

## **Stay At home 681**

### **Chapter 681 Delicious!**

In Chaos City, the Buffett Winery was just as renowned as Buffett Banks, and it was known as the best winery on the entire Norland Continent.

This was the pride of Chaos City, and almost all of the city's residents knew about it.

Wine hadn't been invented by Ian Buffett, yet it had become an extremely renowned luxury item due to the existence of the Buffett Winery. All of the nobles on the continent were avid supporters of wine, and drinking the delicious reddish-purple liquid had almost become an indication of one's place in the social hierarchy.

As such, Ian Buffett was referred to as the godfather of wine, which was sufficient indication of everyone's acknowledgment of his contributions to wine.

And now, Ian was glowering at Mag like an enraged old lion, all because of the wine that Mag was using to cook his steak.

"Just where did Boss Mag get this wine from? It's not every day that you get to see Old Man Ian get so angry."

"I knew immediately after tasting this steak yesterday that the wine used was of an extraordinary caliber. It appears that Old Man Ian shares my opinion."

"Stop flattering yourself!"

"Setting everything aside, the fact that Boss Mag is willing to use such precious wine to cook steak is sufficient indication of his attitude toward food. We're all extremely fortunate to be able to sample such a delicious dish for 1,500 copper coins!"

All of the customers discussed among themselves in hushed tones while appraising Mag and Ian with curiosity in their eyes. Old Man Ian was renowned for being a cultured and benevolent man, so it was extremely rare to see him so flustered and enraged.

"In order to make the most perfect steak, I must have the best beef, wine, and black pepper. I only use the best of the best ingredients in my dishes, so I don't think I'm committing sacrilege or blasphemy against wine. In my eyes, wine is merely a precious ingredient, just like the beef and black pepper used." Mag looked into Ian's eyes with a serious expression on his face. He had thought that the old man was coming here to test him and negotiate a deal regarding his steam engine, but it looked as if Ian was more interested in smashing up his restaurant.

But then again, if his father from his past life were in this old man's shoes, his reaction would most likely be quite similar. The more a person loved wine, the more opposed they were to seeing good wine being wasted.

Of course, in Mag's heart, this wine certainly wasn't being wasted on his steak. Without such premium wine, how would he be able to cook such exceptional steak? Cooking good food was his main priority, after all.

“All good wine has soul! How could you compare it to beef and black pepper?” Ian glared as he waved a hand at Mag, and said, “Get me a bottle of the wine you used. How much of it do you have left in your restaurant? I’ll take all of it and pay the same price as for the most expensive wine brewed by the Buffett Winery.”

All of the customers drew sharp breaths upon hearing that. The most expensive wine sold by the Buffett Winery could reach the price of 200,000 copper coins per bottle, and that was the price charged directly by the winery. After switching hands a few times on the market, the price could swell to 300,000 copper coins. Even at that price, there was still an extremely limited supply.

Mag shook his head with a smile, and replied, “I don’t have much wine in the restaurant, so I’m only going to use it to cook my steaks. I’m not selling it individually.”

“Do you know how much the most expensive wine from the Buffett Winery is sold for per bottle? If you sell me just one bottle of wine, you’ll be earning the equivalent of what you get from selling 200 steaks! You’ll be using much more than a single bottle of wine to marinate 200 steaks. You’re going to get struck by lightning if you keep wasting such exceptional wine!” Ian was getting even more enraged. He had thought that this restaurant owner would be quite an intelligent man, but it appeared that he was an absolute idiot!

“Once again, I’m not going to sell my wine individually, so please do not force the issue. If you’d like an alcoholic beverage, our restaurant provides beer, and you can order as much of it as you like. If there’s nothing else you’d like to speak to me about, then I have to go back to the kitchen now; my customers are still waiting for their dishes.” Mag nodded before turning back to the kitchen in a rather rude manner.

“Old Man Ian offered 200,000 copper coins for one bottle of wine, but Boss Mag still rejected him!”

“There aren’t many people in this world that I admire, but Boss Mag is now one of them. He’s a true man and a true chef!”

“Indeed. How can those chefs that charge extravagant prices for shoddy food even compare to Boss Mag? He’s using wine that’s worth 200,000 copper coins per bottle to marinate steak, and he’s only charging us 1,500 copper coins per steak!”

“I’d like another black pepper steak, please!”

The entire restaurant erupted into a frenzy at the sight of Mag’s departing figure. At the same time, everyone was filled with an even higher level of awe and respect for him.

“Get back here, you little bastard!” Ian abruptly rose to his feet, and was about to charge toward Mag.

“Master! Master... Please calm down. This is not something worth getting angry about.” Brooker immediately stood up and held Ian back. He couldn’t even remember the last time he had seen his master get so angry. “Master, maybe this wine only has a rich aroma, but is lacking in flavor. I, for one, don’t believe that there could be better wine than the wine produced by our Buffett Winery. Also, no matter how you look at this place, it simply can’t possibly have the facilities required to brew exceptional wine. Perhaps he was able to use some tricks to enhance the aroma. He’s a chef, after all, so it’s very plausible that he could have some special tricks up his sleeve.”

Ian looked at Brooker and calmed down slightly upon hearing this as he sat back down in his chair. "Brewing wine is an incredibly technical procedure; without several decades of experience, there's no way that anyone can brew good wine. He's a chef, not a winemaker, so you could be right, Brooker. Also, I've never heard of using wine in cooking. I can't imagine this steak would be any good."

Ian looked at the steak before him, which was giving off a delectable aroma, and hesitated momentarily before slicing off a piece and having a taste.

He gently chewed down on the steak, and delicious meat juices immediately gushed into his mouth. The fragrance of the black pepper complemented the beef to perfection, and the delicious flavor dancing on the tip of his tongue put an involuntary smile on his face. This flavor was simply incredible.

He wasn't an avid foodie, but the chef at the Buffett Manor was most definitely one of the best chefs in Chaos City. However, he had never tasted beef anywhere near as delicious as this steak before.

After chewing and savoring the beef carefully, Ian's expression abruptly changed. Aside from the amazing flavor of the beef itself, the fragrance of the wine also blossomed in mouth, adding a new layer of complexity to the extraordinary flavor of the dish.

This was a combination that was simply irresistible. The flavor of the beef wasn't drowned out by the black pepper in the slightest, yet the black pepper featured prominently in the dish, taking the flavor of the beef to the next level and also contributing a unique texture to the dish.

Furthermore, this wine was the richest and most delicious wine he had ever tasted. Even the flavor of the beef and the black pepper was unable to drown out its incredible fragrance.

In contrast, the V-grade wine produced by the Buffett Winery, of which only three barrels were brewed per year, was far inferior.

The steak was completely impeccable, and entirely tipped Ian's perception of beef on its head. He felt as if every single cell in his body was dancing with joy; he had been completely won over by this phenomenal flavor.

He suddenly understood. Such delicious beef deserved only the most premium wine.

"Delicious!" Ian praised with a genuine expression as he swallowed the mouthful of beef.

## **Chapter 682 This is Super Expensive Steak**

"Hmm?"

Old Man Ian had just exploded into a thunderous rage and appeared to want nothing better than to burn down Mag's restaurant, yet all of a sudden, he was praising Mag's dish; all of the fury on his face had completely faded as he dined on this irresistible steak. This sudden mood swing had everyone's jaws dropping to the ground.

However, smiles soon appeared on everyone's faces. Everything made sense. After all, anyone who tasted Mag's food revered him as a Chef God, so who would dare to get angry at him? If he were to ban someone from his restaurant for disorderly conduct, it would be a massive loss for them.

In the kitchen, a smile had also appeared on Mag's face. He was confident in the ability of his cooking to dispel all doubts and judgment.

"Aisha, you were spot on with your 'delicious' premonition again. I'm pretty sure you have a 100% success rate there." Yabemiya nudged Sally's arm with a vibrant smile on her face.

"This is the voice of the heart, and it can't be repressed." Sally also wore a smile on her face.

Meanwhile, Brooker was staring at Ian with a peculiar look on his face. He had never seen anything like this happen before. His master rarely flew into a rage like this, yet whenever he did, it would always take him a very long time to cool down. However, on this occasion, the flames of his fury seemed to have been entirely doused in the blink of an eye.

Of course, it was even rarer to see his master swallow his words like this.

Is the steak really that delicious? This restaurant owner's cooking must truly be amazing to have even Master this absorbed in his meal. Brooker was gulping down mouthfuls of drool as he inhaled the rich aroma wafting toward him from Ian's steak.

