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# **Kuma Kuma Kuma Bear**

– Bear Bear Bear Kuma –

**- Volume 7 -  
Bear Participates in the Birthday Party**

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**[ Xant & Minions ]**

# Chapter 152

## Bear-san Makes A Shortcake

I had finally completed it. The devil's food.

Using a spoon, I scooped up a bit of this white and soft thing and tasted it.

“So sweet!”

I finally managed to make cream, and making cream meant I could now make shortcake.

I had seen strawberries being sold in the town, and it had made me want to eat shortcake.

Now, after numerous attempts, I finally completed it.

I could even make many different flavours now; all I had to do was just add various things to the cream.

I could make cream puffs and many other cream related sweets.

First things first, though. I baked a sponge cake and added strawberries, covered it all with cream and topped it with more strawberries. My pseudo strawberry shortcake was complete.

Cream might have already existed in this world, but I had never seen any, and now, I managed to make it using my vague memories.

I cut off a slice of the shortcake and ate it.

It wasn't as good as those made by Japanese professionals, but it was delicious enough.

Yep, it was totally worth going through all that trouble to make it.

As I was enjoying my shortcake, I heard someone knock at the door of my Bear House.

Who dared interrupt me when I was finally enjoying a cake after a long time!?

“Big Sis Yuna.”

It was Fina. It was fine, then.

If it had been Cliff or Mylene-san who had interrupted me, I would have sent them away.

“Fina, why are you here?”

“Gold-san should have finished the knife by today, so we should go and retrieve it, right?”

“Oh right, now that you mention it...”

I had just shut myself inside the house the last few days, so...

“You forgot even though it was just a few days ago!?”

She scolded me sharply.

No, today was not a day for retrieving knives; it was the day I finally made cream.

I should be eating my shortcake now.

“Fina, I made something delicious. Want to eat it?”

Since it was finally complete, I had to have Fina taste-test it for me.

“Eat what?”

“I made a cake.”

“A pancake?”

“No, it’s a bit different. It’s a shortcake.”

“Shortcake?”

“A strawberry shortcake, to be precise.”

Fina didn't seem to understand what I was talking about.

It would be faster to just show it to her and make her eat it, then.

I took Fina's hand and dragged her into the house.

"B-Big Sis Yuna!?"

Fina called out in surprise, but I decided not to mind it and dragged her to the room where the shortcake was.

I then made her sit down, cut off a slice of the shortcake and put it in front of her.

I also didn't forget to add a glass of fruit juice.

"So, this is a shortcake?"

"Yep. Eat it and tell me how it is."

"What is this white stuff?"

"It's cream. It's sweet and delicious."

Fina timidly pierced a piece of the cake with the fork and brought it to her mouth.

Was she scared of putting an unknown thing in her mouth?

After eating a mouthful of cake, her expression changed, though.

"It's delicious!"

Fina said and took another mouthful.

"Big Sis Yuna, it's delicious. So sweet and soft."

Fina kept eating it without stopping her hand for a single second. There was even cream around her mouth.

"I'm happy to see that you like it."

The shortcake on Fina's plate disappeared in an instant.

When she was done, I used a handkerchief to wipe the cream around her mouth and put another slice of my shortcake onto her plate.

The cake was too big for me to eat it on my own, after all.

We haven't even eaten half of it yet; I honestly didn't know if the two of us could finish it.

"Big Sis Yuna, is it okay for me to eat more?"

"Yeah, there is still a lot more."

She looked at the cake with a happy smile on her face.

Fina liked it as I had expected; she was a young girl, after all.

She acted as an adult most of the time, but I was happy to see her acting her age from time to time.

After Fina finished her second slice, she showed a satisfied expression.

"Fina, if you think it's good, others will think so as well, right?"

"Big Sis Yuna, will you add it to the menu at your shop?"

"Hmm? I don't plan on doing that for now. I only made it because I wanted to eat it, after all."

"Really?"

Fina seemed dejected.

"What is it?"

"Well, I would be able to eat it anytime if it was on the menu at your shop, but it must be expensive, being this good, right?"

"It's not that expensive. The most expensive ingredient were the eggs, I think? And since eggs are easy to come by these days..."

“Why won’t you sell it at the shop, then?”

“It’s not that I never plan on selling it. I just haven’t considered it yet.”

She was right, though, wasn’t she? If I added it to the menu, I could eat it just by going there and wouldn’t need to make it myself.

I should probably make another cake and present it to Morin-san and the other employees. There were quite a number of them, so I would have to make a lot of shortcake.

Completely forgetting about the mithril knife, Fina and I started to make the cakes together and in a few hours, managed to get a few of them done.

Yep, they all looked delicious. We didn’t just use strawberries as a topping, but other fruits as well.

Now, we just had to bring it to the shop for a taste-test, and if Morin-san and the other employees all liked them, it should be safe to add them to the menu.

Just as I was about to head to the shop, Fina finally remembered the other important thing.

“Big Sis Yuna! We still have to go to Gold-san’s smithy!”

Fina suddenly said with a slight panic in her voice.

I had been so focused on making the cakes that I had completely forgotten about the knife.

So troublesome.

The shortcake was of higher priority than the Black Tiger’s pelt right now.

There was no point in fetching the knife if we weren’t going to dismantle the Black Tiger straight away. Still, I promised Nelt-san that I would come to pick it up today, so there was no helping it.

I suppressed the urge to go directly to the shop and decided to go fetch the knife with Fina.

I put all the shortcakes inside the Bear Box; they wouldn’t spoil or crumble in there.

The Bear Box was really convenient; if I bought enough ingredients, I could just shut myself in if I wanted.

I would get fat if I only ate cake, though, so I had to be careful.

I had been going out a lot since I had come to this world, which also meant a lot of exercise.

How did the exercise work with the Bear Equipment, though?

Did I lose fat while I exercised (battled)?

I didn't put up muscle, though, did I?

My Bear Punches and other quick movements were all thanks to the Bear Suit and not my own strength.

Anyway, I had never gotten fat even if I ate a lot since my body didn't absorb a lot of energy due to my inefficient metabolism.

I did plan on having two big lumps of fat in a few years, though.

While I was imagining myself in a few years time, we arrived at Gold-san's smithy and saw an Iron Golem standing in front of the shop in an imposing manner. It was really cool.

The day after commissioning the knives, I had met with Nelt-san and had talked about the Iron Golem only to learn that she also liked the idea of it standing guard in front of the shop. We hadn't forgotten to add a sword and a shield, of course.

"Is it really okay for us to have it?"

"Yes, I would be happy if you put it on display. When I offered it to Gazar-san, he said that it would only be a hindrance and customers wouldn't come anymore."

"He doesn't understand the greatness of the Iron Golems, it seems. He has a long way to go as a salesman."

She had said while patting the golem. She really loved it.

Also, when I had offered her the golems, she had said that it would act as labor fees for the knives just like Gazar-san had done.

I had said that it was a gift, but Nelt-san had said that she couldn't accept the labor

fees when given such a splendid gift.

I had realized it had been meaningless to push the issue, so I had decided to just accept it.

I looked at the Iron Golem once more before entering the shop, which was tended to by Nelt-san this time around.

“Welcome. I have been waiting for you.”

“Sorry for coming this late.”

“It’s okay. You already paid, after all. Coming late doesn’t matter much after you paid.”

She said and gave Fina the knife.

“How is it?”

Fina tightly gripped the knife and looked at the blade.

“It’s beautiful and easy to hold.”

Fina looked at the knife with a smile on her face.

Fina... had become a bit dangerous.

“Thank you, Big Sis Yuna.”

Well, she was happy and that made making the knife for her totally worth it.

“I will have you dismantle a lot of things in return, Fina.”

“I will do my best.”

Fina put the knife back inside its sheath and placed it into her item bag.

“It will take four more days to make the other knife.”

“We’re not in a hurry, so you can take your time.”

“It will still be ready in four days. If I don’t make Gold work, he will just keep sleeping.”

“Okay then, but no need to rush him.”

“If the knife gets dull, you can come anytime, okay?”

We thanked Nelt-san and left the shop.

Well then, should we go back and eat one of the cakes we had made?

Huh? The Black Tiger’s dismantling?

We could do that anytime.

Also, I wasn’t such a bad person to leave Fina to dismantling while I ate cake on my own.

So, when we got back to my house, we both ended up eating more cake.

“Big Sis Yuna, is it okay for me to take some for Shuri?”

“I plan on doing the taste-testing tomorrow, but having Terumi-san eat it in advance wouldn’t be a bad idea.”

I said and cut a slice for both Shuri and Terumi-san before giving them to Fina.

“I want to hear Terumi-san’s opinion tomorrow, so please tell her to come over when she has time.”

I asked Fina, and then we ate what was left of the cake.

# Chapter 153

## Bear-san And The Cake Taste-Test, Part 1

The [Bear-san's Relaxing Shop] was closed the next day, so it was the perfect opportunity to have a taste-test there.

Morin-san and Karin-san were already at the shop while Fina went to the orphanage to get the children, and since we didn't have enough cake for all of them, she would only bring the ones working here.

When I got to the shop, Fina and the children were already there.

There were also some people I hadn't invited.

"Mylene-san, Elena-san, why are you here?"

Somehow, it seemed as if the two adults had come here with the children...

"Why, you ask...? We saw the children going here, so we talked to them and learned that we could taste your new recipe, Yuna-chan."

So, they came along because of that, huh.

I looked at Fina, and she seemed troubled.

"Should I have not invited them?"

