

After Prison 1401

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When Severin was saying goodbye to Diane, Sheila pulled Sofia to one side. "I understand you, Sofia. We're both women, after all Diane and I can tell that you genuinely like Severin." Sheila then paused for a moment before continuing, "Going out with him on his mission is a great opportunity that you should seize firmly."

Sofia felt a little embarrassed. "Are you sure you don't mind?"

"Of course. We wouldn't have encouraged you if we didn't." Sheila reassured with a smile. "The two of you will be spending a lot of time together, so try your best to get closer to him. Better yet, you can go ahead and boldly make a move. Severin is a numbskull who won't take the initiative to get closer to you, but that doesn't mean he doesn't feel any attraction. I only succeeded in winning his heart because I was bold enough to take the initiative."

Sofia's eyes lit up and she became more confident. "Really? It's a shame that I have to leave with him soon. When I come back, I want to hear all about how you managed to win him over!"

Sheila grinned and said, "Hehe, there's nothing much to talk about. You just need to be bold, that's all. Luck favors the bold, after all!"

Sofia bit her sexy red lips. Unfortunately, boldness was her weakness. After giving it some further thought, she asked Sheila again, "Do you have any other tricks?"

Sheila looked at Sofia from head to toe and said, "You'll have to try it out on your own. Just remember to be bold. Try to wear something revealing or stuff like that. Men are all emotional animals anyway. You're already attractive, and Severin clearly likes you if he agreed to bring you with him. The chances are there, so don't give up, and don't be too shy! Okay?"

At that moment, Severin called out to Sofia. "Let's go, Miss Sofia!"

Sofia smiled and said to Sheila, "I'll have to go now. I might not be as bold as you are, but I've decided to go all out. I need to pursue my happiness, after all, and I have to put in the hard work to achieve it! I won't let this chance slip by me!"

"I'm rooting for you!" Sheila pumped her fists and cheered Sofia on

Severin and Sofia soon left the home. She was puzzled when she found out that Severin chose to take a taxi to the city outskirts instead of driving or taking a flight. They got off only when they were far from the city,

Once they got out of the car, Severin continued to lead her forward even though the taxi had driven off. After walking for some time, Sofia's curiosity got the better of her and she asked in doubt, "We're not going to walk there, are we? I thought we'd take a plane to the city closest to the foggy forest and either fly there or drive there. I have no idea how we're going to reach there on foot."

Severin explained, "That will be such a waste of time. I'll tell you why once we enter those woods up ahead. We need to find a place where no one can see us

“A place in the woods where no one can see us?” Severin’s words made Sofia’s heartbeat quicken. She could almost feel her heart pop out of her chest. ‘Is he taking me to the woods so we can do that?’ Sofia became more anxious when she thought about it. Though she liked Severin very much, things were progressing at too quick a pace. Furthermore, she never thought that her first time would be in the wilderness. She would not be able to face the world anymore if someone accidentally saw them doing it.

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“Yes. I don’t want anyone to be shocked by what they see.” Severin smiled and continued to walk. He hardly noticed that everything he said was already making Sofia think wildly.

Sofia was completely speechless. Severin used to carry himself in such a proper and dignified manner. She did not expect him to be so perverted! She could not help but remember what Sheila said to her before about how Severin was surely attracted to her despite never making a move. Sofia took it to mean that Severin was a very lust-driven man.

Even so, the speed at which everything was progressing was a little too fast for Sofia. She was caught completely off guard. He never said anything to express his love for her, yet he was already about to bring her into the woods to do that with her.

Sofia felt conflicted. She longed to take her relationship with Severin to the next level, but everything was going too quickly for her. She continued to follow Severin, but her pace slowed more and more. She felt that her first time should not have been out in the woods. A hotel, or even a small motel, would be more decent. Heck, even a hidden cave would be passable if either of those options were not available! Doing it in the woods just did not sit well with her at all.

“And you even said that you’re afraid that it’s too shocking for those who might happen to see us!” Sofia mumbled to herself. “Maybe we can do it another day? I’m not ready yet!”

Oddly enough, Severin failed to catch her whispering to herself. He glanced back at Sofia and urged her, “Why are you walking so slowly? Hurry up! I can’t afford to delay this any longer. Why are you mumbling to yourself? I need to hurry!”

