven in size. However, it could be seen that there was a forming trend, which was that the size of the potato granules was slowly becoming more even. The improvement was quite noticeable.

Yabemiya stood at the entrance of the kitchen, and said, "Anna is so impressive. She's already been chopping potatoes for an entire afternoon, and she's still persevering."

"She really is. If it were me in her shoes, I probably wouldn't even be able to last a single potato. There seems to be an immense amount of energy within the small body of this little girl."

Sally also wore a gratified smile on her face. Boss Mag was a really kind person, and if Anna could continue to persevere under his tutelage, she would definitely be able to become an exceptional chef in the future. If she could attain widespread acknowledgment for her cooking skills in Chaos City, then she wouldn't have to worry about being captured and forced to go back to the Wind Forest.

Mag looked at the pile of potato granules on the plate and nodded with approval. At the same time, he was feeling rather embarrassed as Anna's cutting skills had already far outstripped his level of proficiency with a knife in his past life. It appeared that this was the difference that inherent aptitude made.

"Father, I'm back!"

The sound of knocking on the door and Amy's voice erupted from outside. Ugly Duckling, which was sleeping on the counter, immediately opened its eyes before sliding onto the ground and rushing to the door. Yabemiya opened the door, and Amy skipped inside, unintentionally kicking the oncoming Ugly Duckling in the head as she did so.

"Meow~"

Ugly Duckling fell back and rolled several times before lying on the ground and looking up at Amy with an indignant expression.

"You have to be careful next time, Ugly Duckling," Amy warned before greeting Yabemiya and the others. She then continued to skip toward the kitchen.

"Huh? Big Sister Anna? Why are you here?"

A surprised look appeared on Amy's face at the sight of Anna, and her surprise was only compounded at the sight of Anna wearing her little apron and hairnet while holding a knife in her hand.

“This... Amy, Anna is...” Mag looked at Amy, and was scrambling for the right words to explain this situation to her. He was worried that she would develop some negative emotions upon seeing Mag teach Anna how to cook. After all, Mag was everything to Amy, and he didn’t want her to feel jealous.

Before Mag had a chance to formulate an explanation, Amy’s eyes lit up as she exclaimed, “Oh! I know what this is: Big Sister Anna is learning to cook from Father, isn’t that right?”

“Yes, Amy. From today onward, I’m going to learn to cook from Uncle Mag. When I learn how to cook some dishes, I’ll be sure to cook for you.” Anna turned back to look at Amy and nodded with a serious expression on her little face.

“Yay! Father won’t be the only one who can cook delicious food for me, then; Big Sister Anna will also be able to cook for me! I’m so happy!” Amy nodded with elation as she skipped into the kitchen and examined Anna’s little knife set with curiosity in her eyes.

Mag raised his eyebrows upon seeing this. It appeared that his concerns had been completely unwarranted. The two little girls had become such good friends that there was simply no degree of jealousy that could exist between them.

“Amy, do you want to learn to cook with me as well? Cooking is really fun.” Anna turned to Amy with an expectant look.

Mag also turned to Amy upon hearing this. He had thought about getting Amy to inherit his cooking skills, but it had always appeared that Amy was far more interested in eating than cooking. As such, he never mentioned this to her as he didn’t want to pressure her into doing anything against her will.

“I feel like with you and Father both cooking, there has to be someone who’s responsible for eating. If I learn to cook as well, then no one would be responsible for eating, and that would be a waste. Hence, I’ve decided not to cook; I’ll be responsible for eating instead.” Amy shook her head firmly.

Anna contemplated this arrangement for a while before nodding as she said, “Hmm, that does sound like it makes sense.”

Chapter 679 Here’s Your Medium-Rare Black Pepper Steak

As expected, this little foodie is always able to convince others with her strange logic. Mag shook his head with a smile. He turned to look at the clock on the wall, and said, “Alright, that’s enough practice for today. Go and play with Amy, Anna. I’ll call the two of you when dinner’s ready.

“Amy, from today onward, Anna is going to live at our place for a few days. Take her upstairs and show her around,” Mag said to Amy.