"No, it's okay. We need someone to do the poison-test, after all."

I couldn't really blame it on Fina.

"Yuna-chan, it isn't nice to call us your poison testers..."

Mylene-san said, but I ignored her.

"How did you even meet the children? There is nothing between the orphanage and

the shop, right?”

“A woman’s intuition.”

“Haa... And Elena-san?”

It would be meaningless to keep talking to such an useless person.

“I saw Fina-chan when I went to get the eggs for the inn. If I’m bothering you, I will head back.”

“You aren’t a bother, Elena-san.”

“When you say it like that, it feels as if I really am bothering you, though.”

Again with the persecution complex...

“Terumi-san couldn’t come, Fina?”

I had only noticed now that Terumi-san wasn’t here.

I had wanted her to come too, since if I were to add it to the menu, I had to talk to her about the ingredient costs and selling price, plus some other things.

I really wanted Terumi-san to take care of all these troublesome things for me...

Well, I could talk to her at a later time, so her not being here now wasn’t a real problem.

“She would be a bit late, she said.”

“Really!?”

“Somehow, that reaction is completely different from the one you had with me...”

“That’s not true at all. I’m happy that you came, Mylene-san. What about your actual job, though?”

“Yuna-chan, you meanie.”

I believed Mylene-san was fundamentally a good person, who did her job well, but she

also brought trouble with her many times. She really enjoyed sticking her nose into troublesome things. Seeing her dealing with them was fun, but being dragged into them wasn't.

Anyway, we all entered the shop and called out to Morin-san and Karin-san.

"What are you guys doing here?"

"I made a new cake called shortcake, so I wanted all of you to try it, if you don't mind."

"A new cake? Of course, I want to try it. Your new recipes are always good, Yuna-chan, which is also good for my shop."

We sat down in the dining area while Morin-san and Karin-san went to retrieve plates, forks, and a few drinks.

The children, Mylene-san, and Elena-san all waited for them happily.

I took time to cut the cakes into slices while Morin-san and Karin-san put them on plates.

I had many different flavors, so I made sure to divide them equally.

"There are many different flavors; I would be happy if you tried them all."

I said that, but the only thing that was different were the fruits used.

Well, even though it was just the fruits, the taste was completely different.

I proceeded to distribute the cakes to everyone at the table.

"Yuna-chan, what is this white thing?"

"That's the main innovation of the day: whipped cream. It goes great with the fruits and the cake. Please try it."

They didn't waste any time grabbing their forks to eat their cakes.

"What is this?! This fluffiness..."

“It’s delicious!”

“Both strawberries and cream are delicious.”

Everyone found it delicious.

“Yuna-chan, will you be adding this to the menu?”

Morin-san asked while still eating her cake.

“I was planning to, but do you think it will sell?”

“It should sell based on how it tastes, but it still depends on the cost of ingredients and how much we sell it for.”

“It shouldn’t be too expensive since the ingredients can be obtained easily.”

“So, somewhat like pudding? You sure you’re willing to share the recipe with us again?”

“I see no point in hiding it; if I hadn’t planned on putting it on the menu, I wouldn’t have held this taste-tasting party.”

If I didn’t add it to the menu, I wouldn’t be able to eat it anytime I wanted. It would be really troublesome if I had to make it myself everytime. Well, I could just make a lot of them and put them inside the Bear Box, but that would also be a pain.

“Great. Please show me how to make it later when I have some spare time, then.”

Morin-san seemed to have entered her cook mode and was already doing some calculations.

“Yuna-chan, wh-what is this?”

Mylene-san said, her fork trembling in her hand, but that didn’t stop her from eating quickly.

“As I told you before, these are shortcakes. You can change their flavor just by putting different fruits inside. I love the strawberry ones the most, though.”

Hmm, I should stock up on strawberries, so I could eat them whenever I wanted.

Thank you very much, Bear Box-sama.

“I was already wondering this when you made pudding, but what in the world are you, Yuna-chan?”

“You ask me what I am... I don’t know how to respond to that...”

I came from another world. There was no way I could tell them that.

“I’m an adventurer, more or less.”

“There are no adventurers with clothes like yours.”

Mylene-san said and poked my stomach.

Could you please not do that?

It made me feel as if she was poking a fat belly.

My stomach wasn’t as big as the costume made it seem like, you know.

I wasn’t lying, okay?

“Not talking about the fact that you’re strong, cute, strange, and you can make delicious things like pudding. There are no other adventurers like you.”

Well, it was all thanks to the Bear (Cheat), after all.

“I agree. Thanks to Yuna-chan, I can now make many new varieties of bread; her innovations are just incredible.”

Morin-san praised me as well.

“So, when will you start selling it?”

“That depends on Morin-san and Terumi-san, I guess? We have to discuss the price, and I’m not sure if Morin-san will have the time to make them everyday.”

“You’re right. We are already tight on time as it is.”

There were now even more different breads than when we had opened the shop.

Well, the main reason was probably me telling Morin-san “I want to eat a bread like that, and also a bread like this.” every now and then. She kept adding those new breads to the menu, which brought us to the current problem of being low on preparation time.

“Also, tell me which cakes did you like best, so we can decide which ones we would put on the menu when the time comes.”

“We won’t be selling them all?”

I shook my head at Morin-san’s question.

She was already busy enough preparing bread every day; with the time cakes took to prepare, there was no way she could make it in time for the opening hours.

So, without enough time, making all these different cake flavors was impossible.

Well, we might make do if we added more employees, but I would have to talk with Terumi-san and Headmistress about that first.

“Yu-Yuna-san! Please let me work here!”

“Elena-san?”

“I will work hard and won’t reveal the recipes to others, so please hire me!”

Elena-san said and bowed.

“What has gotten into you, Elena-san?”

“For a long time now, I have been thinking I want to do a job that is worth living for.”

“Your help is more than welcome, but what about the inn? Wouldn’t it be difficult for your parents to manage it on their own?”

“They will be fine.”

“They will be fine, you say... They would be troubled if you suddenly left, right?”

“You see, my uncle came not long ago, and now, I don’t really have to work at the inn anymore.”

Elena-san proceeded to explain that her father’s older brother and his wife had come here since their job at their hometown had become unprofitable.

With all the people that came from Mireera, more and more people stayed at the inn, so her father welcomed their help, and they now ran the inn together.

“If you get more guests now, doesn’t that mean you also have more work to do, Elena-san?”

“My uncle and his wife are hard workers, and they are indebted to my father for letting them work here; they took all of my workload.”

“And what about your job of relaxing at the counter?”

“Yuna-san...”

She started to stare at me.

“I’m joking.”

“That job is taken care of by my grandmother.”

She wasn’t denying it. Also, about her grandmother...

“She lived with my uncle and his wife and came here with them. She now takes care of guiding the clients to their tables and other reception tasks.”

Elena-san could work here immediately, and that would help us a lot, so wasn’t it okay?

“So, because of that, I want to have something to do.”

“It’s busy here, you know.”

“It’s better than having no work to do. All I do at home is go shopping from time to time, and even that, my uncle and his wife do most of the time.”

Elena-san seemed a bit sad when she said that.

“I’m okay with it for now, but you have to get your parents’ permission to do it.”

“Yuna-san, thank you!”

Elena-san bowed again.

“By the way, are you a good cook?”

I asked, just in case.

“I help at the inn from time to time, so I can do it pretty well.”

“She can also serve customers.”

“Well then, I will go ask for permission at once.”

“If your parents disagree and you leave anyway, I won’t hire you, okay?”

“Okay!”

Elena-san stood up and rushed out of the shop.

She didn’t really have to hurry that much... Well, she had good parents. I wouldn’t let them split up if they didn’t agree with her working here.

They were way different than mine, after all.

Soon after Elena-san left, Terumi-san and Shuri entered through the same door.

“Elena-san just ran out of the shop. Did something happen?”

# Chapter 154

## Bear-san And The Cake Taste-Test, Part 2

Terumi-san and Shuri had just arrived, passing by Elena-san on her way out.

“Elena-san went back to the inn to ask for permission to work here.”

“Elena-chan will start working here?”

“She said she wanted to, but since her family runs an inn, I decided to make her get her parents’ approval.”

“I see. Well, leaving that aside for now, what was the thing you made me eat yesterday? It was really delicious...”

“A cake.”

“But, it’s different from pancakes, right?”

“Well, it’s like a distant relative.”

“A distant relative, you say... So, does this mean that I will have to stock up on the ingredients and decide on the selling price again?”

“Yep, I’m counting on you.”

I knew Terumi-san would figure it out by herself.

Well, I had asked her to do it for me numerous times, so it made sense...

“I can’t refuse when you make me eat something so delicious, after all.”

“Sis Yuna?”

Shuri said while tugging on my Bear Suit.

“What is it?”

“I want to eat it.”

“Okay, no problem. Please eat it too, Terumi-san. I have many different flavours, so please tell me which ones are your favourites.”

I cut two more portions and gave them to Terumi-san and Shuri.

“Oh right, Yuna-chan, why did Fina bring us only two portions? Gentz was really sad, you know?”

“...Gentz-san?”

Oh, I had forgotten about him.

When I thought about cake, I never considered men might like it too.

“Well, it’s really sweet, so I thought that Gentz might not like it...”

“*Really?* I gave him half of mine, and he seemed to enjoy it very much, you know.”

An old man eating cake...

No, it wasn’t good to judge people by their appearance.

Also, I had seen old men eating cake before...

I had trouble with being judged by my appearance as well, so old men were free to eat and wear whatever they wanted.