Sofia nearly fainted. ‘Does he have to be so anxious? Her worldview was on the verge of collapsing at that moment. ‘But I love him. Will he get angry if I don’t agree to his demands? Will he be unhappy?

Will he ignore me in the future?’ Sofia felt incredibly conflicted.

At long last, Severin stopped after reaching a secluded area and turned to Sofia. “This place will do. There’s no one here.” Sofia was startled. She looked around and saw that it was a rather secluded area. “Are you sure this is a good place? This location doesn’t seem too suitable though.

The next second, Severin took out a flying sword from his spatial ring. When the flying sword appeared, it grew in size and became so big that several people could easily sit on it.

“What do you think? Were you surprised? This is much faster, so this will be our ride. I won’t take this thing out if open.” Severin jumped up the sword and beckoned Sofia to come on.

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Sofia then realized that she had misunderstood him. “When you were talking about shocking people, was this what you were referring to all along?”

Severin frowned, “Well, yeah. What did you think I was referring to?”

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“Ummm... nothing!” Sofia’s had an embarrassed look on her face. She never expected that Severin was talking about a flying sword. The misunderstanding was ridiculous

Fearing that Severin would find out about her wretched thoughts, Sofia immediately jumped onto the flying sword and changed the subject. This flying sword is so charismatic, and it looks very beautiful too. How fast does it go, though?”

Severin smiled and said, “Well, it’s not that fast, but it’s not like we really need to fly that fast anyway. We’re not in that big of

a rush, after all.”

Severin channeled his spiritual energy and a bit of mental power into the flying sword. It began to rise slowly and fly forward In the blink of an eye

“This is still pretty fast! Sofia was awestruck as she stood on the flying sword and looked at the clouds below. The flying sword could fly fast enough without consuming much spiritual energy—demonstrating just how valuable it was

Severin smiled and said, “This speed is probably less than half of its normal speed. This is a ninth– grade spiritual weapon known as the Blood Fiend Sword.”

“Ninth–grade? I expected it to be a spiritual weapon, but I was thinking that it might just be a fourth- or fifth–grade spiritual weapon. I didn’t expect it to be a ninth–grade spiritual weapon.”

Sofia was shocked by that revelation. “Our sect doesn’t even have a weapon like that.”

A sudden thought then occurred to Sofia “Why aren’t you afraid to show me something so valuable? What if I rob you? It would’ve been better for you not to use it.”

Severin smiled nonchalantly. “Rob me? That would depend on whether you’re even strong enough to do that!”

Sofia was speechless. She originally thought that he only dated to show her such an important treasure because he trusted her character and believed her to be a trustworthy person, but it turned out that he looked down on her attainment.

Then, Severin added, “That aside, I don’t think you’re that kind of person. I’ve given you a third–grade pill to help you make a breakthrough in your attainment, and I’m pretty sure you wouldn’t spurn my kindness.”

Sofia’s heart warmed and she said with a smile, “Of course, You are my benefactor, and I ought to repay you for your kindness, rather than spurn it.”

After some thought, Severin asked Sofia curiously, "I understand that you're an elite disciple, but would the sect just allow you to be away for such a long period without having any tasks assigned to you? I don't know much about these things, not less how their way of managing their members. I'm just curious."

"Don't worry," Sofia answered. "It'll be fine for the sect leader to know. I only came out because I got his consent."

"Your leader agreed to let you go out and enjoy yourself?" Severin asked

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Severin was a little surprised. "You must have a rather high position in the sect then."

"That's because I'm the sect leader's daughter, Sofia said with a grin. "No one will object if I go out on my personal account!" Severin was taken aback "You're the daughter of the Stormy Moon Sect's leader! I must say, I'm quite surprised! You've never told me that before!"

Sofia sat down on the flying sword and said to him, "You didn't ask, so I didn't tell. I took the initiative to tell you that I'm the sect leader's daughter, you might think that I'm trying to show off. And being the sect leader's daughter doesn't matter much anyway

Severin nodded. "You're right. It won't affect our friendship."

The two of them chatted for some time, but Sofia could not find a topic to converse about. It was a little awkward for her to be so close to him on the flying sword. After some more thought, Sofia decided to ask Severin, "By the way, do you mind sharing with me how you, Diane, and Sheila met? Can you tell me about your previous dating experience? I'm very interested in how you ended up together with them."