"Here are your Yangzhou fried rice and tofu puddings. Please enjoy." Right at this moment, Yabemiya made her way over to their table with a Yangzhou fried rice and two tofu puddings, one sweet and one savory.

"Thank you." Brooker nodded absentmindedly in response. His attention had been completely drawn to the colorful fried rice on the table before him.

Even though the aroma emanating from the fried rice wasn't as rich as that of the steak, there seemed to be more complexity in the aroma from the multitude of ingredients in the dish. As such, despite that the fact that it didn't smell as stimulating as the steak did, it still intrigued him in a completely different way.

All of the ingredients had been chopped to the same size as the grains of rice, yet there was clear separation between every single grain of rice and secondary ingredients, creating a very clean and beautiful sight to behold.

Brooker had never seen any dish like this before, and its irresistible aroma prompted him to pick up his spoon as he tasted his first mouthful of fried rice.

The freshly cooked fried rice was still quite hot, but Brooker paid no heed to the slightly scorching sensation in his mouth as he basked in the overwhelming joy that his taste buds were experiencing.

The fragrance of chopped green onions and eggs tickled his nose, the texture of grain-sized shrimp and ham was so smooth, and the egg-coated rice had a sweet flavor after being chewed well. Taste of every ingredient melted in his mouth and tickled his taste buds. Even when it was all swallowed, his mouth was still full of aroma.

"This is incredible! How can there possibly be such delicious food in this world? Is this really rice?!"

After looking at the menu previously, he'd discovered that the Yangzhou fried rice was one of the cheapest dishes. However, it still cost 600 copper coins per portion, and that struck Brooker with the impression that this restaurant owner was overcharging his customers.

However, after having his first mouthful of fried rice, Brooker's opinion had completely changed. 600 copper coins was an absolute bargain! Even after all of the ingredients had been chopped to the size of grains of rice, their flavors were still distinctly discernible, and that seemed simply incredible to him.

He was Ian's butler, which made him the most prominent butler in the Buffett Family, so his monthly wage was quite substantial, and he even had two shops under his name.

He had already decided that the next time he had some free time, he was going to come back to taste this Yangzhou fried rice again. If he could have a bowl of this fried rice every day, he felt as if there was nothing more he could ask for in life.

"Ding!"

Ian's knife and Brooker's spoon clinked on their respective empty plates almost in unison. The two of them looked at each other, and Brooker silently picked up his plate to lick it clean.

"Don't be such an embarrassment."

Ian pursed his lips, but even he couldn't resist the urge to pick up a tiny shred of steak left on the plate with his fingers before placing it in his mouth.

Brooker chuckled internally upon seeing this. Ian was scoffing at him for licking his plate, yet what he was doing really wasn't much more dignified or refined.

"Master, were you satisfied with that meal?" Brooker asked with a smile. After that question escaped his lips, he felt as if he had just said something completely redundant. He had never seen Ian clear his plate in such a thorough manner; there wasn't even a single piece of vegetable left on his plate.

Ian put down his silverware as he nodded, and said, "I've never had such delicious beef. It's truly the best of the best, just like the wine used."

"Then, what about the wine?" Brooker asked with a slightly nervous expression. If the wine brewed by Mag really was superior to even the best wine produced by the Buffett Winery, then that certainly wasn't good news for them.

Brooker had asked the question in a very quiet voice, but all of the nearby customers were listening intently for Ian's answer. There were many wealthy individuals among the customers present, but none of them had a better understanding of wine than Ian. As such, his review was very much worth listening to.

Ian considered this question for a moment before nodding as he replied, "Even though I only tasted the wine in this beef, I can tell from the fragrance, flavor, and texture that this wine is definitely not inferior to the A-grade wine brewed by the Buffett Winery. In fact, it could well even be superior."

"A-grade wine is the best wine from the Buffett Winery that's sold to the public! Each bottle costs at least 200,000 copper coins!"

"Oh my God, that's way too extravagant! These steaks are being marinated using A-grade wine? As expected, Boss Mag really is something else!"

“I had thought that the beer would be Boss Mag’s most brilliant alcoholic creation, but it looks like I’ve still underestimated him. He’s going to kill the alcohol industry at this rate!”

Ian didn’t try to keep his voice down at all, so his review immediately sent a massive stir running through the restaurant. All of the customers who had ordered steaks were looking at them with new eyes.

Black pepper, which was widely renowned as black gold, A-grade wine, and beef from the 4th-tier magic beast, the Ironhide Bull; all of these extraordinary ingredients had come together to culminate in a super expensive steak.

Everyone felt as if they were swallowing dragon coins with each mouthful.

Of course, these steaks were far more delicious than dragon coins.

The seemingly ordinary steak at first glance was far from ordinary, and consuming it struck one with a sense of comfort and bliss that also contributed to enhancing its flavor.

His personality is a little odd, but he definitely is a righteous old man. Mag nodded with a smile upon hearing Ian’s words in the kitchen. The fact that he was able to provide such a glowing review just from eating this steak was sufficient to indicate the acuity of his professional judgment when it came to wine.

“Master, here’s your savory tofu pudding.” Brooker set the steak plate aside and replaced it with the savory tofu pudding that Ian had ordered.

### **Chapter 683 Do You Think I’m Retarded?!**

“What kind of brains are these? Could this be the brain of a magic beast[1]?”

Ian looked down at the tofu pudding, only to see a bowl of soft white substance, on which there was a layer of diced pickled vegetables and orange sauce. The aroma of the sauce and the secondary ingredients came wafting toward him along with the faint smell of soybean, creating a very alluring combination.

After finishing that steak, the refreshing aroma of the soybean provided a very pleasant contrast. The appearance of the soft white substance was also very pleasant, completely different from one’s mental image of animal brains.

“It looks very appetizing and smells very good as well; I’m very much looking forward to tasting this.” Ian nodded as he turned to Brooker’s tofu pudding, which had been drizzled with golden sugar syrup, and he smiled as he said, “Brooker, you’re not a young man anymore. You should restrain yourself a little in your sugar consumption.”

“Master, you know that this is the only hobby of mine. If I can’t even indulge in sweets from time to time, it just feels like something’s missing from my life.” Brooker smiled before looking down at the sweet tofu pudding with anticipation glowing in his eyes.

The tofu pudding was white and soft, and was covered in a layer of reddish-golden syrup. It was like a block of pure white jade that had been enshrouded in cognac. After picking up the plate, the tofu pudding wobbled slightly, making it appear very bouncy and supple. The syrup was still quite warm, and its sweet smell was enough to make his mouth water. It was too tempting for anyone with a sweet-tooth to resist.

The two of them had their first mouthfuls of tofu pudding almost at the exact same moment.

“Oh! This flavor!” Brooker’s eyes immediately widened. The sweet tofu pudding immediately melted in his mouth along with the sweet syrup. In contrast with normal syrup that was very sticky and rich, this reddish-golden syrup wasn’t overpowering in the slightest, and none of the flavor of the tofu pudding was drowned out.

Even after he had swallowed, the fragrance and sweetness remained in his mouth, making him eager for more.

Brooker was a huge fan of sweet food, and had tasted countless types of desserts. He constantly had a bag of sweets in his pocket, and it had already become a habit of his to have some whenever he had some free time.

Back when he had first been hired as Ian’s butler, he was so busy every day that he would often have to skip meals, so eating sweets when he was hungry gradually became a habit. If he didn’t eat something sweet every day, then he would feel as if something were missing.

Even though he had tasted countless desserts, he was still completely won over by just a single mouthful of tofu pudding.

He felt as if he had fallen into a pool of sweet syrup, and he was swimming through it with reckless abandon, completely basking in its delectable flavor.

“This really is an amazing dish!” Ian stared at the empty spoon in his hand with shock and elation on his face.

The soft white tofu pudding had been covered in a layer of orange sauce and diced pickled vegetables. After placing it in his mouth, it completely melted without even the need to chew. The sweet and fragrant tofu pudding combined perfectly with the pickled vegetables and sauce, creating a brilliant storm of flavors that wreaked havoc in his mouth. However, after swallowing the tofu pudding, the faint fragrance of soybean left behind only a refreshing aftertaste.

It was an indescribable pleasure to taste this refreshing and delicious tofu pudding after eating the impossibly rich and flavorful steak.