“I will prepare his share, so please take it to him. Also, could you ask him which one he liked the most?”

“I will make sure to ask him.”

Hmm, maybe I should make a cake with less sugar that would suit the tastes of men.

I would need more of them to taste it, then.

Cliff, the guild master of the Adventurer’s Guild, Gill, and Gold-san. Would those four do? Ah, right, I forgot Blitz again.

Meh, I would think more about this later.

“Yum, it’s as delicious as yesterday. I can’t stop eating it.”

“It’s yummy, Sis Yuna.”

Terumi-san and Shuri both liked the cake as well, it seemed; they ate it with smiles on their faces.

Still, the speed at which Terumi-san moved her fork was beyond quick.

“You will get fat if you eat too much of it, you know.”

The moment I said that... a crack appeared in the world. I could almost hear it.

I looked up and saw the women, their hands now still and their faces grimacing as if they had just seen hell.

On the other side, the children were still stuffing their faces with angelic smiles on their faces.

I had created a perfect rift.

“Yuna-chan... The cake can make us fat?”

Mylene-san asked carefully.

“Yep, your stomach will become all cute and chubby.”

“You’re joking, right?”

She asked now trying to smile.

“You think I’m joking?”

“...”

Mylene-san gulped.

“I’m not joking, but it’s fine as long as you don’t eat too much.”

“I knew it!”

Mylene-san said and reached for another bite.

“Still, I think that six slices are quite a lot, you know.”

“Yuna-chan!”

Mylene-san cried out.

Yep, six slices were just too much.

“Yuna-san, are three slices okay?”

“Well, three should be fine if you don’t eat it every day.”

Karin-san seemed relieved.

“Shuri, ahhh...”

Terumi-san was trying to make Shuri eat her share too now.

“But Terumi-san, you haven’t eaten yet, right? I still want to hear which one you like the most.”

“I don’t want to become fat.”

“You won’t get fat so easily, you know.”

“Yuna-chan. It’s fine when you’re young, but when you become older, you can’t be that careless.”

She said with a soft voice and a serious face.

“Still, could you please taste them properly?”

I replied with a smile; I would be troubled if she didn't taste them, after all.

Terumi-san reluctantly started to eat again.

"Ugh... it's even harder to stop eating it since it's so delicious."

She complained with her fork in her mouth.

"Mom, you aren't fat, so there is no problem."

A certain someone said to comfort her.

Well, it seemed that everyone liked the cakes.

There was no other problem other than the fact that it could make us fat.

Well, it was okay as long as we didn't overeat it. Honestly, anything could make you fat if you ate too much of it. Hmm, cake did that quicker, though... Was a low calorie cake necessary? I might have to consider making one with less sugar.

When all the plates were cleaned out, Morin-san stood up.

"Well then, I want to try making it, so do you mind showing me?"

Morin-san said vigorously; she wanted to try making the cake immediately.

I didn't mind, so Morin-san and Karin-san ended up helping me, while Terumi-san and the children just watched.

As I had expected from Morin-san, who was an experienced baker, she followed my recipe and made a strawberry cake without a problem.

However...

"It won't be possible to add it to the menu; we don't have enough time as it is, after all."

"Even if we get more helping hands?"

"Maybe, but it would be hard to teach and oversee them all..."

Karin-san seemed to be of the same opinion as her mother. Elena-san's help was absolutely necessary, then.

We proceeded to eat the cake Morin-san and Karin-san made.

"Yep, it's delicious."

As expected from Morin-san, the taste was perfect.

"It's all thanks to your instructions, Yuna-chan. As a fellow baker, I can tell that you are just incredible, being able to invent such a recipe."

Sorry, but I hadn't invented it. It was just food from another world.

"Anyway, we should put off adding it to the menu for now, right?"

"Yeah, it's a pity, though."

Morin-san agreed with me.

"You really won't sell it!?"

Mylene-san cried out.

"We don't have enough employees to make it, after all."

"I will lend you some people from the Commerce Guild, then."

"It's not like I don't trust you, Mylene-san, but having people I don't know here is..."

I didn't really care if any information got out, but I just wouldn't feel comfortable having strangers work for me.

"Well, if we get Elena-san to help us, we might be able to leave it to her."

"Yeah, but her parents run an inn, so..."

It probably wouldn't happen. Their only daughter? She would most likely get married and succeed the inn.

"Well, I will check the prices of the ingredients, so we can add it to the menu anytime we want."

Terumi-san interjected.

Not a moment later, Elena-san rushed back into the shop.

"Elena-san, what happened? Why are you so out of breath?"

She hadn't had a fight with her parents, right?

"Yuna-san, they are just cruel!"

Elena-san said and hugged me.

I would prefer if you didn't bury your face into my stomach, you know.

"Can you please explain what happened?"

I said and forcibly pulled Elena-san off me.

"So, why are they cruel?"

"They said that I'm a scatterbrain and often cause trouble..."

"So, that means it's a no go?"

"No, I managed to persuade them, but they said that they will come here to make sure I'm not just causing you trouble, Yuna-san..."

So, it would be something like the Parents' Day?

Hmm, it should be called business inspection in this case, right? They would come to see if their child was doing her job properly, after all.

Wait, did that mean I was the one who had the role of a mentor here?

On Parents' Day, the parents would have a talk with the teacher, but in this case, they would just come to see if Elena-san was doing her job well, so it had nothing to do with me, right?

When they came, I could just leave it to Morin-san.

Yeah, if this were a school, I would have the role of the principal, and Morin-san would be the teacher.

"Morin-san, is it okay if I leave dealing with her parents to you when they come?"

I asked my shop manager.

"I don't mind as long as they don't become a hindrance."

Morin-san accepted my proposal.

"Yuna-san, Morin-san, thank you very much."

Elena-san thanked us and bowed.

Well, now we just had to show Elena-san's parents that she wasn't causing trouble here...

The next day, even though I thought that the inn should have been busy, Elena-san's parents came to thank me.

"If she ever causes you any trouble, you can shoo her out whenever you want, okay?"

"If she ever skips work, I don't mind if you kick her butt hard, okay?"

For her parents to say something like that, was Elena-san a bad worker?

When I had been staying at the inn, I had seen her taking breaks at the counter, but she had been properly working when it had been time to serve meals.

Elena-san's parents left soon after, saying that they would come around to see how she

was doing again later.

# Chapter 155

## Bear-san Makes Preparations To Open A Pastry Shop

With Elena-san's parents giving her their questionable approval, she would now start working at my shop.

First things first, though, I had her learn how to make cake, and after three days...

"Yuna-san, I can't do it anymore..."

"Keep it up, please."

"My arms hurt! I give up..."

"You stopped moving your hands, you know."

"Morin-san! Yuna-san is bullying me!"

"Do it properly, or I will kick you out."

"Ugh, okay..."

Elena-san finally started beating eggs again after Morin-san's threat.

What would Elena-san's parents think if they saw her like this?

The image of a crying Elena-san being dragged home crossed my mind.

Well, cooking was tiring, difficult work.

I almost never had to do it, so I didn't really mind, but beating a lot of eggs eventually tired your arms out.

Hmm, I wore a Bear Suit, so I wouldn't tire just from that, right?

"Elena-san, here, use this."

I said and took a pseudo hand mixer out of the Bear Box.

“What is this, Yuna-san?”

“I guess we could call it a magic mixing tool. It will make beating eggs much easier.”

Gold-san had made it for me. There was a magic stone in the grip, making the tool rotate by pouring magic power into it.

I had it made for the children who would be helping Elena-san, though...

Elena-san didn't waste time and took it before I even explained how it worked.

“If you had something so useful, why didn't you give it to me from the beginning...?”

Elena-san said while happily using it. If her parents were to look at her now, they would probably think she was doing her job properly.

I took out some more of the hand mixers and gave them to the children.

It took time to teach them, so a lot of cakes were made in the process. The children took them to the orphanage with the excuse of taste-testing them. All the children liked them, even though they were made by trainees. If they could just make the cakes a bit quicker, the problem of not having enough preparation time would go away, right?

“Yuna-chan, can I talk to you for a minute?”

Morin-san spoke to me, just as I was thinking it was about time to leave Elena-san's training to her.

“Yes?”

“Are you sure about adding the cakes to the menu?”

“Yeah, I was planning on doing so. You think it isn't a good idea?”

“Well, I think the shop has a lot of traffic as it is.”

“And?”

“The place is getting crowded every day, and with these delicious cakes...”

“Hmm... Do I really have to make another shop, then?”

If I made it at a different location, nobody would be able to oversee Elena-san, though...

“You don’t like the idea? I was sure that you would make one anyway, Yuna-chan.”

“If I had two of you, Morin-san, I would have no problem with it, but...”

I glanced at Elena-san, who was in the middle of making a cake.

Well, Elena-san was diligent, most of the time. She did what had to be done. Yet, from time to time, she would say things like [I’m tired...] or [My arms hurt...].

It wasn’t as bad as her parents had told me it would be, but there were times when we had to kick her butt a bit. I was planning on leaving that role to Morin-san, of course, but if I made a new shop at a different location, there wouldn’t be anyone to kick Elena-san’s butt when she was feeling lazy.

Also, I would like to sell all the snacks like cakes, cookies, pudding, and potato chips at the same place.

If we were to sell them at both shops, we would only double the effort, plus it would only trouble the customers.

So, should I just add another building to this shop?

I could make it next to the shop and link the two kitchens, maybe?

“Yuna-chan, how about using the second floor, then?”

“The second floor? Aren’t you and your daughter using it?”