“Really? That’s fantastic!” Amy’s eyes immediately lit up. She picked up Anna’s hand as soon as the latter put down her knife, and led her outside with an elated expression as she said, “Big Sister Anna, I’ll take you to my playground, then I’ll take you to sleep on my little bed.”

Mag looked at the two little girls with a warm smile on his face. It was undoubtedly good news for him that the girls got along so well.

After dinner, Anna and Amy went to play in the square while the restaurant prepared for the busy dinner service.

“Boss Mag, how could you take an unannounced break like this? I’ve been starving for an entire afternoon, so I’ll have to order an extra bowl of Yangzhou fried rice to console myself.”

“I know, right? I hurried over here during my lunch break today, but your restaurant was closed! You have to compensate me for my lost time, Boss Mag.”

“I’m suddenly really glad that I was too busy to come here for lunch today. I’ll get two steaks, one medium and one medium-well, and I’ll get the medium one first.”

As soon as the customers began to enter the restaurant, they all expressed their displeasure at the unannounced break the restaurant had taken earlier during the day.

Mag merely smiled in response to these complaints. He had to condition himself to get used to complaints like this as he was going to have to take a much longer break to facilitate his trip to Rodu.

The customers came and left, and the long line outside gradually shortened, yet business was still booming for the restaurant.

A slightly antiquated horse-drawn carriage stopped in front of the restaurant, and Ian slowly disembarked. He looked at the extremely popular restaurant, and a smile appeared on his face as he said, “I love these super popular restaurants with so many customers. If a restaurant doesn’t even have any customers, then there’s no point in trying out its food.”

“Master, it looks like we’ll have to line up. Should I talk to the restaurant owner to reserve the entire restaurant for the night?” a middle-aged butler asked.

“I’m not the king, so why would I reserve an entire restaurant just to have a meal? You have to fix this habit of yours, Brooker.” Ian chuckled as he made his way toward the restaurant and joined the end of the line.

“Yes.” Brooker nodded and hurried over to his master’s side.

The restaurant doors opened as a customer emerged from within, and the decadent aroma wafting toward Ian made his eyes light up immediately.

Compared to the lively line outside the restaurant, the interior of the restaurant was remarkably tranquil and peaceful.

All of the customers seated inside were completely immersed in their meals, and would only utter an occasional word of praise when they simply couldn’t help themselves.

The customers lined up in the restaurant were also waiting quietly for new seats to open up. Even if they were speaking, they made sure to do so in hushed tones in order not to disturb the dining customers.

The restaurant’s decor was very intricate, there was just enough space between the tables, and the overall dining environment was very pleasant.

Ian cast his gaze around the restaurant before nodding with approval. Regardless of what the food here was like, the restaurant had satisfied all of the other criteria required to provide a splendid culinary experience.

Furthermore, the fact that elves and orcs were willing to sit and dine at the same table indicated that this restaurant's food seemed to possess some kind of magical property that prompted one to set their prejudices aside.

Ian waited for a while before the customers at several tables finished their meals almost at the same time, and Yabemiya made her way over to him and Brooker as she said, "Come on in. There are two seats that have just opened up over there."

"Have a seat, Brooker," Ian said to Brooker, who was standing beside the table with his hands clasped behind his back.

"I'm happy to stand here and serve as you eat, Master," Brooker said as he bowed his head slightly.

"I'm not so old and useless yet that I need someone to feed me." Ian chuckled.

Brooker hesitated momentarily before sitting down across from Ian. However, he made sure that only one of his buttocks came into contact with the seat so he could stand up and serve Ian at a moment's notice.

"Here is our restaurant's menu. You can have a look and see what you'd like to eat." Yabemiya handed a menu over to Ian. At the same time, she had noticed that this old man was rather interesting and seemed to be quite an esteemed figure.

"Alright, let me have a look." Ian opened the menu, and his eyes lit up at the sight of the beautiful images of the dishes laid out before him.

This menu was completely different from the menus of other restaurants, which presented the names of the dishes along with a textual description. The accompanying images on this menu were extremely life-like and alluring, striking one with the urge to taste all of them.