The sound of spoons clinking against bowls rang out over and over again as the two of them scooped spoonful after spoonful of tofu pudding into their mouths, completely unable to stop eating.

“Sweet tofu pudding is the king of all desserts! I’ve never had any dessert with such an incredible flavor before! This dish is absolutely irresistible!” Brooker licked his bowl clean before staring at it with amazement and satisfaction, feeling as if he had found the meaning of life.

Ian put down his bowl and shook his head as he turned to Brooker. “You should taste the savory tofu pudding first before you say that. Sweet tofu pudding is an absolutely blasphemous concept. Tofu pudding should only be eaten as a savory dish, not wasted as a dessert.”

“With all due respect, Master, I have tasted countless desserts in my lifetime, and this sweet tofu pudding ranks high above all of them, so please do not insult it.” Brooker looked at Ian with a serious expression, and said, “Also, the slightly sweet flavor of the tofu pudding can only be enhanced to the

maximum extent by this sweet syrup. I think this is the only right way to eat tofu pudding, and that making it into a savory dish would be ruining the flavor.”

“As your boss, I must be responsible for instilling within you the correct values. Tofu pudding must be eaten as a savory dish!” Ian looked at Brooker with a stern expression.

“Master, you are indeed my boss, but nothing you say can shake my loyalty to sweet tofu pudding. I am willing to live and die by my sweet tofu pudding!” Brooker looked into Ian’s eyes with the expression of a man who was prepared to go to war.

Ian looked at Brooker for a long while before placing a hand onto the table. Brooker immediately rose to his feet upon seeing this, but he showed no intention of backing down.

“I also firmly stand by my savory tofu pudding.” Ian harrumphed before making his way over to the kitchen.

“I can respect that.” Brooker heaved a faint sigh of relief, and he suddenly felt as if his legs had turned into tofu pudding. He had been serving Ian for several decades, and this was the first time he had ever objected to anything that his master had said.

“Boss... Mag, right? Your steak and tofu pudding are both very delicious. However, I still want to discuss something with you. Would you be able to sell me a bottle of your wine? I’d be willing to pay the price that I offered earlier,” Ian said as he made his way over to the entrance of the kitchen.

Yes! Hell yes! Mag roared internally. However, he still shook his head with a smile as he looked at Ian, and replied, “My apologies, but my wine cannot be sold individually.”

“I’ll throw in another 100,000 copper coins.” Ian looked into Mag’s eyes with a serious and insistent expression.

“Sorry, my answer remains the same.” Mag shook his head again.

He felt as if his heart were bleeding. He was being offered 300,000 copper coins for a bottle of wine, which had cost him only several hundred copper coins to source from the system. How could the system force him to turn down such a ridiculously lucrative transaction?

“System, why don’t we set the reward for the next mission as this wine-brewing method? I want to be able to do some things on my own and take some of the load off your shoulders,” Mag offered internally.

“The mission rewards are random, but as long as you work hard in completing the missions thrown at you, you’ll have a chance to obtain the winemaking method in the future,” the system replied.

However, in a corner of Mag’s mind outside of his notice, a small line of text quickly flashed past. “Do you think I’m retarded?! If I give you the winemaking method, the winery I built would completely go to waste...”

“Interesting. Boss Mag, please come and visit our winery when you have some free time. I’ll treat you to some of our wine.” Ian looked at Mag, and a smile reappeared on his face.



“Thank you for your kind offer. I’ll be sure to pay your winery a visit if I get an opportunity to do so.” Mag also nodded with a smile. He was also considering arranging a lunchtime auction together with the old man.

On Earth, an opportunity to have lunch with Old Man Buffett could be auctioned off for hundreds of thousands of US dollars per pop[2]. This Old Man Buffett wasn’t the god of the stock market, but he was just as legendary of a figure as the Old Man Buffett on Earth. If news of this were to spread, there would most likely be many people willing to pay good money for the opportunity.

Only Old Man Buffett could think of a way to earn money while being treated to a meal.

Right after Ian and Brooker paid their bills and departed, a large horse-drawn carriage with city lord’s castle insignia emblazoned onto it stopped in front of the restaurant.

### **Chapter 684 You’re Going to Hurt Me!**

In the horse-drawn carriage, Brooker looked at Ian with a concerned expression, and asked, “Master, are you worried about the effect that Boss Mag’s wine will have on business for our winery?”

Ever since they had got onto the carriage, Ian had remained completely silent.

“Competition exists in all sectors of the market, and it’s the primary driving force behind innovation and improvement. If the wine he brews can truly pose a threat to our winery, then so be it. It’s much more refreshing to see a man with actual skills and talent rather than all of those dimwits doing everything they can to suck up to me, thinking that I would provide them with a one-way ticket to riches and prosperity.” Ian shook his head with a hint of a derisive sneer on his face.

“Then...” Brooker was a little perplexed.

“I’m thinking about whether I should invite him to become the supervisor at our winery so he can improve the quality of our wine.” An eager smile appeared on Ian’s face.

Brooker was still rather concerned as he said, “But Master, all of the winemakers working at our winery are very experienced and established figures in this field. If we force Boss Mag onto them, they most likely wouldn’t be willing to submit to him. That would be too risky in my opinion.”

Ian smiled, and said, “If they can’t produce wine as good as Boss Mag’s, then they’d better shut up and learn. The only thing that matters to me is results. Things like experience and ability are all secondary in comparison. Otherwise, our banks and winery would’ve never reached this level of success.”

“But Young Mistress Scheer is the one in charge now, after all. Should we...” Brooker began in a quiet voice.

“There’s no hurry. Scheer has been very busy recently, but if she can cement her collaboration with Mag, then surely he wouldn’t be able to refuse me,” Ian said with a smile.

...

“Father, why aren’t you taking Mother with us? Is it really ok for us to come out for a late-night snack without her like this?” Vivian jumped down from the horse-drawn carriage first before turning to

Michael. Despite what she was saying, she wore a beaming smile on her face, and there was not even a single shred of guilt or remorse in her eyes.

Michael also disembarked from the horse-drawn carriage, and he smiled as he replied, "I told your mother before coming here, but she didn't want to come, as eating at night will make her gain weight, so we could only leave her behind."

Vivian sighed, and said, "That's a real shame. To think that Mother is missing out on such a delicious spicy grilled fish. You should tell her next time to eat a spicy grilled fish, then a tofu pudding. Those two make up an unmissable combination."

Michael's eyes immediately lit up as he said, "Is that so? I'll be sure to bring one of each back for your mother. She'll surely enjoy it too."

Vivian smiled as she looked at Michael, and said, "Father, you're coming out for a meal with your precious daughter, yet all you're thinking about is your wife. You're going to hurt me like this."

"Alright, alright, order whatever you want to eat today, and we'll take the rest back with us," Michael conceded with a resigned smile.

"Well, don't mind if I do!" Vivian's eyes lit up as she strode toward the restaurant.

It was already close to 9 pm, and business in the restaurant was slowly wrapping up, so there were a few empty seats around.

Vivian strode in through the door, and was subsequently followed by Michael. All of the customers in the restaurant faltered initially at the sight of Michael before hurriedly rising to their feet to extend greetings toward him. They were clearly not expecting to meet the city lord here.

"No need for formalities, everyone. I'm just a customer who's here for a meal tonight as well." Michael waved his hands with a smile to acknowledge everyone's greetings.

"Could it be that Young Mistress Vivian is the city lord's daughter?" Yabemiya was looking at Vivian with a surprised expression on her face.

Vivian raised her hand and turned to Yabemiya with an excited expression as she said, "I want a large insanely spicy grilled fish!"

She then turned to Michael, and asked, "Father, we should be able to finish this together, right?"

"Well, about this insanely spicy flavor..." A hesitant look appeared on Michael's face. Judging from his experience in eating the super spicy grilled fish last time, this was most likely a level of spiciness that he couldn't handle.

However, at the sight of the excited expression on Vivian's face, he hesitated momentarily before nodding as he said, "Sure. We can take away what we can't finish here."

Michael then turned to Yabemiya with a smile, and asked, "Has the black pepper steak been released?"

Yabemiya nodded with a smile, and replied, "It has; it was released today."

"Is that the steak from last night?" Vivian was also very intrigued on hearing this.

“Yes,” Yabemiya replied with a nod.

Vivian clapped her hands together as she said, “Then I’ll get a black pepper steak as well. I was drooling the entire time last night. I have to taste one for myself today!”

