

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

Chapter 31: Buy An Ugly Duckling Egg

“Shut up, Black Coal!” Urien shouted in a shrill voice. He was wearing a black robe for magicians, his face a little grim. He watched as the father and daughter walked away. “Such a strong magic wave! The little girl is a genius? Or is that man a hidden master of magic?” he muttered.

“Now you’re a real Black Coal.” The green parrot giggled at the black crow whose feathers had been burned away, gloating.

“Call me honorable Fama Odin Ben, old man. My palace has been burnt down buy that little girl, so get me a new one quickly. And make a flamboyant robe for me, or someone may catch a glimpse of my beautiful body,” complained the black crow. Then he sniffed around. “Good heavens, why do I smell a roast chicken?” he shouted.

Urien turned to look at his black crow. “Shut your mouth, or I’ll feed you my new potion!” His face was expressionless, his voice as shrill as the voice of a demon that had crawled out from hell.

The black bird stopped his unruly behavior right away. He moved over his feet timorously. “At least... at least give me two leaves to cover my body. You don’t have to see me like this.”

“Green Pea, get him some leaves,” Urien said as he walked towards his shop. “Why haven’t I noticed that magic wave before? Maybe we could exchange experience some day,” he muttered to himself.

“My Lord Urien, next time, call me Sunny when you want me to help,” said the green parrot merrily. She cocked her head to one side to open the lock on her cage and flew away; after a little while, she was back and put two leaves beside Black Coal. Then she flew back to her cage, locked the door, and preened herself gracefully.

“Never thought I’d come to be like this.” Black Coal sighed. He looked around and picked up the two leaves to cover his most important parts.

Mag was walking with Amy on the square. Apparently, she had become very happy after she set that black crow on fire. She skipped merrily in front, paused to wait for Mag, and resumed her skipping again.

Mag had 10 gold coins in his pocket. They were very important to him right now, but if Amy wanted to buy anything, he wouldn't hesitate at all.

However, the little thing was very considerate. They had walked around for half an hour, but she had only asked for a puppet with strings.

Then Mag took Amy to the largest market on the Aden Square. Unfortunately, they didn't find a swan, much less an ugly duckling.

They had found regular ducklings, though, but Mag feared that when they failed to grow into beautiful swans, Amy would feel he had cheated her, so he didn't buy any.

The vegetables were cheap here, but the system once said that he was not allowed to take outside ingredients into the kitchen, so he wasn't tempted by their low price.

"Father, we can't find an ugly duckling today, right?" Amy looked up at Mag, a little disappointed.

Mag nodded. "They say the ugly ducklings haven't been born yet, so maybe we could buy one later." He was trying to find a way to comfort Amy, who had been filled with expectation. It was early autumn now. Big swans were very rare around Chaos city, let alone the small ones. There was a high chance that he wouldn't find one in a long time.

"What's that?" Before Mag could offer any consolation, Amy's eyes were already drawn by an herb stall by the roadside. She ran to it and squatted down immediately. She looked at it with her wide eyes for a while, and then turned to wave at Mag as she shouted, "Father, look! This must be an ugly duckling egg!"

"Oh?" Mag walked over to her. The stall was owned by a strong, dark middle-aged man who was weaving a basket from dried stalks. He looked like an herb collector, and his hands were covered with calluses from climbing ropes. The sacks on the ground were filled with herbs. Beside his feet was a small pile of hay, and on it lay a gray egg the size of the mouth of a bowl.

"Father, can we buy this egg? You said there is no ugly duckling right now, so we can hatch this one when we get home." Amy looked up at Mag as she pointed at the egg, her face full of anticipation.

Mag nodded, smiling. "Yes." The little thing had been disappointed enough times today. He wanted her to go back home in a good mood, so he turned to the herb collector and asked, "What is this egg?"

"Well, I'm not sure myself. I found it on a cliff yesterday when I was collecting herbs. Only birds can reach that place, so it should be a bird egg. It's very nutritious," the seller said with a smile.

“How much?” Mag’s eyes brightened. If it was a bird egg, then it would be something like a swan when it hatched; besides, judging by its size, the bird might be even bigger than an ostrich, which would make a great ride for Amy after being well trained.

The seller smiled and scratched his head as he looked at Amy who was watching the egg with great interest. “I see the little girl loves it, so... three gold coins,” he said.

“Fine. Here, three gold coins.” Mag handed over the money. The herb collectors were risking their lives every day to climb cliffs. If this was truly a bird egg, three gold coins was not expensive at all.

“Thank you. Take this small basket with you, little girl. The egg will fit perfectly in it.” The middle-aged man put the egg with the hay into the little basket he had just made and handed it to Amy.

“Thank this mister, Amy,” Mag said to Amy quickly.

“Thank you, Mister.” Amy took the basket merrily and carried it with her two hands. “Be good, ugly duckling. I will hatch you out very carefully,” she whispered.

“You’re welcome.” The seller waved his hand, smiling. Then he turned to Mag, and said, “I have a little girl about the same age as her and she likes raising animals too. But she already has two monkeys, so I decided not to take this egg to her.”

“I see. This little thing has been going on about raising an ugly duckling for several days. Hope she’ll like it when it hatches.” Mag gave him a sour smile, but when he looked at Amy, his eyes were full of love.

They left the herb collector’s stall. Mag wanted to help Amy carry the egg, but she refused. She was carrying the basket with effort in front of Mag, making him worry about her dropping it.

Finally, they made it back after nearly half an hour. Amy put the basket gently on the stairs outside the door and sighed with relief. She turned to Mag, and said earnestly, “Father, thank you for buying this ugly duckling egg for me. I will take very good care of it.”