Severin answered, "Sure. We have nothing else to do anyway, and you're practically one of us now I'm happy to tell you everything"

Sofia felt all sweet, particularly since Severin mentioned that she was 'one of them. She even began to wonder if he had already tacitly agreed to being in a relationship with her. Judging from the situation, she probably had a small place in Severin's heart. As long as she followed Shella's advice to become holder and work harder, then she would be well on her way to winning his heart.

Sofia sat next to Severin and listened to Severin's story. Bit by bit, she began to get to know him better. Severin would smile from time to time, and Sofia was deeply enthralled by how handsome he was.

Time passed quickly, and it was nightfall by the time they arrived at a desolate yet ancient-looking city. Severin looked at the city up ahead and frowned. "What sort of city is this? Why haven't I read or heard about it before? This city doesn't seem to have been recorded on Dranodon's map."

Sofia smiled and said, "We flew over a very high cliff, remember? That cliff has trapped a lot of people below. This place belongs neither to Dracodom nor any other country, which is why it doesn't exist on Dracodom's map" Following a pause, she added, "Besides, you probably know that there are some areas that aren't marked on Dracodom's map, and some areas that are displayed in black Cartographers don't know about these places, and this city here happens to be one such example."

Severin looked at Sofia and remarked, "You seem to be quite knowledgeable about this, Sofia I'm assuming you know what city this is then. It's getting dark, and I'm planning to find a place to rest for the night. Judging from our speed, we'll probably be able to reach the foggy forest's periphery by tomorrow afternoon."

Sofia smiled and said, "This place is named Reputab, from the word reputable, because there are several reputable secluded families around these parts. The rich spiritual energy in the mountains and valleys makes it a desirable place for many of these secluded families to train. This city is like a pitstop for most people to shop and spend or exchange certain valuable items such as spiritual herbs."

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Severin's eyes lit up when he heard that. "I didn't expect such a place to exist! This is new to me! I'm guessing there are probably a lot of strong individuals here, then?"

Sofia laughed and said, "For other people, yes. Your attainment is already high enough that even your mother-in-law calls you a saint. For you at least, none of these people can be considered strong." She thought for a moment and added, "But there are a lot of warrior emperors here. This is something we don't often see in normal society. Warrior kings, on the other hand, are practically everywhere. By contrast, profound masters are the minority here."

Severin nodded. "So, you've been here, then?"

"No." Sofia shook her head. "I've never set foot here, but I've heard the great elder talk about this place before. If memory serves me right, then this is the place that was mentioned. Now that we're here, I think you're just as interested in this place as I am. How about we go in and have a look around? It'd be good to get some rest for tonight."

"Let's hop off and walk into the city. I wouldn't want other people to target me after seeing my flying sword." Severin steered the sword and made it hover a couple of inches from the ground. He jumped off with Sofia and then immediately stored the weapon back in his spatial ring.

"Shall we? I heard the restaurants here make dishes from beast meat that are apparently very delicious. I've been wanting to try something like that for a long time!" Sofia stretched her waist a little and walked forward eagerly.

"Haha, sure! I brought you out with me and you ended up being my guide, so it's only fair that I treat you to dinner later. Make sure to eat your fill!" Severin chuckled when he saw how happy she was.

Unbeknownst to them, a man and a woman got dressed and walked out from the bushes not far away. Both of them were in their early twenties.

"Did you see that, Ferrol? That flying sword must be super valuable!" the young woman gulped and asked. "It probably is a spiritual weapon."

Ferrol sneered and said, "What you saw isn't just a spiritual weapon. From its energy and the way that it's built, I'm guessing that it's at least a fifth-grade or sixth-grade spiritual weapon. It's a very valuable treasure. Our family's combat strength would increase tremendously if we have something like this, and we'll become even stronger!"

The woman nodded. She thought for a moment and asked again, "But don't you think he might also be very strong if he has such a powerful weapon? Besides, what if he has some sort of backer? Do you think he might be from a certain sect? That means we won't be able to take it from him."

"Hehe, let's take things one at a time," Ferrol replied. "We should head back first. I'll tell the family head about this, and I'm sure he won't let this opportunity slip past him. We need to hurry though. It'll be troublesome if other secluded families know about this and try to snatch it away."

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After the two of them ended their conversation, they flew up and flew straight toward a valley. Ferrol went back to his family -the Marrlaid-and requested to meet several elders as well as the family lead.