Michael turned to Vivian with a perplexed look, and asked, “Didn’t you already order an insanely spicy grilled fish?”

“That doesn’t interfere with me eating a steak. In preparation for this meal, I didn’t even have dinner tonight,” Vivian said with a smug smile.

“What am I going to do with you?” Michael shook his head with a doting smile. He then turned to Yabemiya, and said, “We’ll do as she says, then. We’ll get two black pepper steaks and a large insanely spicy grilled fish.”

“Alright, please wait for a moment.” Yabemiya nodded with a smile, but there was a hint of envy in her eyes. Vivian was very fortunate to have such a loving father.

“Hello, Big Sister Vivian, Uncle City Lord!” Amy held Ugly Duckling in one arm and held Anna’s hand with her other hand as she greeted the duo with a smile.

“Who’s this, Amy?” Vivian looked at Anna with a curious expression. This little elven girl was very adorable.

“This is Big Sister Anna,” Amy introduced.

Mag looked at the three conversing girls, and then at Michael, the straightforward and righteous city lord, whom he liked quite a bit. He was wondering whether he was here just to enjoy a late-night meal with his daughter, or if he was actually here for the steam engine.

The two black pepper steaks were brought out first.

“Oh! This is amazing!” A blissful smile immediately appeared on Vivian’s face as she tasted her first mouthful of steak.

Michael also had his first mouthful of steak, and he couldn’t help but praise, “It’s even better than it was yesterday. As expected, Boss Mag can perform even better in his own restaurant. Beate lost fair and square.”

After finishing their steaks, a massive spicy grilled fish was placed before the two of them; it almost stretched across the entire table.

The scorching waves of spiciness wafting toward them prompted Michael to reflexively shuffle his chair back; just the aroma alone was making his eyes water. This wasn’t a normal level of spice; this really was insanely spicy!

“Oh! It smells so good!”

In contrast, Vivian poked her face closer to the fish with an excited expression, and even went as far as to fan the scorching air toward herself with her hand. A content expression appeared on her face as she picked up her chopsticks. Only after dipping a piece of fish in the spicy juices did she place it into her

mouth and chew with a joyful expression. She then immediately had another mouthful of fish, and she simply couldn't stop.

Is it perhaps not as spicy as it smells?

Michael looked at Vivian with a curious expression, and hesitated slightly before emulating Vivian by dipping a morsel of fish in the spicy juices before placing it in his mouth.

### **Chapter 685 Please Board the Train, City Lord**

"Oh!"

Michael's face immediately turned bright red, and it seemed as if jets of flames were about to erupt out of his widened eyes. Only after struggling for a long while did he manage to swallow that first mouthful of fish, following which he immediately turned to Yabemiya, and urgently said, "Get me a glass of beer with ice!"

"Sure." Yabemiya quickly made her way toward the kitchen. She knew that the insanely spicy grilled fish was not something that everyone could handle.

"Are you alright, Father?" Vivian asked with a slightly mischievous smile on her face as she continued to dine on the grilled fish.

Michael accepted the glass of beer that Yabemiya had brought him, and chugged down most of it in one go. Only then did he feel as if the scorching sensation in his throat had subsided. His expression eased slightly as he heaved a sigh of relief. He then turned to Vivian in a state that was caught somewhere between laughter and tears, and asked, "Are you trying to kill your father? How is this fish even edible?"

Vivian ate a large chunk of fish before turning to Michael with a confused look as she countered, "How is this not edible? I feel like this is the best level of spiciness there is. Ever since I had my first insanely spicy grilled fish, all of the other levels have felt too bland and tasteless."

"Alright, have some more if you like it so much. Watch out for the fishbones." Michael shook his head with a resigned expression before chugging down the remainder of his beer. He then signaled to Yabemiya for another glass. There was no way that he would be able to have any more of this insanely spicy grilled fish, but he could certainly do with another glass of this refreshing beer.

9 pm soon arrived, and Mag waited a couple of minutes until all of the customers had finished their meals before clearing the tables.

Michael turned to Mag with a smile, and said, "Boss Mag, I heard from Dicus that you have a business proposal for the city lord's castle. Would I be able to examine the fruits of your research now?"

Mag smiled, and replied, "There's no way I can turn the city lord away after you've made the effort to get here in person. If Young Mistress Vivian isn't in a hurry to get home and is happy to play with Anna and Amy while enjoying her grilled fish, then I would be happy to show you what I've developed."

"You guys can take your time; I still have half a fish left to eat," Vivian said without even raising her head. She had just finished half of her fish, and was turning it over to begin feasting on the other side.

“You two can go back for today. Leave the cleanup for tomorrow morning,” Mag instructed to Yabemiya and Sally. He then had a quick word with Amy before leading Michael to the room<sup>[1]</sup> next to the restaurant.

The spacious room was illuminated by a few lamps, and the small train in the corner was very eye-catching.

Michael walked in a circle around the steam train with a fascinated expression, and asked, “So this is the steam train? Can it actually move without being pulled by any magic beasts?”

Mag opened the lid of the boiler and added some coal as he replied, “This steam train converts the thermal energy from the combustion of coal into a controllable form of kinetic energy. As such, it can power its own movement, and there’s no need for anything to pull it. Also, this is just a miniature train, but many more carriages can be added to a full-sized one for more storage capacity.”

“It only requires coal?” Michael strode forward and picked up a piece of coal before crushing it into black powder. Sure enough, this really was a pile of coal.

“The steam engine can only run on coal at the moment, but if a more efficient energy source is discovered, that can perhaps be used as well.” Mag didn’t want to speak in definite terms, as this was a magical world, after all, so there could be better and cheaper alternatives out there.

Michael looked at the steam train with an intrigued expression, and asked, “Can I try it out?”

“Of course. Please board the train, City Lord.” Mag nodded with a smile as he ignited the boiler. White steam began to billow out from the train’s chimney, and he climbed onto the driver’s seat, waiting for the barometer to reach a certain threshold before pushing the control shaft forward, upon which the steam train began to clunk forward.

Michael looked down at the railway tracks that the train was traveling along, and his eyes completely lit up. Hydle’s team had given him many concepts regarding how the steam engine could be utilized, yet those were merely insubstantial and abstract ideas. In contrast, this steam train was showing him firsthand the changes that the steam engine could effect.

There was no need for magic beasts; only coal was required to power this metallic hunk of a vehicle.

The steam train traveled in a circle around the room before coming to a halt. Michael remained seated on the train for a while before disembarking, upon which he turned to Mag, and said, “Boss Mag, what’s this train’s towing capacity?”

“This is just a miniature steam train for demonstration purposes. If it were to be constructed for practical application, the whole thing would need to be bigger, and the overall horsepower of the train would also be enhanced. In that case, one steam train would be able to tow up to 100 tons of weight. We’ll need to actually produce a steam train before we can ascertain the exact figures. As for how long the train can run for, as long as there’s sufficient coal, the train can travel anywhere where there are railway tracks,” Mag elaborated with a serious expression.

Upon hearing this, Michael began to tap the train absentmindedly as he fell into deep thought. After a brief silence, he looked at Mag with a smile, and said, “Arrange a time with Scheer and we’ll discuss terms for collaboration.”

“Sure.” A smile also appeared on Mag’s face. It had been easier to gain the interest of the city lord’s castle than he had expected. With the nod given by the city lord’s castle, Mag already held the initiative as the organizer for this three-way collaboration.

...

Even at this hour, the Blue Suede clothing store was still brightly lit.

Mars, who quickly walked into the room, discovered Gloria sitting on her own with a piece of fabric draped over her hands, seemingly deep in thought about something. He said, “Young Mistress, all 30 dresses have been reserved, and each of them has been sold for 100,000 copper coins. All of them will be produced and paid for by the end of the month. Many customers also inquired about the other two dress styles, but we acted according to your instructions, and refused to accept reservations. Instead, we’re going to release them half a month later. The reception for those dresses should be quite fantastic as well.”

“That’s great! We’ll definitely be able to make this a profitable business by the end of the month, then, right?” Gloria’s eyes lit up with excitement, and she felt as if all of her exhaustion from a hard day of work had been wiped away.

Mars nodded, and replied, “The president has taken care of the debt that the shop currently owes. After deducting the cost of wages and the cost of tallying up our stock, just the 30 dresses alone will make us 2,000,000 copper coins’ worth of profit. Half a month later, the other two dress designs will also be released, and those should also fetch the store 500,000-1,000,000 copper coins.”