The names, images, and prices of the dishes had been made very apparent, and the menu was very easy to navigate.

For a restaurant of this scale to charge such high prices yet still be so popular indicates that the food here must indeed be very good. Ian nodded to himself as he scanned through the prices on the menu.

"I'll get a black pepper steak and a savory tofu pudding." Ian closed the menu before handing it to Brooker as he said, "Brooker, you pick something for yourself as well."

Brooker flipped open the menu, and was rather stunned by the prices being charged. After a brief hesitation, he said, "I'll... get a Yangzhou fried rice and a sweet tofu pudding."

"Certainly. Sir, may I ask how you would like your steak cooked?" Yabemiya asked Ian with a smile.

"What do you suggest for an old man like me?" Ian asked with a smile.

"You look very healthy for your age, so I'm sure you'll be able to handle anything. The medium steak will be more tender, while the medium-rare steak will be slightly tougher, and the medium-rare beef will have a stronger flavor. You can pick any of those based on your own tastes," Yabemiya introduced with a smile.

“Then I’ll get a medium-rare steak. I like my food with a harder texture,” Ian decided with a nod.

“Alright, please wait for a moment.” Yabemiya nodded as she made her way into the kitchen.

What kind of nonsensical policies has Jeffree implemented? This half-dragon waitress’s serving attitude and quality are far superior to that of the average waiter. These discriminatory policies should’ve been abolished long ago, Ian thought to himself as he looked on at Yabemiya’s departing figure.

“Surely there’s no better wine than the wine brewed at our winery, though,” Ian murmured to himself with his brows furrowed in contemplation.

“Here’s your medium-rare black pepper steak.”

A short while later, a steak was placed in front of him.

Chapter 680 This is Absolute Sacrilege to Wine!

Ian’s love for wine began when he was a young child. His father was a leather shoe craftsman, who, following the conclusion of the war among species, established a small shop for himself in Chaos City, where he would make custom-made leather shoes. At the end of every month, he would buy a bottle of wine and place it on the high windowsill, drinking only a small glass before bed every night.

As a young child, Ian was extremely curious about the reddish-purple liquid in the bottle. Finally, when his father was out running an errand one day, he carefully clambered onto the windowsill and drank half a glass of wine for himself.

The wine was sold at several dozens of copper coins per bottle, and the flavor was slightly sour and bitter. There were still traces of unfiltered grapes in there, and it was a very mediocre wine brewed by a small winery.

However, at the time, Ian felt as if that was the best thing that he had ever drunk. It was as if a whole new world had been opened up to him.

The young Ian had a very low alcohol tolerance, and fell asleep on the ground after drinking just half a glass of wine. After his father got home, he gave Ian a thorough beating.

However, that didn’t discourage Ian from his pursuit of wine.

Ever since then, he had played a game of hide and seek with his father over his bottles of wine spanning many years. This continued all the way until he was able to purchase a bottle of wine for himself and share it with his father without having to hide anything.

As such, when people asked why he had founded Buffett Banks, his reply would always be: because I wanted to be able to buy wine for myself.

It was this simple, almost childish wish that gave rise to a colossal business empire.

After the bank had begun raking in significant profits, he dedicated a proportion of those earnings to building a winery.

He had always been of the opinion that there was still potential for wine to improve, so the Buffett Winery was born.

This was an investment that had drawn much ridicule from countless people. It only became a profitable business in its 20th year, yet by its 30th year, it had already become one of the most renowned wineries on the entire Norland Continent.

The wine produced by the Buffett Winery was referred to as liquid gold, and it was still immensely popular despite its lofty prices. Even the imperial family of the Roth Empire would spend vast amounts of money to purchase a batch of wine from the Buffett Winery every single year.

Ian was very serious about wine.

Only three barrels of the V-grade premium wine were produced by the Buffett Winery every year. One of them would go to Scheer, while the remaining two were sent to Ian.

This was the best wine in the world, with no other wine able to compete with it.