“But that mister said it might not be an ugly duckling egg. It could belong to other birds,” Mag said, smiling. He took out a handkerchief and wiped the sweat off her forehead.

Amy shook her head stubbornly. “No, I’m sure it’s an ugly duckling egg. I’m going to hatch it and raise it. It will grow into a beautiful swan, and... and...”

Then Mag saw her swallow her saliva.

Thank you for reading on

Chapter 32: Mag? My Father?

Mag felt a little sorry for the egg, but he could do nothing about Amy's obsession with the roast goose. It seemed he had to work hard and complete his missions to get the recipe for roast goose as soon as possible.

Of course, the recipe for the Peking Duck would be just as fine.

They opened the door and went inside. Amy put the little basket in a compartment under the counter. She crouched down and whispered a little something to that egg, and then closed the door carefully as if afraid of waking up the little creature inside the egg.

"Father, when will it hatch?" Amy asked as she looked at Mag, expectant.

Mag shook his head. "I'm not sure. Maybe next spring." He didn't know much about the hatching of birds'.

"That would be too long." Amy was a little depressed.

"Maybe it will hatch out more quickly if it's put in a warmer environment, like mother ducks hatching their eggs," Mag said quickly after thinking about it.

Amy's eyes brightened immediately. "Then what about Amy sitting on that egg too?"

Mag chuckled and shook his head. "No, that won't work. Amy, take that little blanket downstairs and use it to cover the egg. That should do."

"Okay," Amy answered happily. She ran upstairs quickly.

"Hope it's a swan egg. But it's quite unlikely," Mag muttered to himself. He went to the kitchen and poured two glasses of water.

Mag helped Amy wrap up the egg in the blanket. It was already 11:25 am and almost time to open his restaurant. He looked at Amy as she was crouching on the ground, whispering "ugly duckling, grow up quickly..." and considered getting a roast goose for her later today.

A few minutes later, at exactly 11:30 am, Mag went to the door, turned over the sign, and opened his restaurant formally.

Although still not many came here, the restaurant's grand and different style truly fascinated some people. Two dwarves came, and then an orc, but when they saw the menu, they all shook their heads and left.

Mag had grown used to it. It was perfectly normal, though. Not all the customers liked Yangzhou fried rice; besides, they didn't even know what this Yangzhou fried rice was. They would rather spend six gold coins on a large plate of roasted meat and a flagon of wine than spend them on something they knew nothing about.

Maybe only Mobai and his friends would come for lunch, Mag thought helplessly. This was his second day, and he had only sold eight plates in total. If he wanted to complete his mission, he had to sell 500 plates in the following nine days. It was not very encouraging.

Just then, Mag heard the sound of hoofbeats outside. He looked out and almost chuckled. It was not a horse, but a black donkey. On its back was a human knight in silver-gray boiled leather. He was so tall that his feet could almost touch the ground sitting on that donkey's back.

The knight looked about 30 years old, his face square, his black hair tied up casually with a piece of gray cloth. He halted before the restaurant, holding reins in one hand and a longsword at his waist in another. He looked up at the signboard smilingly.

"Mamy Restaurant? Sounds like a good place. I'll have my lunch here," Conti Nicolas said to himself, smiling. He swung off his donkey and tied it to a tree. Then, he strode towards the restaurant and entered.

Mag was standing by the counter. He glanced at the knight's sword with an emerald inlaid in it and smiled. "Welcome!"

"Hi, what do you have here?" Conti said to Mag, smiling. He didn't look around the restaurant like others.

"There is a menu on the table. You can take a look first, sir." Mag pointed at the black menu. He found this knight very enthusiastic, just as if nothing could trouble him.

"Thank you." Conti seated himself and opened the menu with a smile. He froze for an instant when he saw only one dish on it, but his smile returned quickly. He looked up at Mag and said, "Owner, give me a plate of this Yangzhou fried rice."

"Okay, please wait a minute." Mag was a little surprised as he looked at this Conti who maintained a smiling face. After all, it was the first time that a customer had ordered after just one look at the menu. It seemed like he didn't even need to think about it.

Mag remained very calm on the outside, though. He loved this kind of customers, of course. He didn't worry about him not liking his food. He nodded, smiling, and walked into the kitchen.

Conti put his sword on the table and took a look around the restaurant. "Looks good." He seemed in a good mood.

And then a little head appeared from behind the counter. "Hello, new customer," Amy said to Conti.

Conti jumped onto his chair in alarm, his sword half-drawn and his face serious and nervous.

Amy was also startled by Conti's reaction, but his shining armor and sword had really aroused her curiosity, so she revealed herself, and asked, "Are you a knight?"

When Conti saw a lovely little girl who was only three or four years old, he quickly slid his sword back into its sheath embarrassedly. Then he jumped down. "No, I'm a dragon slayer. I haven't killed any dragon yet, but some day, I'll put those evil bastards to the sword!" he said proudly, his head held high.

Mag looked over when he heard the noise and chuckled at Conti's words. In his predecessor's memory, there were many knights who wanted to slay dragons, and he had been one of them. However, unlike them, he had really killed a dragon before; more than one, actually.

"Whoa, amazing." Amy clapped her little hands and looked at Conti with adoration. Then she pointed at the longsword in his hand. "So you must have defeated many formidable opponents."

"I don't like fighting people. I like Mag Alex the most. He killed four wicked dragons and is one of the bravest and strongest knights on the whole continent," Conti said, smiling, his eyes full of excitement and adoration. Then he looked down at Amy. "If you like knights, little girl, you should like the ones like Mag Alex."

"Mag? My father?" Amy looked at Conti, a little puzzled.

Thank you for reading on