“There is a dormitory, right? I went there to give greetings once. We could just live over there, right?”

“The rooms there aren’t as big as here, you know.”

“The rooms here are too big for us anyway.”

“Yeah, I think so too.”

Karin-san interjected and nodded in agreement.

“You sure? I could also make a new house for you two.”

“Thank you, but the dormitory will be just fine. It’s close to the orphanage, so it will be easier to teach the children how to cook this way.”

From time to time, Morin-san taught the children how to cook after closing the shop. Yeah, living at the dormitory wasn’t a bad idea at all.

I decided to go with Morin-san’s idea and turn the second floor into a pastry shop. In order to remodel the shop, we decided to close the shop for a week, starting with the next week’s day off.

I didn’t forget to make an announcement about it to avoid causing trouble for the customers, of course.

We also decided that, during that week, Elena-san and the children helping her would keep practicing at the dormitory’s kitchen while Morin-san and Karin-san would use the time to move.

I took out the home furnishing from the second floor and demolished the walls while making sure to keep some pillars to carry the weight. It looked like one wide floor when I was finished.

Since there was no third floor, the attic would be used for storage.

I didn’t forget to make stairs to the kitchen on the first floor for easy access. I then made a kitchen on the second floor by the staircase; having the kitchens connected like this meant that I could have Morin-san supervise Elena-san.

After I was done, I asked Mylene-san and Terumi-san to furnish the kitchen; Mylene-san managed to get all we needed, even on such a short notice. Well, that much could probably be expected from someone with the power of a Commerce Guild’s master.

She deserved a one-week-all-you-can-eat ticket for this, right?

It would just be Mylene-san who would get fat from eating too much, anyway.

Anyhow, after doing the basic reconstruction of the shop, I left everything else to Terumi-san; being able to rely on her when I didn't know what to do was really convenient.

I decided to head to the Adventurer's Guild to ask Rurina-san and Gil to do some bodyguard work for me; I wanted to reduce the trouble this remodeling would cause. As for their payment, it was free food, of course.

I also didn't forget to go and retrieve Shuri's knife from Gold-san's smithy. Gazar-san should have finished my knives by now as well, but I didn't really need them at the moment, so I didn't go to the capital to fetch them yet. There was another place I had to go right now: the home of a person who could cause trouble during the reopening of the shop. So... I went to Noa's mansion to deal with it before it happened.

"Yuna-san, it has been a while. What brings you here?"

Noa asked me after I was taken to her room by her maid, Lala-san.

"I came because I wanted you to try my new dessert."

"New dessert!?"

"It's a new recipe I'm planning on adding to the shop's menu."

"Is it delicious like pudding!?"

Noa said with a sparkle in her eyes.

"It tastes a bit different, but I think you will like it."

I said just as there was a knock at the door.

"Excuse me."

Lala-san said while entering with drinks.

"Would you mind trying it too, Lala-san?"

“Me?”

“The more people giving me feedback the better.”

“But, you see, I’m working, so...”

“Lala-san, let’s eat together!”

“But, you see, Noire-sama...”

“It’s okay!”

Noa tugged on Lala-san’s hand and made her sit down.

I took out three different cakes and cut two small slices from each of them; Mylene-san was the only one who could eat three normal-sized slices without remorse.

“Well then, please tell me if you like them.”

I said and took a sip of the black tea Lala-san had brought.

I didn’t eat the cake, or rather, I didn’t want to see it for a while.

Just looking at it made my stomach hurt. Cake was good once in a while, but it was just too much eating it everyday.

“Delicious!”

“Yeah, it tastes great, Yuna-sama.”

“I will be adding it to the menu, so I hope you will come and eat it from time to time.”

“I will come to buy it for sure.”

“Are the sweetness and the texture good?”

“Yes, they are.”

“It makes you thirsty, though.”

She was right.

What drinks did we sell at our shop again?

I always tried new breads, but never cared much for drinks.

“By the way, Lala-san, is this black tea expensive?”

I asked her about the tea I was drinking.

“Yes, it’s the highest grade of black tea. It’s for guests with whom we must show the utmost courtesy to.”

“You’re joking, right?”

“Fufu, am I?”

Lala-san glossed over it with a laugh.

“Well, is it possible to buy it, then? It’s okay even if it’s not of the best quality. On the contrary, it would be easier to add it to the menu if it was cheaper.”

“Cheap black tea doesn’t taste that good, you know.”

“I guess I will have to try it first, then.”

It would have been great if I could just add this good black tea to the menu.

“Yuna-sama, there are also special techniques to pouring tea. It wouldn’t taste good if an amateur were to pour it.”

Hadn’t I seen that during TV intermissions before? There had been many things they had to keep in mind. Things like the water temperature and the amount of tea leaves. Black tea didn’t just use tea packs, after all.

Considering all that, it might be difficult to just add it to the menu.

While I was still wondering what to do, a certain someone entered without knocking.

“Cliff-sama!”

Lala-san quickly stood up and bowed.

“I’m really sorry for my behaviour.”

“I asked Lala-san to try my food, so don’t get angry at her.”

“I won’t get angry for such a little thing. Well, it might be different in Rondo’s, our butler’s, case, though. So, what are you eating?”

He asked while glancing at the leftover cake on the table.

“Something that I will be adding to the shop’s menu.”

“Is it good?”

“It’s delicious.”

“Yes, it was sweet and really delicious.”

Noa and Lala-san both answered.

“If you’re okay with sweet stuff, do you want some?”

“Yes, please.”

When Cliff sat down, Lala-san poured him some tea. She did it so elegantly that it seemed as if she didn’t waste a single movement (from an amateur’s point of view, at least).

“It’s good.”

“It isn’t too sweet? I was thinking of making a less sweet version in the future.”

“It’s not too sweet.”

“Well, I wanted to add in some black tea for the patrons to rinse their mouths since it’s sweet, but Lala-san told me that it’s expensive and difficult to make.”

“You want to serve black tea?”

“Yeah, I would like to serve cheap black tea that still tastes good.”

“That’s a bit unrealistic, you know.”

“Well, it’s meant for all the common folk that come to my shop.”

“Maybe you could make it a thing for rich people only since it is this good?”

“The pleasure of eating delicious things should be shared by everyone. It’s more delicious to eat it with others, after all.”

A veteran Hikikomori was saying it, so that really meant something.

“If you went to buy cake and bought it just for yourself since it was too expensive... do you think you would enjoy it without Noa eating it next to you?”

Cliff only took a second to think before shooting out an answer.

“I wouldn’t. I would say that I don’t need any and make my daughter eat it.”

“But, that would make Noa feel bad, wouldn’t it?”

“Ah, you’re right. I see what you’re trying to tell me.”

I looked at Cliff, somewhat impressed.

“What’s with that face?”

“I was just thinking how weird it was for you to give me a proper answer. I thought you would just say something like, ‘I have enough money, so I would buy enough for both.’”

“Don’t treat me like an idiot. I can at least understand the basis of your question and what you wanted to tell me with it. I will introduce you to the person who procures the tea for us. I can vouch for the taste, but you will have to negotiate the price on your own.”

“Wouldn’t it be better for you to talk with them to get me a good price?”

“I can try, but don’t expect too much. I’m not that good of a negotiator, after all.”

“Thank you.”

I thanked him and went straight in for another request.

“Can I ask you for one more thing?”

“What is it?”

“Would you mind if Lala-san gave some lessons on how to pour tea?”

“Me!?”

“Even if the tea leaves are of high quality, the taste can change depending on how you pour it, right? I was hoping you could teach my employees how to pour the black tea.”

“Lala, huh. It’s true that the tea Lala pours is delicious...”

“Cliff-sama...”

Lala-san seemed to be deeply moved by Cliff’s words.

“Okay, I’m fine with it.”

“It’s strange for me to ask this as the one who put out the request, but won’t it interfere with her working here? I don’t want to do the terrible thing of increasing her workload and taking her free time?”

“I leave those matter to my butler, Rondo, so there should be no problem.”

“Okay, sounds good, then. I will be counting on you, Lala-san.”

“Okay, I will make sure to properly teach them the right way to pour black tea.”

I came here to ask them for a taste-test but ended up getting really lucky and obtained the tea.

After talking about it for a while longer, we decided that Lala-san would come to the shop in a few days and show my employees the right way to pour tea.

# Chapter 156

## Bear-san Opens The Pastry Shop

Reconstruction of the shop's interior design was now finished. The furniture had been purchased, and the reopening day was steadily approaching. All that was left to do was for Lala-san to teach my employees how to pour tea.

Everyone gathered for this opportunity. Elena-san, Morin-san, Karin-san, and all of the children who worked at [Bear-san's Relaxing Shop]. For some reason, Terumi-san and Fina, who had no reason to be here, also participated.

"Why are you two here?"

I asked them.

"Nothing wrong with learning it, right?"

"Yeah, it might turn out to be useful in the future."

They told me.

When Lala-san arrived and started teaching, everyone listened seriously and some even took notes. They all did their best to learn how to pour tea.

Also, thanks to Cliff and Mylene-san, I had managed to procure medium quality tea leaves at a cheap price. Well, this much should be expected when the feudal lord and the guild master came together.

Mylene-san took care of some other matters concerning the shop as well, and since I didn't want to be in her debt, maybe I should offer her a one-month-free-cake ticket? I was sure she would accept it.

Hmm, in that case, should I prepare a scale to measure how much weight she gained?

As for Cliff, he was already in my debt, so there was no problem in doing nothing for him, right?