"I was told that you wish to meet with all of us. What is so important that you insisted on meeting us at this late hour instead of waiting until tomorrow?" Eulon Marclod-the Marclods head-asked Ferrol with a smile.

Ferrol immediately said, "When Betty and I were playing outside the city today, we saw a man and a woman arriving just outside Reputab on a flying sword. They descended from the sword and the man stored it in his spatial ring before they entered the city."

Fulan frowned and asked with some displeasure, "Isn't that normal? What's so strange about it?"

Their great elder then pressed for more information. "Give specifics, Ferrol. What's so special about this sword?"

Ferrol then said, "It's probably at least a fifth-grade or sixth-grade spiritual weapon. We can feel the fluctuations in it from a distance."

"A fifth-or sixth-grade spiritual weapon is something that even those secluded sects find difficult to obtain. The second elder's eyes lit up instantly after hearing that "I never would have expected such a treasure to appear here."

The great elder was excited too. "If we can get our hands on that treasure, our family's strength will become even stronger. You could like it to a trump card that can be used in dire situations!"

Eulan's interest was piqued, but he remained rational. He frowned and said, "Someone like him would almost certainly have a high level of attainment, Snatching the sword from them brings with it a risk of getting killed. We should be wise to avoid that."

The great elder had a wise smile as he said, "Ferrol is a smart man. He must be quite confident of our success if he could gather us here and say all this. Correct me if I'm wrong, Ferrol, but the possibility is there, right?"

Ferrol nodded with a smile and said, "You understand me best. Based on my analysis, it shouldn't matter whether or not these two people are from a sect. Their sect wouldn't know what happened as long as we destroy their corpses after killing them. It's not like these sects come to this sort of place anyway. Killing two of their disciples shouldn't be a problem."

Ferrol then paused for a moment and continued, "Secondly, their attainment shouldn't be that high. If it was, they wouldn't have decided to disembark some distance away from the city and store the sword before continuing their journey on foot. This shows that they're afraid of people who might want to rob them of the sword after knowing that they possess such an item."

Eulon nodded after hearing that analysis. "Ferrul's reasonings make sense. Are there any other indications to bolster the supposition that their attainment isn't very high?"

Ferrol thought about what happened and said, "The flying speed doesn't seem to be very fast. Perhaps their attainment is too low that they are unable to utilize the flying sword to its fullest. Neither of them look like disciples of a sect. They're more like two casual, unaffiliated practitioners. I'm confident that they're not from any aristocratic families because they don't look familiar at all.

His companion, Betty, added, "They look young too, so it's possible that their attainment isn't very high. I'd say they're probably just warrior kings"

Eulon was finally swayed by all their remarks. He looked at the elders and asked "What do you think? It seems quite feasible

to me."

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The great elder was petting excited too, and with good reason considering that the weapon was at least fifth or sixth grade. Such an item would have all the secluded families coveting it.

Upon seeing Eulon's interest, the great elder said, "There are several secluded families in this area, and our strength is average at most. We have only a total of five warrior emperors including yourself, which makes us lag quite far behind the more powerful secluded families."

The great elder paused and continued, "You'll be much quicker than the others if you have this flying sword, and it'll also be very useful in combat. Your combat strength will increase significantly, and you can escape easily if your opponent proves to be too strong. Even a level seven or level eight warrior emperor might not be able to stop you because of how quick your flying sword is."

Eulon had an excited look in his eyes when he heard that.

The second elder pondered over the situation and nodded. "We ought to give it a try since the flying sword's owner doesn't have that high an attainment. Needless to say, we shouldn't let other secluded families find out about this, or else we wouldn't stand a chance of getting it again."

Eulon nodded approvingly. "That is a timely reminder. We mustn't allow other secluded families to get any information on this because those who are stronger than us would definitely want to get their hands on it as well"

Ferrol then said. "The guy has entered the city with the woman. If we try to engage in combat with them, then they might escape on the flying sword after knowing that we're too strong. We might not be able to catch up to them then." He took a deep breath and added, "If he uses the flying sword to fight back, then other people will spot it too. That would certainly attract attention from the other families."

The second elder nodded after hearing that. "That does seem to be a little troublesome."

Ferrol tried to come up with an idea and immediately looked at Betty. "We could ask Betty to help us."