Gloria put down the fabric in her hands, and a smile appeared on her face as she said, “The president sent me a letter today, telling me that if our profit for this month can exceed that of the forge that Cyril is running, then I’ll become a Board Member of the Chamber of Commerce and be given the opportunity to take over even more businesses.”

Mars nodded with a confident expression as he speculated, “That forge used to be quite a profitable business, but it’s since tapered off significantly in the past few years, and is on the brink of incurring losses. It’s in slightly better condition than the Blue Suede Textiles Shop previously, but it’s virtually impossible for them to make more profit than our shop in 20 days.”

Gloria shook her head, and replied, “We still shouldn’t get complacent. Cyril definitely wouldn’t be willing to give up so easily.”

...

In the darkness of the night, there was a group of black-robed knights silently entering Chaos City through the northern city gates.

### **Chapter 686 Is Snow White Made From Ice Cream?**

In the northern region of the city, in a secluded courtyard, there was a dimly lit house.

A black-robed man was looking at Seuss with a grim expression as he reported, “Team Leader, we’ve been unable to gather any leads regarding the whereabouts of Narson and his team. However, when we visited their base, we discovered that they had left many weapons behind, so they most likely hadn’t left

Chaos City voluntarily. It's very likely the case that they were completely wiped out during their search for Alex."

"Does that mean they found Alex?" another black-robed man exclaimed before immediately clapping his hand over his mouth as a horrified look appeared on his face.

The atmosphere in the room immediately cooled to a freezing point. The dozen or so black-robed figures stood silently in the room, and all of them could see their own horror mirrored in each other's eyes.

Even though they had been searching for Alex for all these years, they were still horrified rather than elated that they might have discovered his whereabouts.

That legendary man had severely traumatized them, and all of them were still very fearful about the prospect of having to face him in battle.

"It can't be Alex. He's already a cripple, so there's no way that he can wipe out Narson's team on his own." Seuss shook his head in a decisive manner as a cold smile appeared on his face, and he said, "But no matter who it is, anyone who dares to kill a team of us Black Falcons must pay the ultimate price."

The black-robed figures' expressions eased slightly upon hearing this, and confidence reappeared in their eyes.

"It's impossible for Alex to be the one who killed them, but this incident may not necessarily be unrelated to him. I'm going to gather all of the Black Falcons in Chaos City and search through the entire city for Alex as well as Narson's team." Seuss clenched his fists with a cold smile, and said, "I have a feeling that he's right here in this Chaos City. After all, hiding in the wilderness isn't his style."

"Yes!" the black-robed figures responded in unison.

...

After bidding farewell to the city lord and his daughter, Mag took Amy and Anna upstairs to tuck them into bed. He bribed Babla with a black pepper steak to bathe Anna before dressing her in a pretty little pink nightgown, and the two of them lay down on Amy's little bed.

"Meow~"

Ugly Duckling cried urgently at the foot of the bed, trying to catch Amy's eye as it stuck out its head.

Amy turned her gaze toward Ugly Duckling, and said, "Ugly Duckling, I already have Big Sister Anna now, so I don't want you anymore. You can sleep on the floor from now on."

"Meow~" Ugly Duckling's ears immediately drooped as it looked up at Amy with a pitiable expression. There were already tears swirling in its eyes.

"Poor Ugly Duckling." Anna turned to Ugly Duckling with a sympathetic expression. She contemplated the situation for a moment before her eyes lit up, and she suggested, "How about we let it sleep between us?"

“Meow!” Ugly Duckling was very excited to hear this, and it skipped on the spot before looking up at Amy with an expectant gaze.

“Alright, seeing as Big Sister Anna is speaking out for you, I’ll let you onto the bed. But, you have to behave.” Amy contemplated the proposal for a moment before picking Ugly Duckling up from the ground and placing it between herself and Anna.

“Meow~”

Ugly Duckling got into a comfortable position between the girls, and immediately fell asleep after closing its eyes.

“What a good little kitten.” Anna stroked Ugly Duckling’s fur with a wide smile on her face.

“But it’s only getting fatter and fatter. I feel like it won’t be long before it crushes this entire bed.” Amy heaved a forlorn sigh as she squeezed Ugly Duckling’s chubby cheeks.

“The chubbier it gets, the more adorable it is. Look at how fun it is to squeeze its cheeks like this; it’s like its made from water!” Anna grabbed onto Ugly Duckling’s face with her hands and gently kneaded it into different shapes.

“Wow! I didn’t know you could do that!” Amy’s eyes immediately lit up with curiosity. She squeezed Ugly Duckling’s cheek from the other side, and its face was twisted into another shape, drawing peals of laughter from its tormentors.

What a poor cat. Mag, who had just gotten out of bath, couldn’t help but shake his head with a smile upon seeing this. Every other pet owner treated their cats as if they were the masters of the household, yet Ugly Duckling was constantly being toyed with.

After having the time of her life squeezing Ugly Duckling’s cheeks, Amy turned to Mag, and wheedled, “Father, can you tell us a bedtime story?”

Anna’s also turned to Mag upon hearing this, and her eyes lit up with anticipation. Back when her grandfather was still alive, he would tell her a bedtime story every night.

“Sure. I’ll tell you two the story of Snow White today.” Mag carried a stool over to the bed and sat down on it.

Amy raised her little hand, and asked, “Is Snow White made of ice cream?”

“No, Snow White is referred to as such because her skin is as fair as snow.” Mag shook his head with a smile. As expected, Amy really could link everything to food.

“I see. That’s a pity.” Amy nodded with a wistful expression.

Mag didn’t know what she was feeling so disappointed about, but he still began to tell the story in a gentle voice.

“During a cold winter, snowflakes as large as goose feathers danced in the air. The queen sat in front of the window, looking out at the vast expanse of snow, and made a wish...



“Snow White’s tragic life stemmed from this beautiful wish of the queen, who was jealous of her beauty. She was abducted to the forest, where she encountered the seven dwarves. However, she was still unable to escape from the queen’s sinister grasp, and she was almost strangled to death first before almost being killed by a poisonous hairbrush...”

Amy and Anna were completely absorbed in Mag’s story. They were concerned for the welfare of Snow White while expressing anger toward the cruel queen.

However, after reaching the part in the story where Snow White ate a poisoned apple and fell into a deep death-like slumber, Mag’s voice came to a halt.

As a father, he simply couldn’t bring himself to tell the original version of the story, where a necrophilic prince had fallen in love with Snow White’s body and purchased it with money before living happily ever after with her.

That was too dark a story for him to tell.

“What happened next, Father? Did Snow White really die?” Amy looked at Mag with a sad expression.

There were also tears shimmering in Anna’s eyes. She felt as if Snow White was just as unfortunate as she had been.

Mag thought to himself momentarily before a flash of brilliance occurred to him, and he said, “In the end, the seven dwarves transformed into seven gourds, and were willingly refined into seven different pills for Snow White to take. After taking the pills, Snow White came back to life and gained seven different types of magical powers. She went back to the royal palace, shut the queen into a dark well for all of eternity, smashed that magic mirror, and became the new owner of the palace.”

### **Chapter 687 Mr. Mag, Have You Made a Decision?**

A gratified smile appeared on the Mag’s face at the sight of Amy’s and Anna’s sleeping faces. Fairy tales should be designed to teach children to be strong and independent, and not to rely on some creepy necrophilic prince to save them.

Mag crept away from Amy’s little bed before lying down in his own bed. He then thought about the events that had unfolded earlier. The city lord’s castle had essentially thrown their support behind him, so he was only awaiting a final decision from the Buffett Family. Scheer would be the one to decide whether their three-way collaboration would eventuate or not.

Mag then began to examine the 0.5 strength point bag within his body. This was the reward that he had received from completing that mission earlier in the day, and even though it wasn’t much, it really had arrived in the nick of time.

His trip to Rodu would undoubtedly be fraught with peril, so the more powerful he was, the greater the chance he would have of survival.

Mag lay on his bed for a long while, and only after the clock struck midnight did he silently get up and sneak out onto the balcony.

After getting out onto the balcony, Mag said internally, “System, fully activate the restaurant’s soundproofing effect, and then hit me with that half of a strength point.”

The horrific experience of being struck by lightning on the last occasion was still fresh in his mind, and no normal person would want to experience that a second time. However, in his pursuit of power, he had no choice but to bring this torture on himself.