Anyway, back to the tea and cakes. Thanks to Morin-san kicking her butt, Elena-san managed to improve her cake-making skills. The children who helped make the cakes improved considerably too, of course, and thanks to Lala-san, they now knew the proper way to pour tea.

They weren't as good as Lala-san, of course, but their tea was delicious enough.

Soon, only one day remained until the reopening, which meant that Elena-san and the children in charge of helping to make the cakes were already preparing for their first day. Interrupting their hard work, Mylene-san entered the shop.

"It was made just in time."

Mylene-san said, holding something in her hands.

It was *that*, right?

Mylene-san approached Elena-san, who sensed danger and drew back.

"Mylene-san, is that possibly..."

"Elena-chan's uniform!"

Mylene-san unfolded the fur in her hands, and a Bear Uniform appeared.

"I have to wear it too!?"

"But of course. I had it made for you, after all."

Mylene-san said while approaching Elena-san again.

"I also wear it when I work, you know. It wouldn't be fair if you weren't wearing it, Elena-san."

Karin-san interjected, obviously overjoyed to have made a companion.

"But, I won't be working with the customers..."

“You will also serve after you finish making cakes, you know.”

“Yuna-san!?”

“If nothing major happens, the cakes made in advance will last for a while, so you will have spare time to serve the customers.”

“You’re joking, right?”

When I shook my head, Elena-san tried to flee, but there was no way she could escape an adventurer like me.

Thanks to the explosive power of the Bear’s Feet, I jumped past Elena-san and caught her without a problem.

“Yuna-san...”

I delivered a pitiful Elena-san back to Mylene-san, who dragged her into the changing room. People who worked here had to wear uniforms; it was that simple.

The children followed Elena-san and Mylene-san into the changing room, and after a few minutes, an embarrassed Elena-san and the newly employed children came out wearing Bear Uniforms.

There was nothing to be so embarrassed about... I walked around in this world wearing a costume, even though it wasn’t a uniform, you know.

Also, I was sure I was the only one who did something like that after coming to a different world. I had never seen it in mangas, animes, or novels, after all!

“Yuna-san, it’s embarrassing...”

“Are you trying to say that my clothes are embarrassing?”

They were embarrassing, though.

“No, I didn’t mean it like that! It changes with the person wearing it! Yuna-san, you’re cute, so it’s okay! But, I am...”

“You’re cute too, Elena-san.”

“Ugh, Morin-san isn’t wearing it, so I thought that these uniforms were only for the children...”

Elena-san said while glancing the children, who seemed very happy in their Bear Uniforms.

Also, I wasn’t the one who had proposed this uniform; it was the person smiling next to me.

“Make sure to wear it to work tomorrow, okay?”

“Ugh...”

Elena-san let out in response and dropped her head.

Finally, the day of the reopening came. At first, the number of customers seemed to be normal, most of them coming for Morin-san’s breads.

Still, it didn’t take long for them to notice that the second floor was now remodeled into the [Bear-san’s Relaxing Shop’s Pastry Shop].

I also posted some flyers at the entrance of the shop and around the tables at the first floor. Well, it wasn’t as much of posting rather than making the bear statues hold the fliers, though.

The customers who went to the second floor were met by an employee running a sampling stand right next to the stairs, where they could taste bite-sized pieces of our cakes.

The reason we had set it on the second floor was so that it wouldn’t steal Morin-san’s customers away.

Anyway, the customers who tasted the cakes were assaulting the girl who was in charge of the stand with questions, and like all of the children who had been eating the cakes for a week now, she was able to answer all their questions, which mostly concerned what fruits were used and how sweet the cakes were.

She didn’t forget to recommend our drinks as well, of course. We still served the ones from before, like fruit juice and milk, but now we also served black tea, just the way Lala-san had taught us.

The girl also recommended salty foods like potato chips.

Cake and potato chips were the best possible combination to eat together.

Hmm, they were also the best combination to make people fat...

Well, we got money only if the customers ate our food. Maybe if I just posted a warning not to eat too much?

Meh, I should deal with that when we get more people who ate cake like Mylene-san.

Anyway, after the customers barraged the stand's girl, they all rushed to the second floor's counter and ordered some more cake.

Even though we didn't advertise it in advance, the cake completely sold out.

Still, we didn't make any more for today but rather focused on tomorrow's share.

It would probably be a good idea to make a few more than we had done for today, right?

"Yuna-san, I can't do it anymore..."

"Do your best, please."

"But, I can't move at all..."

Elena-san whined, collapsed on a chair, and laid her face on the table.

"The children can see you, you know."

"Ugh."

Elena-san raised her head to see that they really were looking at her.

"Go on. Do your best!"

"Ugh, fine. Well then, shall we prepare for tomorrow?"

The children all happily agreed.

“Yuna-san, it’s really nice be young, huh.”

Elena-san commented on the enthusiasm of the children.

“Elena-san, aren’t you still in your teens?”

“I feel old, though...”

“If you’re old, what does that make me?”

“Morin-san!?”

Morin-san came to check on us from downstairs and was now giving Elena-san a slight glare. Was it because of what Elena-san said about her age?

“No! Morin-san, you’re young! There is no way you could be considered old.”

Elena-san did her best to retract her statement.

“If I’m young, that means you are still young too, right?”

“Yes. I will do my best!”

When confronted like that by Morin-san, she had no other choice but to get back to work with the same enthusiasm the children had.

Morin-san smiled seeing her like this.

“So, why are you here?”

“Well, Karin acted just like this when she was a bit younger. She would ditch her work often and scolding her in such a way always worked.”

“Yeah, I remember you telling me something about that before.”

“Anyway, when you’re young, of course you want to play and fool around. Honestly, I think that the children from the orphanage are too diligent in that regard.”

True. In Japan, children of their age just went to school and played around.

“Headmistress told me that they do their best since they know what it is like not being able to eat.”

“There is that, and also the fact that they want to be of help to a certain someone.”

This time, Morin-san gave me a smile of a profound meaning then went to kick Elena-san’s butt again.

On the second day, a short line appeared in front of the shop from all the people spreading word, however, thanks to Rurina-san and Gil, the day went smoothly.

On the third day, the number of customers increased again, some coming for the first time and some already for the third. Mostly women, of course.

I was happy that we had so many customers, but it wasn’t good to eat cake everyday.

I would really have to put up a big poster warning them not to eat too much by tomorrow.

Since I wanted it to be easy to understand, I decided to draw a woman becoming fat from eating too much.

I only wanted to stop the women who were coming in everyday, so I also wrote down that once or twice per week was fine.

I wasn’t sure if it was thanks to my drawing of the fat woman, but the number of customers coming daily decreased, so things were able to calm down a bit at the shop. We were still busy, though.

“Yuna-san, I’m exhausted!”

“Tomorrow is your day off, so you can use that time to rest.”

“I heard that there was a fixed day off here, but is it really okay for me to enjoy it too? There was no day off at the inn, so...”

“Still, there were times when you had no clients, right?”

“There were, but we had to be ready since someone could arrive at anytime.”

“Oh... So, how was your week here? Want to resign yet?”

“Hmm, it’s really busy, and I have to work hard, but I don’t want to quit; seeing people eating things I make and find them delicious makes me happy. Well, it’s all thanks to your recipes, though. It might be difficult, but working with Morin-san and the children is also fun.”

Elena-san said with an happy expression.

# Chapter 157

## Bear-san Goes To Fetch Her Mithril Knives

The pastry shop had more and more customers, but it was smooth sailing thanks to Rurina-san and Gil.

If I really had to point out a problem, it was that the popular cakes disappeared in an instant. More often than not, customers couldn't buy the cakes they wanted since those cakes had already been sold out. We could just call it the customer's fault for coming too late, but I would prefer if they could eat what they wanted, no matter when they came.

"Elena-san, could you please adjust which cakes you make more of, so that we don't run out of the popular ones so quickly?"

"Can I really make that decision?!"

"Yes, of course. You also have popular foods at the inn, don't you?"

"Yes. We make sure to stock up more ingredients for the foods that are ordered a lot. If we ran out of the ingredients, the customers would be dissatisfied. Most would probably just order something else, but some would surely decide to go to a different place, which would end up lowering our profit."

"Well, it's similar with the cakes. You should make more of the popular cakes and less of the others. If you have any questions, you can always talk to Morin-san and Terumi-san. Also, if you end up making too much of one cake, you can just tell the children to take it to the orphanage, where they will be happy to eat it."

Over time, it would become obvious which cakes to make the most of. Even now, we could already guess it by which ones were disappearing first, and which ones were left over in the end.

It would be great if we eventually made just the right number of each cake, and they all sold out right at the closing hour, but that might be a bit too much to hope for. Well, I would be happy if we came close to that goal at least. If we managed that, I could come to the shop to eat any cake at any time.

I decided to leave everything concerning the shop to Morin-san and Elena-san and went to do something I had neglected: fetching the mithril knives from the capital. While I was there, I could also bring some cake to Princess Flora.

Like the last time, I decided to invite Fina, but...

“Ehm, I will pass this time.”

She declined my invitation.

This might be the first time Fina had ever refused me.

What was it, this pain piercing my heart? It was like the disappointing feeling I got when a pet ran away after I approached it.

I felt like crying.

“Big Sis Yuna?”

“Why? Did... Did I do something to make you hate me, Fina?”

“Y-you didn’t! I don’t hate you, Big Sis Yuna!”

“Why don’t you want to come with me, then? Is it because of my clothes?”

Did she finally reach the age where she found it embarrassing to walk around with me in my Bear Clothes?