"Me? 1

that.

But my attainment is so low! How do you expect me to help? Betty was stunned and did not know what Ferrol meant by

Ferrol then said, "Men love women, so all you need to do is get close to him and lure him into a secluded area. Mister Eulon and the elders will be waiting there in advance, and they'll have the flying sword after killing the guy."

"Yes," Eulon's eyes lit up immediately and he said, "The four elders and I will surround the man and attack him at the same time. That'll prevent him from getting a chance to escape. As soon as we make our move, we need to end him as swiftly as possible so he doesn't even have the time to bring out the flying sword."

Betty was a little upset with that idea. She pouted. "I don't want to do something like that. What kind of person do you take me for, Ferrul?"

Ferrol immediately comforted her. "This is but a small sacrifice for the sake of the family's future. You don't need to sleep with him. Your goal is just to bring him somewhere secluded. Then again, it doesn't even have to be secluded. It'll be good enough as long as there isn't anyone from a secluded family around you."

Eulon then immediately said to Betty, "Don't worry, Betty. I promise that you'll be rewarded handsomely after this is done. We won't let your sacrifice be in vain."

"okay. I'll do it for the family," Betty eventually gave in.

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Hetty thought for a moment and said again, "But his companion is way prettier than me. What if he doesn't fall for this sort of trap? What should I do then? What if he isn't tempted by women? How am I supposed to make him follow me?"

"All men like beautiful women," Ferrol replied after some thought. "It doesn't matter if a man is taken. I'm confident that guy would give in to his temptations as long as you initiate things with him."

Ferrol paused and said, "If he doesn't take the bait, then you can also figure out a way to accuse him of feeling you up. We just need an excuse to take action against him. We wouldn't want Mister Eulon and the elders to arouse suspicion by attacking him for reason"

Betty nodded. "Okay, I understand. When are you going to set this plan in motion?*

Fulon answered, "Tonight, of course! He might just be passing through this raty, and we might probably fail to seize the opportunity if we're too slow."

Ferrol agreed. "That's right. It's best to get this done and over with as quickly as possible to avoid missing out on the opportunity."

After discussing the plan again, the group set off immediately to look for Severin. Since Ferrol and Betty had seen Severin before, they separated into two groups and began to look for Severin as soon as they arrived at the city entrance.

By their estimate, Severin and Sofia would probably be somewhere nearer to the city entrance if they were only passing by and needed a place to rest. The likeliest possibility was that they might get some dinner before finding a place to stay. By narrowing their search down, they were able to come to restaurants near the gate of the city.

As they had predicted, Severin and Sofia were found enjoying dinner at one of the restaurants

“Don’t you think you’ve overordered? How are we going to finish all this food?” Sofia asked when she glanced at all the food on the table. She rolled her eyes at Severin and took a sip of red wine. Despite saying that, she felt extremely happy in her heart because it was her first time having dinner with someone she genuinely liked. The atmosphere there was pretty decent as well. It was rather romantic, and she felt like one of those young couples on a date. From her perspective, Severin had ordered all that food because he wanted to treat her. It showed that he cared about her but was just too embarrassed to

express it.

Severin smiled and said, “You mentioned that the spirit beast meat in this city tastes better, so I ordered a few of their signature dishes for us to try. We don’t usually come to this sort of place anyway, so it’d be such a shame not to give it a try.” He paused briefly before adding, “Besides, I still have a lot of spirit stones left over from the auction, and there’s no point in keeping them anyway. You should enjoy yourself a bit more since you don’t usually go out that often either.”

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Severin sipped his wine and remarked, “The wine here is exquisite, and the spirit beast meat here is delicious too. The texture is just nice.”

“In that case, let’s enjoy our food then I’m glad we chose a good restaurant, Sofia smiled. The restaurant had a very classic feel. There was also a nearby pathway around a lake of lotuses, the fragrance of which was carried by the breeze.

Severin said with a smile, “I still think that spirit beast meat tastes better when barbecued or roasted. It lacks a certain addictive aroma”

When Sofia heard that, she said nonchalantly, “Addictive? That sounds a little exaggerated. How can it be so addictive? The food we’re having right now is already incredibly delicious.”