“The restaurant’s soundproofing effect has been completely activated. One bolt of lightning coming right up; please close your eyes!”

The system’s voice was tinged with a hint of joy as if it took pleasure in inflicting pain on Mag.

Mag pursed his lips and suppressed the urge to say anything as he stood at the center of the balcony, awaiting the incoming lightning strike.

There had to be no worse feeling in this world than waiting to be struck by lightning.

As such, when the massive bolt of lightning finally descended from the sky and crashed down on his body, he was struck by a sense of relief amid the excruciating pain.

“Phew~”

A long while later, Mag exhaled as he stretched out his stiff and rigid body. There were still currents of electricity dancing over his body and crackling whenever they came into contact with each other.

Mag looked down at his charred charcoal-like body, only to discover that even his underwear had been zapped to dust. A gust of cold autumnal wind blew past his crown jewels, and he shuddered as he hurriedly draped a bathrobe over his own shoulders. Thank heavens I took off my clothes before this. Otherwise, I’d have one less set of clothes to wear.

After going upstairs, Mag began to assess the enhancements his body had experienced while taking a bath.

The most obvious effect was the increase in strength. With the strength coursing through his current body, Mag felt as if he could fell an Ironhide Bull with a single punch.

This wasn’t an arrogant delusion. Instead, it was an objective assessment of the capabilities of a 4th-tier knight.

A normal 4th-tier knight would perhaps be able to successfully capture an Ironhide Bull through the use of advanced sword techniques and other abilities.

However, if a 4th-tier knight specialized in refining and training their body, then their constitution would make them powerful enough to face off against an Ironhide Bull directly.

Alex was a man who could even face a giant dragon head on in his prime, so his constitution was naturally incredibly powerful.

I have to master all of the sword forms I can at the 4th-tier before I go to Rodu. Mag slowly clenched his fists as he made up his mind.

...

In a lavish and intricate room in the Buffett Manor, Scheer sat alone in front of a window. She was holding a half-full glass of wine in her hand, while her brows were furrowed in deep thought.

Following a prolonged silence, Scheer turned her attention to her wineglass before suddenly downing its contents in one go. After doing that, she seemed to have made up her mind, and she smiled as she said, "In the past, I've always taken a more steady approach that minimizes risk in my investments, but this time, I'm going to take a gamble. If I succeed, the Buffett Family will be taken to even greater heights, and we'll truly become one of the premier families on the Norland Continent. Aside from the bank and the winery, we'll be adding the steam train to our list of ventures."

Scheer put down her glass and turned off the lights as she murmured to herself, "I hope you won't disappoint me, Mr. Mag."

...

In a hotel room in the northern region of the city.

Snarr, who had altered his appearance into one of a heavily bearded man, was carefully studying a map under the light of a lamp. There were a few red circles around various locations on the map, and it was already appearing rather messy.

"It really isn't an easy task to find someone who's trying to conceal himself in Chaos City. I have no one I can trust here, either. Hopefully, my luck will be good and I'll be able to find Master Alex and Young Mistress Amy soon." Snarr sighed as he quickly wrote a letter before inserting it into a thin bamboo tube. He then opened the door and let loose a long whistle.

A hummingbird that was only around the size of a thumb flew toward him before landing on his hand. He strapped the small bamboo tube to the hummingbird's leg before setting it free, and it disappeared into the night in the blink of an eye.

...

Rodu, the second prince's manor.

A butler quickly walked into the study with a letter before offering it up with both hands in a respectful manner. "Your Highness, this is a letter from Ambassador Cayrols."

"Cayrols?" Josh's brows furrowed. Then, the other letter in his hand was incinerated with a ball of green fire. He accepted the letter being offered to him by the butler before reading through its contents.

"Mag? Is that a coincidence?" While reading through the letter, Josh's brows furrowed even deeper. However, as he continued to read, he shook his head as he murmured to himself, "No, there's no way that Alex would become a chef. Even as a cripple, there's no way that he would become a chef. He's far too proud to submit to others and cook at their behest."

The butler stood silently off to the side, not daring to make even the slightest sound.

After reading through Cayrols' letter, Josh was silent for a while before writing a letter in response.

Cayrols had been Rodu's ambassador in Chaos City for over 10 years, and that resume guaranteed him a high-ranking position when he came back to Rodu. Josh was trying to recruit him to his side in order to assist his bid to seize the throne.

Furthermore, Josh was very interested in this so-called incredible chef from Chaos City that could cook for the king on his birthday. He had been scrambling to find a good birthday present for the king, yet his efforts had proven futile thus far. If this chef really was as amazing as Cayrols claimed, and could bring joy to the king on his birthday, then it was very much worth a try.

“Seuss has encountered some difficulties over at Chaos City, so get Cayrols to help him one last time before he comes back from Chaos City.” Josh finished his letter and folded it up before handing it over to the butler.

...

“Mr. Mag, have you made your decision?”

The next morning, Mag had only just woken up when he was greeted by the sound of knocking on the door.

### **Chapter 688 Negotiating Terms**

Mag opened the door, only to find a portly middle-aged butler standing outside. A perplexed look appeared on his face as he asked, “Who are you?”

The man smiled, and replied, “I’m Master Cayrols’ butler, Hulton. I’m coming here on behalf of Master Cayrols to ask you whether you’ve made a decision to come to Rodu with us for His Majesty’s birthday banquet in 14 days.”

Mag nodded as a slightly apologetic expression appeared on his face, and he replied, “I see. Unfortunately, I haven’t discussed this issue with my daughter yet, so I’ll have to give Mr. Cayrols a response in a few days. Would you be able to relay that message to Mr. Cayrols for me?”

“Master Cayrols has said that if the Young Mistress would like to come to Rodu, she can also accompany us. We’ll be traveling to Rodu on the back of a flying magic beast, and the journey will only take a single day, so it won’t be difficult at all,” Hulton urged.

Mag nodded, and said, “I’ll be sure to take that into consideration. Please pass on my regards to Mr. Cayrols.”

Prior to sorting out the issues surrounding the steam engine, he couldn’t give Cayrols a definitive reply.

Otherwise, even if he didn’t blow his cover in Rodu but was forced to remain at the palace as a royal chef, that would completely throw Mag’s plans off track. As such, he had to recruit the city lord’s castle and the Buffett Family to his side first so there would be powerful allies on the outside to bail him out under such circumstances.

“Alright, I’ll be sure to relay the message. However, I must advise you that it’s a very rare opportunity to travel to Rodu and cook for the king. I hope you’ll consider this matter carefully.” Hulton didn’t press the issue any further as he nodded and departed.

“Risk and reward come hand in hand. Looks like I have no choice but to make the trip to Rodu.” Mag looked on at Hulton’s departing figure with a slightly grim expression.

After breakfast, Amy went to attend her lessons, while Anna remained in the kitchen with Mag to practice her cutting skills.

Mag was quite surprised and more than a little approving of the perseverance and resilience that Anna was displaying despite such a young age.

No master would dislike a hardworking disciple. While Anna was quite young, the determination and drive she displayed far outstripped those of an average person.

Following the conclusion of the lunch service, Mag was just about to close the restaurant until the dinner service when Scheer and Dicus appeared in front of his restaurant at the same time.

Scheer looked at the slightly surprised Mag with a smile on her face, and said, "Mr. Mag, I was wondering if you had time for a chat."

Mag was indeed quite taken aback, but he quickly composed himself. After all, Scheer wouldn't be Scheer if she went along with his plans without playing any tricks of her own. With that in mind, he nodded, and said, "It's an honor for Young Mistress Scheer and Mr. Dicus to come and see me at the same time. Please come in and have a seat."

Sally and Babla had taken Anna to the ice cream shop to give Yabemiya a hand, so there was no one else in the restaurant with him.

Mag brought out two glasses of water for Scheer and Dicus before also sitting down at the same table with them.

Scheer took a sip of water and looked at Mag with a smile as she said, "Please don't misunderstand, Mr. Mag. I went to the city lord's castle this morning to verify whether the city lord is willing to participate in your plan. However, it appears that my concerns were completely unwarranted. The city lord was in full support of your plan, so he asked me to come to visit you with Mr. Dicus here for further discussions."

"I understand, Young Mistress Scheer. This is quite an important decision, so it's best to be cautious." Mag nodded with a smile. He was already actually quite surprised that Scheer had decided to collaborate with him so quickly.