“Big Sis Yuna, that’s not it, so please calm down.”

Fina reassured me before giving me her real reason, clearly embarrassed.

“I don’t remember what happened after I met King-sama, and if I did something rude...”

Oh right, she had mentioned this before.

“Eleanora-san was with you, and she didn’t say anything about it, so shouldn’t it be

okay?”

“Still, I don’t remember it at all, so...”

“I think that the King wouldn’t mind it anyway, and if he did actually have a problem with it, I will just have to knock him out.”

I said and threw a few Bear Punches into the air.

“You will be arrested if you do something like that, Big Sis Yuna!”

“Don’t worry, I will punch him when nobody is looking.”

“Big Sis Yuna!”

“I’m just joking.”

Well, if he really did something to Fina, it wouldn’t be just a joke anymore.

After talking with Fina for a while longer, I learned that it wasn’t just the king’s fault that she didn’t want to come with me, but also Eleanora-san’s since she had treated Fina like a doll and had dressed her up in beautiful clothes, which had ended up traumatising her.

She couldn’t dirty or rip those high-class clothes... Such thoughts still seemed to bother her young mind.

She would recall those bad memories if she went there, so she wanted to avoid it for a while.

Those clothes really suited Fina, though... Still, I understood her feelings. If I were forced to wear a pretty dress, I would sustain psychological damage as well. I sympathised with Fina because of that and didn’t force her to come.

She promised me that she would accompany me next time, though.

Because Fina didn’t come with me, I had to transfer to the capital all alone this time around.

I had to pass by a lot of people on my way to Gazar-san’s smithy, and if Fina had been with me, she would have diverted my attention from all the stares. Yet, she wasn’t here, so I covered my face with the Bear Hoodie and scurried to the smithy.

“Excuse me!”

I shouted when I entered, and soon, Gazar-san showed up from the back.

“You finally came, huh.”

“I’m sorry. A lot was going on, so I couldn’t find the time to come here.”

“I don’t mind, really. You had to come all the way from Crimonia, right?”

Gazar-san said with an expression of: ‘You came from far away, so there is no helping it.’

Sorry. In truth, I could have come here anytime because of my Bear Gate.

When I wasn’t at the shop, I was either napping or just playing with Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear. If I really wanted to come and fetch it, I could have come much sooner. Honestly, I was postponing it just because it was troublesome. There was no way I could admit that to him, though.

“So, did you finish it?”

“Of course. How many days do you think have passed since you have commissioned them?”

Gazar-san handed me two things wrapped in cloth.

I unwrapped one, and a knife in a beautiful sheath appeared.

It had a splendid black handle, and when I looked at it more carefully,

“A bear?”

A bear head was carved on the handle, like some sort of a crest.

“It was a good idea, wasn’t it?”

“Did you engrave it, Gazar-san?”

“I didn’t plan on doing it at first, but since you didn’t show up for so long, and I had free time, I just went with it.”

“I’m sorry for being late.”

Now I was really *sorry* for not coming to get it sooner just because it was troublesome. Sorry for myself.

“No need to apologize. I did it because I felt like doing it. More importantly, unsheath it.”

I did as he said, and unsheathed the knife.

I wasn’t Fina, but I still knew that it had a beautiful edge. I raised the knife over my head, and it reflected the light coming in from the window.

“So, how’s the grip? The black knife you’re holding right now is for your right hand. Please hold it with the Black Bear Glove.”

“Black knife?”

“The other one has a white grip and is for your left hand. It will be easier to differentiate them since the colors are different, right?”

I unwrapped the second knife, and it was another beautiful knife, with a white handle this time. Of course, this one had a bear face carved into it as well.

“Thank you. How much do I owe you?”

“I told you that the golem was enough, didn’t I?”

“But, you also added this beautiful carving, so...”

“I did it just because I had time, plus the golem was more than enough to cover everything.”

Gazar-san threw a look at the Iron Golem that was still standing at the entrance.

“You left it there, huh.”

I was sure that he would melt it down to make other things.

“It’s really popular with the customers, so I left it be.”

“Really?”

“No one had seen an Iron Golem in such a good condition before, after all. A lot of curious people come just to see it. They don’t buy anything, though.”

I had told him that it was okay to destroy it, but I was happy to see it still intact.

“Well then, can I try out the knives?”

“Yeah, and if anything doesn’t feel right, just tell me. I might be able to fix it right away.”

I exited the shop and took out an Iron Golem from the Bear Box to check how well the knives cut.

“I just have to pour some magic power inside, right?”

“Yeah, its sharpness will improve depending on how much you pour inside.”

Well, it worked like that in the game as well, so... time to try it out here. If it wouldn’t work, I just had to figure it out later.

I gripped the two knives with my Bear Hands; I had used tantous a lot in the game, so this felt nostalgic. I could move the knives very quickly since they were light; the only problem was that they didn’t have a big offensive power. Well, compared to big swords at least.

I gathered magic power in my hands just like I did when casting normal magic and then slashed at the Iron Golem’s right arm, which was cut off without any real resistance and fell to the ground.

“Ohhh... This is amazing! Gazar-san, the knives are amazing! I was able to cut it without a problem!”

I was actually a little moved.

“You’re the amazing one. Normal people couldn’t cut an Iron Golem so easily, even with a mithril knife.”

He praised me.

“Still, a moving Iron Golem has a magic core which makes it sturdier than iron, right?”

“Yeah, but this is still the first time I have seen someone cutting iron so easily with a mithril knife.”

“Isn’t it because the knives you make are incredible, Gazar-san?”

I put some distance between the Iron Golem and me before charging at it and cutting it several times as quickly as I possibly could on my way past it. The Iron Golem broke into a number of pieces and crumbled down.

This somehow made me feel like a ninja.

It seemed that I could become a Shinobi when using my Bear Equipment.

“Wow! I didn’t even see how many times you cut it.”

Gazar-san approached what remained of the Iron Golem to inspect it and then turned to me.

“Show me the knives.”

After I handed him the knives, he lifted them up towards the sky.

“You cut iron, but there are no nicks on the blades. That much is enough to prove your strength. Be it your talent wielding knives or the flow of your magical power, I now understand why Gold said that you were an excellent adventurer. You really make an example for the proverb: ‘You shouldn’t judge a person by their appearance.’”

Nelt-san was the one who made him write it, though. What had been written in that letter, really?

Gazar-san returned the knives to me, and I put them inside the Bear Box, happy with the purchase.

“Well then, thank you and have a good day.”

I thanked him and tried to leave, planning to head to the caste, which Fina feared so much.

“Wait, I will return you the leftover mithril, so just give me a minute. Also, did you plan on leaving this wreckage behind?”

He pointed at the crumbled Iron Golem.

It was scattered in so many pieces that I had thought it would be a pain to put it back inside the Bear Box, so I had planned on leaving it here and fleeing the scene, but he had managed to thwart that plan.

“Gazar-san, want me to give you a job?”

“What is it? This gives me a bad feeling, though...”

“I will give you all the iron here, so could you please separate the mithril from the iron on the fake Mithril Golem?”

I didn't quite know how much mithril I had since the golem was also made out of iron.

Knowing how much I had might end up being useful for something at a later time.

“Oh, that's what you wanted. If it's only separating the ores, you are offering me too much.”

“Emm... It's troublesome to tidy everything up, so... I'm giving it to you.”

“You're a real idiot, you know that? Even though you cut it into pieces, it's still iron... How many weapons and tools do you think can be made from all of it?”

“You make some sense, but I have no intention of using iron in this crumbled state, so...”

“Just sell it, then. You will make quite the profit.”

I looked at the iron pile again. There were just too many pieces. Putting it back into the Bear Box would be too much of a pain.

“Like I already said, picking it up would be too much trouble.”

“Okay. I get it. I will buy it, then. It will be at a low price, though.”

“I don’t really need the money, though... If you really want to repay me, just separate the mithril and the iron from the fake Mithril Golem.”

“That doesn’t work, you would be giving me too much for the work I would do, missy. I would prefer for us to be on equal terms when we do business in the future.”

When he put it like that, I had no other choice but to accept his proposal.

“The mine is finally providing the ores for the market, so you wouldn’t be getting much from selling it to someone else anyway.”

“Oh, the ores are finally coming from the mine again, huh.”

Now that he mentioned it, I had completely forgotten to go to the guild.

Yep, it was all because of the commotion with the cakes.

Well, I just had to go there to record the achievement on my guild card and receive the payment, so there was no need to rush; I could just postpone it for a while.

I handed over the fake Mithril Golem to Gazar-san, and finally headed to the castle to bring the cakes to Princess Flora.

## Chapter 158

### Bear-san Comes Up With A Scheme, But It Fails

After leaving Gazar-san's smithy, I was finally able to go to the castle.

Like usual, I was able to enter without even having to show my guild card, which had my castle entry permit on it. It was great being well known, or rather, being a bear. Also, one of the guards ran off when I entered. Yup, the usual treatment.

There was no point in even having the entry permit. The only time I might need to use it would be if I took off the Bear Suit. Still, if I did take it off, it felt like something bad would happen.

As I walked through the castle, the people I passed all greeted me with slight bows.

Normally, if someone were to walk through a castle dressed in a Bear Suit, people would report it, not bow, right? This would be comparable to walking through the Japanese Parliament building while wearing a costume, right?

On my way to Princess Flora's room, I was approached by one of the women passing by.

"Thank you for making the picture book; the children really enjoy reading it."

Having said that, she bowed and left.

