

A Stay-at-home Dad's Restaurant In An Alternate World –

Chapter 3: I'll Show You A Magic Trick

"System will only decorate the restaurant, and other parts will not be included," answered the system.

Mag stroked his chin with his right hand as he used to, took a look at the dilapidated stairs and the dark second floor, and remembered the straw-covered bed he had just left. *This is no place for my baby girl to sleep. I shall change it by tonight,* he thought.

Besides, I didn't feel too much malice from the system. The said punishment must be just something to make me study hard and become the God of Cookery sooner.

If that is the case... Mag came up with an idea, and casually said in his mind, "System, I think you've got it wrong. I have provided this whole building for the restaurant, so you have to decorate the whole thing. I will not accept a restaurant under such a shabby house. Besides, if the second floor stayed unrepaired, someday a brick might fall down and kill a customer, which would be very bad, and if he was not killed by it, that would be even worse—I might get killed by the guy who can't be killed by a brick. If that happened, how could I learn to cook and become the God of Cookery? It's your choice."

The system became silent, as if lost in thought. After a while, it spoke again, "Because the house is very dangerous, after analyzing, system has decided to reconstruct the whole building and then decorate it. Please choose the decoration style."

Mag smiled secretly. *As I've expected, these things can be reasoned with. Being led around by the nose would be so not fun.* Still, he seemed pretty calm on the outside.

The style of the restaurant had been decided, and he chose a style quite like his previous house for the second floor—inconspicuous yet grand and comfortable. There were three rooms, one lavatory, and one bathroom, all on the second floor. Amy's room's main color was pink. So, everything was decided.

"The reconstruction and decoration will cost 30 seconds. Please leave this house. The countdown begins now from 60 seconds ..." said the system.

Just 30 seconds?! Mag froze for an instant, but then he heard the countdown, so he dragged himself towards the door in a hurry. It took him much effort to step across the threshold, and then he turned around and closed the door. It was already dark.

"Father, are you here to meet me?" Amy's cute little voice sounded behind his back.

Mag turned around. Amy was looking up at him, one brown pancake in each hand—too big in her little hands, her long eyelashes fluttering, happiness and joy all over her little face. *Father has never come out to meet me before, but today it seems he has come downstairs to meet me*, Amy thought happily.

“Yes, Amy, and Father will show you a magic trick.” Mag smiled as he went down, took Amy in his arms, and hugged her gently.

“A magic trick?” Amy looked up at Mag, a little confused, but soon her eyes brightened. “Is it magic? Can you conjure up a lot of good food, Father?”

“Yes. Father will conjure up a big beautiful house for you and a pretty restaurant and will cook a lot of good things for you every day,” Mag answered in a soft voice. *A little chowhound all right*, Mag thought.

“Really?” Amy seemed unconvinced, her mouth slightly open in surprise.

Mag nodded, smiling. “Close your eyes and count down from 30.”

“30, 29 ...” Amy closed her eyes obediently, counting down the number.

Mag looked at Amy gently, listening to her cute little voice. The ground started shaking slightly, and he could hear the sound of things hitting the ground now and then, but he didn’t look back once.

The count of 30 was over in a short while.

Amy opened her eyes, expectation all over her little face.

“Now, let’s have a look at our new home.” Mag took the two pancakes from Amy, took her little hand, got up, and turned around with some expectation to look at their new house.

A warm light spilled from the door and landed right on the two very different figures—one big and one small.

“Wow...” Amy’s mouth was wide open. She gaped at the suddenly changed house that looked like a resplendent palace in the lamplight for a long time before she turned to look at her father and cried out happily, “Father, is this really from your magic? The house is so beautiful, like a crystal palace! And look, the rocks are shining! Father, you are amazing!”

“This will be our house from now on, and it’s also a restaurant.” Mag smiled happily. *Nothing feels better than being admired by your own daughter.*

It was still a two-story house, but it had changed from a ramshackle log cabin to a European-style villa. Facing the square was a floor-to-ceiling window, and the restaurant in the light of the European crystal chandelier could be seen from outside, cozy and stylish.