After all, the steam engine and the steam train were completely new inventions in this world, and had not been tested in the market at all. As such, there was no way to control risk, but the initial investment was very high.

Dicus placed a thick satchel onto the table, and looked at Mag with a smile as he said, "The city lord approves of your invention greatly, and we are willing to fully cooperate with you in your plans for production and promotion of the steam train."

"Seeing as all three sides wish to participate in this project, then let me get straight to the point." Mag looked at the two of them with a serious expression, and said, "I can provide all of the technology involved with producing steam engines and steam trains, and I'll continue my research and development in this area. In return, I would like 10% of all profits made in this business venture."

Scheer contemplated momentarily before looking at Mag as she said, "I can see that you're being very straightforward and transparent here, so I won't waste any time, either. Buffett Banks can provide all of

the money necessary to fund this project, but in return, we want exclusive rights to operation in the area of the steam train, as well as a share of no less than 60% of the profits made. The steam engine will be left out of this deal as I hope for that to be the product involved in a two-way collaboration with Mr. Mag and Buffett Banks. In that collaboration, you'll be receiving 20% of all profits made."

She really is an exceptional businesswoman, Mag praised internally, but his expression remained calm and collected. Only through intervention from an official party like the city lord's castle could the steam train be promoted as quickly as possible. However, the promotion and development of the steam engine was a pure business venture, and even though Scheer was giving Mag an extra 10% share of the profits, she was also retaining complete autonomy in return.

"The city lord's castle can accept anything no less than 30% of the profits made from the steam trains. In return, we'll be asking the mechanical bureau to provide you with their unreserved assistance in this project. We'll provide all of the manpower and skilled labor necessary, and be responsible for the promotion of the steam train. However, aside from a 30% share in the profits, the city lord's castle also has one more condition: in the case of extraordinary circumstances, the city lord's castle must temporarily assume complete authority over the railway tracks, and the other two parties must be in full support of this." Dicus looked at the two of them, and continued, "As for the matters regarding the steam engine, I have no right to make a decision there. I have to report this matter to the city lord before I can provide a response."

"In the case of extraordinary circumstances, the Buffett Family will stand by Chaos City unconditionally, and pledge our full support to the city lord's castle." Scheer nodded without any objections.

Mag also nodded in response. It was most likely the case that Michael had given Dicus a set of requirements, and as long as Scheer's proposal fitted those requirements, the city lord's castle would be willing to accept it. With that in mind, Mag smiled, and said, "In that case, I think we've reached a mutual understanding when it comes to the steam train. We can discuss the steam engine another day, but I think it's safe to say that the discussion about the steam train is settled."

Scheer nodded, and said, "I can sign the contract on behalf of Buffett Banks. As long as Mr. Mag and the city lord's castle are satisfied with the conditions I proposed, we can draft the contract today. However, I suggest finding someone more professional to ascertain the more specific clauses on the contract."

However, Dicus shook his head, and said, "Those are the conditions raised by the city lord's castle, but I think it's a good idea to consider this matter more carefully before the contract is confirmed. The city lord will also be signing the contract in person."

Mag smiled, and said, "The city lord's castle and Young Mistress Scheer are clearly more professional in this matter, so I'll leave it to you guys to draft up the contracts. I won't participate in the business aspect of this operation, and I'll only be responsible for providing the technology and skills in return for a share of the profits. If possible, I'd like to keep my participation in this project confidential."

He was providing the brains behind the project, so he had the right to make such demands.

## **Chapter 689 Boom!**

In the magic room on the second floor of the magic potion shop, Amy was in the process of building a snowman. Urien cleared his throat, and in his coarse voice, he said, "Little Amy, following this period of

practice, you've become a lot more proficient in your usage of manifestation magic. What we're going to do next is ability endowment, which is to inject magical power into the objects that we manifest so they can be useful in battle."

"Will it be like Master Urien's giant Frost Dragon that can break ice cubes?" Amy was very excited to hear this.

Urien nodded, and said, "Yes. Just being able to manifest something alone is nothing but a trick. If a magic caster can manifest something, but they can't endow their subject with special properties and abilities, then they're a failure in manifestation magic. It's just like the phoenix that Krassu can summon; it's just a battle rooster that looks like a phoenix."

Amy turned to Urien with a perplexed look, and said, "But Master Urien, your giant Frost Dragon and Master Krassu's phoenix have fought many times with no clear conclusion."

"Well..." Urien's expression stiffened, and he was at a loss for a reply. He cleared his throat in a slightly awkward manner, and continued, "Let's begin the ability endowment process now. Think of something that you see as the most powerful being, then manifest it while thinking about what ability you would like it to have.

"Also, this is the final warning: you're not allowed to manifest Boss Mag again!" Urien added. He had gotten really sick of seeing Mag during the past few days. He felt as if Mag was constantly attending his lessons uninvited, when in reality, it was just the subject of Amy's manifestation magic.

"I still think Father is the strongest, though..." Amy murmured to herself, but she still fell into deep thought at the sight of Urien's implacable expression.

Urien waited patiently for her decision, and didn't offer any tips or advice.

He had never seen anyone with magical aptitude as exceptional as Amy's. Even Princess Irina's aptitude was quite far away from reaching Amy's level.

As for himself, he was more than willing to admit that even if he grew a second brain, his aptitude would most likely still be inferior to Amy's. As such, he would much rather guide Amy in a general direction and ask her to figure out the rest rather than instruct her on every small detail. This was a rare subject that he agreed with Krassu on.

The 10th-tier was something that he and Krassu would never be able to transcend. Even though they were far more powerful than normal 10th-tier magic casters, they still had to admit that they were 10th-tier magic casters themselves, and had yet to reach the next level.

As such, they wanted to know if there was someone in this world who could break through that final bottleneck, and reach the legendary 11th-tier.

There were rumors that suggested the elven queen was at the 11-tier, but even in the war among species, the elven queen had only appeared in battle on a handful of occasions. As such, no one could verify the authenticity of this claim, and it could well be a smoke bomb thrown out by the elven race to try and intimidate the rest of the continent.

Amy's extraordinary aptitude was only one of the reasons why Urien and Krassu had decided to accept Amy as their disciple. The other factor of consideration was that both of them wanted to see if there was indeed an 11-tier, and they knew that Amy was perhaps the likeliest candidate on this continent to reach that level if it truly existed.

Amy closed her eyes, and an orange ball of light appeared above her head. The ball of light slowly condensed before expanding, creating quite a mesmerizing sight.

"What's this?" Urien's eyes lit up as he looked on with an expectant gaze.

Successful ability endowment was one of the signature signs indicating that one had become a 5th-tier magic caster.

Amy had been studying magic for just over a month, yet she had already become a 4th-tier magic caster. Such an insane rate of progression was simply unprecedented. If she could achieve ability endowment, then she would also be claiming the record for the youngest 5th-tier magic caster, a record that would perhaps never be broken again.

Upon seeing this ball of orange light, many powerful magic beasts flashed through Urien's mind. However, this was Amy's first attempt at ability endowment, so even if the magic beast that she manifested wasn't a very powerful one, it would still be a monumental achievement.

The orange light slowly squirmed before shrinking, and it gradually became more substantial.

"Is that... that orange kitten?"

After about 10 minutes had passed, Urien stared at the small orange kitten that had appeared above Amy's head, and he didn't know whether he should laugh or cry.

"Wow! It looks exactly the same!"

Amy had also opened her eyes, and she nodded in an extremely content manner at the sight of the orange kitten hovering in mid-air.

"Um... Little Amy, I told you to manifest something that you think the most powerful. Under normal circumstances, only powerful magic beasts would be able to unleash powerful combat prowess in battle... Your little kitten..." Even though Urien was trying to give Amy as much autonomy as possible during her magic education, he still couldn't help but interject at the sight of this adorable orange kitten. If she were to summon that thing in battle, the best-case scenario would be that her opponent would laugh themselves to death.

"Master, that's not a kitten, it's Ugly Duckling!" Amy emphasized with a serious expression. She then pointed at Ugly Duckling, and insisted, "Also, Ugly Duckling is super powerful."

Urien was still not convinced. He looked at the orange kitten, and said, "Did you endow it with an ability? If so, use it on me."

"Boom!"

The entire building tremored violently.



A massive kitten-shaped meatball had fallen from the sky, squashing Urien firmly underneath it.

“Master, are you alright?” Amy asked with a concerned look on her face.