I was wondering why she would approach me, but it was about the picture book, huh. Now that she mentioned it, I had allowed for it to be distributed throughout the castle.

Still, had the fact that I was the one who had made it leaked out?

Hmm, I had told Eleanora-san not to reveal that it was me. Maybe I should complain to her about this?

As I was about to reach Princess Flora's room, another woman approached me.

“The children are very excited about the next book.”

Had my job changed to that of a picture book author?

No, no, I wasn't a picture book author. I didn't plan on making another book either.

Eleanora-san would hear about this. She must not spread it any further.

Still, how did people know that I was the author when I didn't even write down my name?

People not knowing it was me was the very reason I hadn't written it down.

Well, there was no point in thinking about things I couldn't understand. I finally got to Princess Flora's room and knocked on the door. I heard Anju-san's voice from inside, and soon, the door opened.

“Oh, Yuna-sama, welcome.”

“Hello, Anju-san. Is Princess Flora here?”

“Yes, please come in.”

As I was about to enter the room to greet her, Princess Flora appeared next to Anju-san.

“Bear-san!”

Princess Flora cried out with a huge smile on her face and hugged me.

“It's been a while, Princess Flora.”

“Yes, it's been a while, Bear-san.”

Flora-sama returned my greeting properly.

Her cuteness made it hard to believe that she was related to the king. Oh, she did look more like the queen, so she would surely become as pretty as her in the future.

“Well then, Yuna-sama. Please enter.”

I was about to do so, but then a sudden idea stopped me in my tracks.

“Yuna-sama?”

“Bear-san?”

Both of them asked in confusion.

“Princess Flora, the weather is nice today; why don’t we go to the garden instead?”

If we stayed in her room, the king was bound to show up; we might be able to avoid him by going to the garden.

Yeah, since we ate in her room every time I came to visit her, he would surely come to look for me there.

So, the solution was easy: just eat somewhere else.

Because of the king and Eleanora-san, Fina had taken a lot of mental damage, so I wouldn’t be happy until I got at least a bit of revenge.

“You’re right, not being outside in a weather this nice would be a waste. Flora-sama, shall we head to the garden and eat there?”

“If Bear-san wants to go, then we should go.”

Anju-san went along with my vile plan without any suspicion while Princess Flora also accepted with a smile.

A pang of guilt hit me when I saw her smile like that, but since they both agreed, we headed to the garden to execute the [King goes to Princess Flora’s room, but nobody is there.] plan.

I could almost imagine his troubled face, once he walked into the room, and not a single person was there.

We could call this just a tiny bit of harassment, right?

“Yuna-sama, is something wrong?”

Anju-san asked, noticing the change in my behaviour.

Oops, I must have loosened my expression while thinking of my evil deed.

“No, everything is fine.”

“You sure? Well then, Yuna-sama, I’ll go prepare us some tea. Could I ask you to look after Flora-sama while I’m gone?”

I had no reason to refuse, so Anju-san bowed and ran off to prepare the tea.

“Princess Flora, we should head to the garden.”

I offered her my Bear Hand, and she took it, so we headed to the garden, hand in hand.

While it would have been ideal to reach the garden without being seen by anyone, we did meet three people. I just hoped that none of them would report seeing us on our way to the garden to the king.

When we finally arrived at the garden, we were greeted by a wide array of beautiful, blooming flowers. As expected of the royal garden. I had seen it before, but it was still breathtaking. Fina had seen this sight as well when she had visited the castle with Eleanora-san the other day.

Usually, the only people who could see this beautiful garden were those associated with the castle. That was just a waste. Not to mention the fact that everyone here worked the whole day and couldn’t come to see it.

So, it made sense that Princess Flora and I were the only ones here. Princess Flora was looking at the flowers happily, and based on that, I judged that she didn’t come here often either.

Tugging at her hand, I took her to the center of the garden, so we could sit down at the table there. We could enjoy the flowers all we wanted there, while also being able to chat and eat snacks.

There was even a roof set up over the table, so we didn't have to worry about getting wet if it rained. I could just think of all the romantic things people could do in this place, like looking at flowers on a rainy day, but who here would do that?

The king was absolutely out of the question, but maybe the queen spent some time here.

When we reached the center of the garden, that very certain someone was already there.

"Oh my, it's Flora and Yuna-chan. What are you two doing here?"

The queen was sitting at the table all by herself, looking at the garden.

Was it really okay for the queen to be left alone?

Well, we were inside the castle, so it should be fine?

"We were planning on having a meal out here today. Would that bother you?"

"Of course not. May I join you?"

There was no way I could refuse the queen, so I agreed. Still, was it okay to just give food to the queen like this?

Well, it was too late to think about it at this point since I had already fed Princess Flora so many different things.

"Bear-san, what are we having today?"

Princess Flora asked while sitting down on a chair next to her mother.

Now, everytime I came here, it was always about food. Well, I did bring her something every time I came, so it couldn't really be helped. It still felt like feeding a baby chick, though.

"It's something sweet and delicious, but wait a moment."

I had to make it so that nobody could join us before I brought the cakes out, so I

summoned my Bears in their cub forms and sat them down on the remaining chairs.

With this, the king would have no seat even if he managed to find us.

When I had to sit down, I could just pick one of the Bears up onto my lap.

It was a perfect plan.

Sadly, it fell apart in an instant.

“It’s a small Bear-san!”

Princess Flora jumped up from her seat to hug and pull Swaying Bear of its seat.

Hmm, I hadn’t expected this to happen.

To make the matters even worse, the queen also stood up and took Hugging Bear into her arms.

“My, how cute.”

I definitely couldn’t tell them to let go of the bears, so we were now left with empty seats.

“Bear-san, is this Big Bear-san’s child?”

Oh, was this the first time Princess Flora had seen the bears in their cub forms?

“No, I just made Big Bear-san smaller.”

“Amazing!”

Princess Flora said and kept hugging Swaying Bear. Somehow, this visit was no longer about cake. Well, it was fine as long as she was happy.

Princess Flora started running around the garden together with Swaying Bear. I started to fear that she might fall, but the queen just watched her while embracing Hugging Bear.

She was hugging it quite tightly, in fact. Hugging Bear seemed to be suffering, so I

hoped she would let it go soon.

After Princess Flora played with Swaying Bear for a little while longer, Anju-san finally came, but not alone.

“You’re eating here today?”

“Yuna-chan, what did you bring today?”

The king and Eleanora-san both accompanied Anju-san, and with that, all the usual members had gathered. Just like that, my [King goes to Princess Flora’s room, but nobody is there.] plan fell apart.

“What are you two doing here?”

I asked, despite more or less knowing the reason.

“Oh, it was reported to me that you were at the castle. I ditched my work to go to Flora’s room, but I ran into Anju on the way there. That is how I learned you were planning on eating here today.”

Where should I even start?

First, it would probably be the best to tell him not to abandon his job!

“So, Yuna, what’s with the bear that my daughter is playing with?”

The king asked, glancing at Princess Flora and Swaying Bear.

“It’s my summoned beast, Swaying Bear. I did show him to you before.”

“The size is different, though?”

“Oh right, I heard that you can make them smaller.”

Eleanora-san knew about the bears’ cub forms?

She had probably gotten the information from Cliff.

Anything I talked to Cliff about went straight to Eleanora-san.

“Swaying Bear, come here.”

When I called it, Swaying Bear immediately ran to me, with Princess Flora right on his tail.

“That bear can get this small?”

The king picked up Swaying Bear when it got to us.

“Ooh, how soft.”

“Father, don’t take him from me!”

Princess Flora said and clung onto his leg in protest.

You shouldn’t be the one to say that; Swaying Bear was my family.

“Okay, but he’s heavy, so take care.”

The king said and returned Swaying Bear back to Princess Flora.

She was slightly bigger than Swaying Bear but still wasn’t able to hold him and ended up falling on her back. She didn’t care, though, and kept hugging Swaying Bear happily.

She would give him back, right?

The only outcome I could see was Princess Flora crying after I took Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear away from her.

# Chapter 159

## Bear-san Eats Cake With The Royal Family

My plan ended up failing as everybody gathered at the garden.

Also, the number of chairs increased to five without me even noticing.

It must have been Anju-san who had brought it, right? When had she done it, though? She sure acted quickly.

Anyway, the people who had already sat down were: the queen, who was holding Hugging Bear in her hands; the king, who had abandoned his work; and Eleanora-san, whose actions I could never really understand.

“Princess Flora, how about you let go of Swaying Bear for now and sit down with us?”

I said in an attempt to get Swaying Bear back.

“No!”

Princess Flora said and kept hugging Swaying Bear, which looked quite troubled within her arms.

I wanted to save it, but she would cry if I forcibly took it away.

“Princess Flora, I brought some yummy food, so why don’t you have some? You won’t be able to eat it if you keep holding onto Swaying Bear.”

“Yummy food?”

“Yeah, it’s really delicious. Also, Swaying Bear is getting tired, so it said it wants to take a break.”

I glanced at Swaying Bear to give it a signal, and it let out a small yawn to seem like it was tired.

My Bears were well-known for their acting ability. They had already tricked Noa in the past and also threatened the villains who had come to attack me at the inn in Mireera by pretending to be man-eating bears.

After seeing that Swaying Bear was getting tired, Princess Flora reluctantly let it go.

“I’m sorry, Swaying Bear. I hope we can play again later.”

What a kind child.

Swaying Bear didn’t have to act this time and let out a real, happy cry.

Thanks for the good work, Swaying Bear.

I patted its head to reward it for playing with Princess Flora and returned it to its glove before she changed her mind.