Even the king of the Roth Empire and the queen of the elven race had never tasted wine of such premium quality.

However, as Ian turned his attention to the steak before him and took a whiff of the rich aroma wafting toward him, his eyes immediately widened with surprise.

The aroma of the wine is extremely rich and complex! And this is only after the beef has been cooked, so a lot of the wine's fragrance would've already evaporated. It's incredible that the fragrance could still be so potent!

Ian wore an incredulous look on his face. During the construction of the winery, he would visit it almost every day, guiding it toward greater heights as there was no one in this world who knew more about wine than he did.

No, if it's just this much, then it's still not enough. Ian shook his head slightly. He was still very confident in the wine from his own winery. This was wine that had been brewed through the combined efforts of countless top-level master winemakers. How could it be inferior to wine brewed by a restaurant owner?

"You can slice into the beef with your knife, then consume it using your fork," Yabemiya instructed in a gentle and thoughtful manner.

"Thank you." Ian nodded as he picked up his silverware and gently sliced into the beef.

The tender beef was easily sliced open, and vibrant red wine gushed forth along with meat juices. The aroma of the beef and the wine diffused in the air, wafting directly toward him.

This flavor! How is this possible?!

Ian was completely dumbstruck. The aroma of the wine had seemed a little lacking to him before, but that was only because it had been masked by the beef. Now that the steak had been sliced open, he was no longer able to continue deceiving himself.

"What wine is this? Which winery was this produced by?"

Ian suddenly raised his head as he turned to Yabemiya with an intense expression just as she was about to walk away to serve the next customer.

"I beg your pardon?" Yabemiya turned to Ian with a perplexed look, unable to understand why this benevolent-looking customer was suddenly so angry.

All of the surrounding customers also turned their attention toward Ian.

"Well, well, well, if it isn't Old Man Ian? I didn't think you'd be visiting Mamy Restaurant as well."

"Indeed. Ever since Young Mistress Scheer took over as the leader of the Buffett Family, Old Man Ian rarely ever makes public appearances anymore."

"What's going on now, though? Could it be Old Man Ian isn't a fan of the dish?"

Some of the customers had managed to identify Ian, and a stir swept through the entire restaurant.

Mag, who was cooking in the kitchen, also looked out into the restaurant upon hearing the commotion. He, too, was rather surprised to hear that Ian had come to visit his restaurant for a meal.

However, when he thought about it, that did make sense. After all, the steam engine was an important matter, and perhaps Scheer was unable to make a decision on her own, so her grandfather was coming here clarify the situation. However, it appeared that he was dissatisfied with his food.

Ian also realized that he had let his emotions get the better of himself, and he lowered his voice by a few octaves as he repeated, "I was asking what kind of wine is being used in this steak and which winery it was produced in."

"I... I don't know what kind of wine Boss is using, either," Yabemiya replied as she turned to the kitchen with a helpless expression.

Mag emerged from the kitchen and looked at Ian with a smile, and said, "This is wine that I brewed on my own, not sourced from any winery. Are you dissatisfied with the wine or the steak?"

"You brewed it yourself?" Ian looked around at the restaurant before shaking his head as he said, "There's no way such exceptional wine can be brewed in a place like this."

"I only use the wine I brewed myself in my steaks," Mag reaffirmed with a smile. This old man was indeed a wine expert. Brewing high-quality wine required many procedures, and just the equipment involved would take up a lot of space. The restaurant wasn't even large enough to act as a cellar, let alone a complete wine-brewing facility.

"Alright, let's set aside who brewed this wine for now." Ian waved a hand as he looked at Mag with a slightly angry expression as he said, "But how could you use such premium quality wine to cook your dishes?"

"I think that only the best ingredients can be used to make the best dishes. This wine is just right for my black pepper steak." Mag shook his head with a smile.

“Just right? This is absolute sacrilege to wine! Do you know how difficult it is to come by such exceptional wine? Even the best winemakers wouldn’t be able to guarantee replicating wine of this caliber next time, yet you’re using it for cooking!”

Ian glowered at Mag, and even his hands were trembling slightly with rage.