Only Urien’s upper body was visible beneath the massive meatball. His face was slightly flushed in a strenuous manner as he said with difficulty, “I’m fine, but... get this thing off me...”

...

The city lord’s castle’s and Scheer’s efficiency were on full display as the final contract regarding the steam train operations was finalized after just three days. All three sides expressed their approval of the contract terms, and the contract was signed by Michael, Scheer, and Mag. As had been discussed earlier, Mag was going to get a 10% share of the profits.

The restrictive clauses on the contract required Mag to keep everything about the steam train project strictly confidential for three years. Also, Mag didn’t have to come in contact with anyone else working on the project aside from Michael, Scheer, and Dicus.

This was a form of self-protection for Mag. The steam train was undoubtedly going to create a massive stir on the Norland Continent. Many major powers on the continent would be yearning to get their hands on the steam train technology, and if they couldn’t do so through official avenues, their attention would inevitably turn to the inventor.

Mag wasn’t stupid nor vain enough to put himself at such major risk just for fame and renown.

As for the development of the steam engine, the city lord’s castle stated a new condition. The city lord’s castle was going to invest some funds into that project, and wanted to be given 10% of the shares in return. They weren’t going to participate in any of the business operations, but the Buffett Family was permitted to act on behalf of the city lord’s castle. Mag would still receive a 20% share of the profits, and the Buffett Family would be entirely responsible for the project.

This is going to be the number one technology stock on the entire Norland Continent. As expected, City Lord Michael is quite an intelligent man. Mag looked on at the two departing horse-drawn carriages, then turned his gaze toward the document satchel in his hand, and a content smile appeared on his face.

This investment would perhaps make him one of the wealthiest people in this world.

### **Chapter 690 Is Uncle Blour Going to Come Back?**

Three days later, Mamy Restaurant.

Mag looked at Cayrols, who had come to pay him a visit, and he smiled as he said, “Ambassador Cayrols, I’ve decided to accept your offer to travel with you to Rodu, and cook for His Majesty during his birthday banquet. It would undoubtedly be a very interesting experience for me to be able to cook with chefs from all over the Norland Continent.”

Cayrols had prepared a script to convince Mag to make the trip to Rodu, but all of his preparations had been made redundant. Despite that, this was naturally good news to him, and so he smiled as he said, “You’ve made the right decision, Mr. Mag. I trust that His Highness, the prince, would be very pleased after tasting your cooking. If you can satisfy His Majesty as well, you’ll be able to remain in Rodu as His

Majesty's personal cook. In that case, it won't be difficult for you to open a restaurant larger than Ducas Restaurant in Rodu."

"I'm willing to travel to Rodu, but I must make a few things clear in advance, ambassador: I'm only making the trip to Rodu as a learning experience. I can only stay there for a maximum of five days. All of Mamy Restaurant's customers are still waiting for me to come back and cook for them, so I won't remain in Rodu or the royal palace. Amy is also studying magic with the two great magic casters in Chaos City, so we'll have to come back no matter what. Also, Mamy Restaurant may not be a large restaurant, but I currently make profits of around 500,000 copper coins per day. During this trip, I'll be forced to temporarily close down my restaurant. If His Highness would like to invite me to Rodu, then regarding the opportunity of my trip..."

Mag smiled as he looked at Cayrols, and his words cut off mid-sentence.

Cayrols faltered slightly upon hearing this before smiling as he said, "Rest assured, Mr. Mag, His Highness will definitely issue you 500,000 copper coins per day for the entirety of your trip. However, have you ever thought about leaving Chaos City, Mr. Mag? Rodu is not inferior to Chaos City in any aspect, and all of the wealthiest people in the Roth Empire have flocked to Rodu. As such, the average spending power there would undoubtedly be superior to that of Chaos City. Won't you consider moving your restaurant to Rodu for a brighter future? Also, if you catch the fancy of His Highness and His Majesty, it's quite possible that you could be rewarded with a dukeship; that's not something that you can obtain here in Chaos City. Your daughter is currently studying magic under two great magic casters, but His Highness could easily arrange for her to enter the Magus Tower. That place is the holy land for all magic casters, and it would be a great honor for her to become a part of such a sacred place."

Mag shook his head with a smile, and replied, "My apologies, Ambassador Cayrols, but I've always been of the opinion that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush."

Cayrols look deep into Mag's eyes, and he could tell that Mag wasn't going to change his mind. As such, he rose to his feet, and said, "Alright, I won't force the issue, then, Mr. Mag. We'll be setting off for Rodu in nine days; I hope you'll make preparations in advance, Mr. Mag."

"I'll be sure to do so." Mag nodded, and then looked on as Cayrols departed.

...

In the Blue Suede Textiles Shop, all of the tailors were busy at work. The employees that had grown accustomed to complacency had also been taken out of their comfort zones, and were assisting the tailors in their work.

The entire store had become a miniature clothing production factory, with over 20 tailors and their students working hard to produce dresses as quickly as they could.

These tailors weren't exactly extremely renowned in Chaos City, but they were all skilled craftsmen. Under normal circumstances, it would be a good month for them if they could receive three or four orders for custom-made clothes, and they were barely making ends meet.

As such, when the Blue Suede Textiles Shop extended invitations for them to produce clothes based on ready-made designs, and offered remuneration that was twice what they had received for their past

custom-made jobs for every dress they produced, almost none was able to reject such an offer. As long as they worked quickly enough, their earnings would increase severalfold compared to their income in the past, so all of them were brimming with drive and enthusiasm.

Aside from taking time to rest and sleep, Gloria was almost constantly in the shop, making sure that every finished product was of an exemplary quality that was worth the prices they were charging.

Gloria made her way over to a seamstress, who was busy embroidering the dress draped over the table before her, and a look of approval appeared on Gloria's face as she praised, "Rebecca, your embroidery skills are really good. I'll get you to embroider all of the collars for our first batch of dresses."

Rebecca hurriedly rose to her feet upon hearing this, and she waved her hands in a fearful manner as she said, "Young Mistress, I'm just a normal seamstress; how can you entrust such an important duty exclusively to me? I'm already extremely thankful that I'm able to work here."

She had come to this shop in search of a job following a recommendation from Mag. Initially, she was only trying her luck, but to her surprise, she was actually hired. Her monthly wage was far higher than what she had been earning in the past, and it was already sufficient for her to make ends meet and also pay for Jessica's tuition without having to rely on subsidies from the city lord's castle.

Rebecca knew that Mr. Mag and Young Mistress Gloria definitely knew each other, but she didn't slack off nor get complacent, and made sure to do her job with a serious and diligent attitude.

However, Gloria was asking her to embroider the collars of the first batch of dresses, which were being sold for hundreds of thousands of copper coins per dress, and she was feeling extremely overwhelmed by that prospect.

Gloria shook her head with a smile, and said, "You have the skills required to succeed in this role. I want to give all of my customers the most perfect dresses, and to do that, I need you."

"I..." Rebecca looked at Gloria, and there were already tears shimmering in her eyes. In the past, she had felt fortunate just to be alive, let alone receive praise and respect from others. This was a feeling that had been sorely missing from her life.

Gloria smiled, and continued, "By the way, I heard you have a daughter who would come to play outside the shop from time to time, right?"

A tense expression immediately appeared on Rebecca's face as she hurriedly said, "Yes. My daughter is still very young, and I'm the only one looking after her, so I told her to come over during lunchtime so I could split some of my lunch with her. If you don't like that, then I'll tell her not to come anymore."

Gloria shook her head, and replied, "Those aren't my intentions. If you'd like, you can bring your daughter to work with you, and she can play inside the shop as long as she doesn't disrupt the other tailors. I'll also get them to prepare an extra meal for her, so you won't have to split your lunch with her."

Rebecca stared at Gloria with disbelief in her eyes, completely at a loss for words.

“A few days ago, Teacher Luna told me that she has already received the first batch of donations for her foundation. It won’t be long before your daughter will be able to go to school. Before that, let her come and stay with you in the shop. You’ll be able to look after her here as well,” Gloria continued.

“Thank you! Thank you so much!” Rebecca rose to her feet and bowed deeply toward Gloria.

Gloria also bowed in return, and smiled as she said, “I’ll be leaving the embroidery of those dresses to you, then.”

...

That night, Anna stood in front of Mamy Restaurant’s floor-to-ceiling window, and asked, “Uncle Mag, is Uncle Blour going to come back?”