It seemed the shaking before had caused a little tumult, so Mag took Amy's hand and went inside the door. "Let's go home. Father will tell you more later."

"Okay. Father is the best!" Amy rubbed her head against Mag's hand, leaping into the doorway happily.

Mag turned off the light on his way in. In the meantime, a dwarf with a thick beard stumbled out from the next door. Looking around with his drunken face, he shouted, "Stupid trolls come dancing here again! Damn it, I'm trying to get some sleep here..." Then he went back and slammed the door closed.

"Father... is this really our house?" Amy stopped at the door, looked at the grand restaurant, and then raised her head to look at Mag, still not believing her eyes.

She had never seen a house so beautiful—the floor was flat and smooth, the chandelier was beautiful and crystal-like, and the aligned tables and chairs were brand-new, with exquisite tableware boxes on the table. Deeper inside was a long counter that was higher than her, and behind it was a room, but she couldn't see what was inside.

"Sure." Mag nodded, smiling. Then, waving his hand, he said, "This is our new home. The first floor can be used as a restaurant, and the second floor is where we'll live..."

"Great!" Before Mag could finish his words, Amy had already run away. She extended her arms and ran around the restaurant, and then she found a table on the very inside and took a seat there. "Father, let's have the pancakes here. Amy is hungry," she said, waving at Mag.

"Okay." Mag smiled. Sure enough, food was the most important.

"The mission 'own a restaurant' is complete. Since the host has required the reconstruction of the parts besides the restaurant, the reward this time is cancelled out. System has issued a new mission: learn the first dish—Yangzhou fried rice¹. The time limit is three days. When the host is ready, enter the test field for the God of Cookery. The reward this time is: strength +0.5, and the punishment is: strength -0.5." The system's voice sounded again.

Mag stopped there immediately. A door suddenly appeared in his mind with four golden words on it: Yangzhou fried rice. *This must be the so-called test field for the God of Cookery.*

To be sure, Mag cared more about the reward it had mentioned. The most urgent matter for him was recovery because he couldn't hold the kitchen knife still in this condition, to say nothing of cooking. He didn't think the system would arrange a reward to help him recover this quickly, so he was a bit excited all of a sudden.

I don't know what this 'strength +0.5' means to me, but I don't think the system would cheat me. How hard could it be to make the Yangzhou fried rice?

When he was in Yangzhou, he had tried the authentic Yangzhou fried rice a few times in several different restaurants, but his comments then were too mean. To be frank, however, the taste was very good, but at that time, he was so obsessed with criticism that he somehow felt compelled to do that. It was said that one old and famous restaurant was closed for some time after his commentary, but those things were always happening, so he didn't pay much attention to it back then.

"Father?" Amy looked at the absent-minded Mag, a little confused.

"Coming!" Mag quickly suppressed his impulse to open that door in his mind, and sat opposite Amy. He handed a pancake to her. "Let's have a taste of Amy's favorite pancake," he said, smiling.

Mag took a close look at the pancake—it was about the size of a grown man's hand and one centimeter in thickness. It must have been made from flour mixed with corn, mung bean, potato... and many other coarse grains, and then was put into a wood oven to bake. It felt like a rough tile in his hand.

"Okay." Amy took the pancake with two hands, opened her little mouth, and took a bite. The pancake cracked, and Amy chewed happily like a little hamster, looking satisfied and very cute.

It tastes that good? Mag wondered. Still, looking at Amy eat gave him such a good appetite that he couldn't help but bring the pancake to his mouth and give it a hard bite. He chewed a few times and got astounded.

This must be baked tile! Mag thought. *Did the pancake crack, or did my teeth? It was really a torture to my mouth and choked my throat when trying to swallow. This thing can be used as a lethal weapon! Hundreds were sold in one day? Are you kidding me? This world's food culture is so primitive! Damn, I choked!* Mag felt terrible. He dropped the pancake on the table and ran to the sink in the kitchen with hands around his throat.

Thank you for reading on