Severin smiled and said, “It is, but the meat that barbecue has a slight edge over this”

“Does it?” Sofia’s eyes lit up. “I’d like to try it if I have the chance. If it isn’t as good as this restaurant, then I’m going to call you out for talking big.”

Faced with her skepticism, Severin looked at her and said, “It looks to me that you don’t believe in my cooking skills. I’ll have you know that my master taught me a secret spice that can enhance the aroma of

roasted or barbecued meat. Anyone who catches a whiff of it will drool instantly.” He then said to Sofia, “What if I prove to you that my cooking is better than the meat dishes they serve here?”

Sofia thought for a moment but did not know what to gamble for, so she finally came up with a bold idea. “I’ll let you kiss me if you can prove yourself right. But if you can’t, I’ll ask for a third-grade low-level pill from you. How does that sound?”

Severin was speechless. He did not expect Sofia to use a kiss as a bargaining chip to make a bet with him. The whole bet seemed to have gone a little overboard. As he looked at her beautiful face, he realized that she was almost flawless.

When she saw that Severin was stunned silent, Sofia tossed up immediately and her heart began to pound. She instantly regretted making such a bet because it made her seem too nonchalant about such matters,

If Severin said yes, then her move would bring them closer; if he said no, then, she would have to face some measure of embarrassment. The latter scenario might even be some sort of implication that she was not attractive, or that Severin was not interested in making such a bet.

Severin saw that Sofia was somewhat at a loss as she lowered her head to take a sip. Severin then smiled faintly and said, “Wouldn’t it be entirely up to you to say which one tastes better? What if you claim that my cooking isn’t as good as the cooking here just because you wanted the pill? Wouldn’t be on the losing end then?”

Sofia immediately assured him, “Don’t worry. I’ll always follow my conscience.”

Her firm assurance made Severin smile “Okay then. We’ll see if you’ll hold yourself to your

“Deal!” Sofia was ecstatic. Severin had agreed to the bet! Ti wort”

that he was either very determined to win or that he wanted.

[Chapter 1410](#)

“It was through a sliver of fate that we met each other back in that huge forest,” Severin raised his wine glass and said to Sofia “To our fate.”

Sofia did the same and clinked glasses with Severin. “To our fate. If meeting you in the forest was due to a sliver of fate, then meeting you in Riverson is much more than just fate. The world bestowed us with this destiny. We must cherish this and see it through all the way.”

Her cheeks turned red and she finished her glass of red wine right away. Her nervousness was slowly getting the better of her. She picked up from where Severin left off about fate and revealed her true feelings. It was very easy to misconstrue what she had said. She never said something like that before, not that she had the courage to say that anyway.

It was probably the ambiguous atmosphere between them that day—along with the help of some alcohol—that allowed her to muster up the courage.

Severin did not expect Sofia to say something like that either. He could only smile awkwardly and drink his wine.

Ferrol, Eulon, and the elders happened to be passing by. They walked into the restaurant to take a look and spotted Severin dining with Sofia. "There" That's them!"

Eulon was over the moon. He said to Ferrol, "Let's not spook them. I'll tell the second older to bring their group over. We'll find an opportunity to attack once they finish eating and leave."

Ferrol nodded. "Sure. I'll call Betty's group and tell them our location."

Eulon and the others acted natural by getting a table and ordering a few small bites. While they were chatting and eating, they would sneak a peek at Severin from time to time.

"I'm stuffed! I hope I don't go up a size after eating so much." Sofia stood up and did a small stretch. Severin was captivated by her curves.

Severin stood up and footed the bill before leaving

At that moment, Betty and the others had already arrived. Upon seeing Severin leaving the restaurant with Sofia, both groups immediately tailed the two.

Since Severin and Sofia had nothing to do and were not in a hurry to find a place to stay, they planned to take a walk and have

a stroll around the city.

"There aren't many people here, and they seem to be planning a walk in the park. Our opportunity has arrived." Eulon was starting to get a little excited. "Their attainment probably isn't very high, and their young age leads me to believe that they're not warrior emperors. We practically have that flying sword in our bag now!

The great elder took the chance to butter Eulon up. "Hala, allow me to congratulate you in advance then! This treasure will help our family reach glorious brights. We can soon bemme one of the strongest people in Reputab!"

"I still have a long way to go to improve my attainment, and I can't rely on this sword too much. It should be treated as a bonus," Eulon remarked humbly, feeling that the great elder was exaggerating