Seeing Swaying Bear disappear, Princess Flora appeared to be sad, but stayed seated.

Hmm, maybe I should ask Sherry to make her a plushie version of Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear; Princess Flora would surely be happy if I presented them to her.

I looked over at my other summoned beast, Hugging Bear, which was currently still being held by the queen. She looked like she had no intentions of letting Hugging Bear go, though.

Oh come on, your daughter had given Swaying Bear back properly. Would you please give Hugging Bear back as well? Ignoring my silent glances, the queen continued to pet Hugging Bear while Princess Flora looked at them enviously.

At this rate, they were going to start fighting over Hugging Bear...

I decided to figure out how to get it back later and took out a whole shortcake out of the Bear Box.

“Strawberries!”

Princess Flora’s gaze snapped to the cake. Great, I could avoid the fight with this.

“What is this?”

“It’s similar to the pancakes you ate before.”

“Oh, those? They were tasty.”

I set down enough plates for everybody then cut the cake.

Meanwhile, Anju-san prepared black tea on the other side of the table.

“There are strawberries inside as well.”

“I love strawberries!”

“It looks delicious.”

Just as I finished dividing the cake, Anju-san also served the tea. Princess Flora’s tea had milk added into it.

“Bear-san, can I eat now?”

Princess Flora held her fork but still waited patiently.

Was it because of the king? No, it was probably because Anju-san had taught her properly.

“Sure, go ahead.”

She didn’t waste time and started eating happily.

“Yummy!”

She said with a smile, and cream on her cheeks. Others started to eat soon after.

“This really is quite delicious.”

“Yes, but I find it a little too sweet for me.”

“Really? I think its sweetness is perfect.”

I just drank the tea Anju-san had poured for me and didn't eat any cake. The tea was good; it tasted just like the one I had drunk at Cliff's mansion. Well, it was a tea the king drank, so it had to be of high quality. The tea I had drunk while I had come here before must have been of high quality as well, huh.

The cake was being well-received by everyone; even Princess Flora, who had been down for having to part from Swaying Bear, now ate the cake happily.

Yet, the queen ate the cake while still holding onto Hugging Bear, giving me no opportunity to rescue it.

Hugging Bear, stop looking at me with those eyes. I'll save you eventually.

"Yuna, you're not going to eat?"

The king asked me when he noticed I was only drinking tea.

"Yes, I ate a way too much cake while taste-testing the recipes. Also, eating too much would make me fat."

Hmm, perhaps saying that I was sick of it would be more accurate? I couldn't get fat with my metabolism. Yet, one of the forks stopped moving when I mentioned getting fat.

Oh, just one?

It was Eleanora-san who had stopped eating.

Princess Flora was still eating with cream all around her mouth, the king didn't seem to care, and the queen also carried on as if nothing had been said.

"Yuna-chan, this thing can make you fat?"

Eleanora-san asked, her hand holding the fork now shaking.

"Yeah, it has high sugar content. Well, that just means you get fat quicker compared to other food."

"You sure know some strange things."

“Yuna-chan, were you trying to make me fat?!”

Eleanora-san got mad at me suddenly.

“Of course not. Besides, a single slice won’t make you fat. If you don’t eat it every day, that is.”

“Really?! You aren’t lying, right? I will believe you, okay? If I get fat, I’ll be mad, though.”

Umm, annoying much?

“If it bothers you that much, you don’t have to eat it, you know?”

“Are you trying to bully me, telling me not to eat something this delicious? How can you even say such a cruel thing, Yuna-chan?”

‘Fat’ turned out to be a forbidden word amongst women after all, huh. Maybe I should be more careful with using that word in the future since it only brought trouble when it was used in the wrong context.

Still, if she was that worried about her weight, she shouldn’t eat snacks at all. She would just lash out again if I mentioned that, though, so I kept it to myself.

On the other side of the table, the queen was eating without a care in the world. Did she not care if she got fat? I hadn’t seen her put on any weight in the time I had known her, so maybe she just didn’t eat much in general.

“The queen doesn’t get fat no matter how much she eats.”

Eleanora-san told me when she caught me staring at the queen.

“She’s a true enemy of all women.”

I must have been included in that group as well since I didn’t get fat either.

So, that was why I couldn’t respond.

“Yuna-sama, may I have a moment?”

Anju-san asked me as I went back to watching everyone eat cake and drink tea.

“Yes?”

“Do you happen to have an extra share for the head chef?”

“Head chef?”

“Yes. You see, while I was preparing tea earlier, the head chef approached me. I told him that you had come to visit, and he immediately got excited.”

She explained to me with some hesitation.

Everytime I came here with a new recipe, I had the head chef taste it. If it was something that Princess Flora liked, I even gave him the recipe.

I cut two more slices of cake and put them on two different plates.

“Anju-san, could you give this to the head chef?”

“Yes, no problem.”

“Also, you can eat the other one later.”

Anju-san would be able to join us if it was just Princess Flora, but with the king here, it was a bit difficult for her to be that casual.

“Can I really?”

“Yeah, just let me know what you thought of it the next time I come here.”

“Thank you very much.”

She happily accepted it and placed both plates onto her trolley.

“Anju, we’ll be fine here, so you can take that to Zelef.”

“Is it really okay for me to leave?”

“Yeah. I know he is really looking forward to Yuna’s cooking.”

“Okay, I will deliver the cake to him, then.”

Anju-san said, bowed, and left the garden.

“Please forgive him; he enjoys your cooking very much.”

“It’s fine. On the contrary, I always end up causing him trouble, coming here without warning and bringing my own recipes even though he is the one taking care of your meals.”

They probably noticed that this was bothering me.

Me passing along my recipes often caused him trouble since Princess Flora liked to eat them, which put him in a bad spot. I didn’t want him to think he was an inferior cook to me.

Honestly, there was no point in even comparing us. I just happened to know a few recipes from a different world, but there was no way I could make full-course royal banquet meals the way he did.

Every person had their own field of expertise, and it was impossible for them to be the best in everything in that whole field.

That was why I had told them that there was no winning or losing when it came to cooking. All that mattered was making good food.

A while after Anju-san had left the garden, I noticed that Princess Flora’s plate was empty while she stared at what was left of the cake, so I cut her another slice.

“Thank you, Bear-san.”

“It’s a reward for being a good girl and letting Swaying Bear go.”

Unlike the person next to you...

“Is it good?”

“Mhm, it’s yummy.”

Good, maybe I should bring a different type of cake next time?

A fruitcake or a cheesecake might be a good idea.

“Yuna-chan, can I have another slice too?”

Eleanora-san said and timidly passed her plate to me. I couldn't be held responsible if you get fat, okay?

“Yuna, one more for me as well.”

“I would like some more too, please.”

I put another slice on each of their plates.

It kind of felt as if I had become a maid.

Since everybody's teacups were empty as well, I poured them tea just as Lala-san had taught me. Hmm, I hadn't thought I would ever have to do it myself.

The king drank the tea I had poured him and said:

“What is this, you can pour tea as well?”

“You're very good at it.”

The queen praised me.

“The maid at Cliff's place taught me.”

“Oh, you mean Lala?”

“Yes. I added the cakes to the menu at my shop and wanted to serve some tea that went well with it, so I had her teach me.”

“So, I could eat this cake whenever I wanted at your shop, Yuna-chan? Maybe I should head home to Crimonia.”

“You will get fat if you eat it every day, though.”

“I won't let you leave anyway, so no need to worry about getting fat.”

“You’re both so mean.”

As we were enjoying our cake-chat, I heard heavy footsteps from within the garden. I turned to look and saw Head Chef Zelef-san running towards us.

Zelef-san was a plump old man with grease all over him. Even though he looked that way, he was a dependable person and was in charge of cooking for the entire royal family.

Yet, this dependable person was now standing in front of us, completely out of breath.

## Chapter 160

# Bear-san Is Going To Open A Shop At The Capital?

Zelef-san managed to make it to us, even though his running speed was slow. I noticed Anju-san walking right behind him, keeping up with his speed. This had often happened in anime and manga, but it was my first time seeing it in person. Wouldn't it have been better if he just walked as well?

"Zelef, did something happen?"

The king asked Zelef-san when he finally reached us.

"Your Majesty, Your Highness, you're both here?"

"Yes, I'm taking a breather from work."

You did that every time I was here, ditching work to find me.

Well, at least that was what I came to believe. Did anybody even check in on him? In this kind of a world, shouldn't there be an old man like a prime minister standing beside the king and scolding him? Probably someone who had to take stomach medicine to stop it aching from all the stress this king's actions were causing him?

Well, if such a person had existed, he would have been here right now.

"So, what is it? This is the first time I have seen you actually run."

Could we even call that running? It was of the same speed as Anju-san's walking.

See, Anju-san was already tending to the queen and Princess Flora.

"I apologize for showing you such an embarrassing sight. I rushed here because I wanted to know more about the new recipe Yuna-dono just let me taste."

He answered and scratched his head in embarrassment.

“It was pretty tasty, wasn’t it?”

“Yes, it was, and since I wanted to know what it was, I ran here despite my old age.”

Despite his old age? He seemed to be in his thirties, no more. Also, I didn’t think that his age was the reason for his slow running. He would do much better if he exercised more and got rid of his bulging stomach.

Zelef-san looked my way, not realizing what was going through my head.

“Yuna-dono, it’s been a while. As usual, I would like to thank you for letting me taste your new food.”

“How have you been, Zelef-san? Oh right, I’m sorry for always giving you trouble when you are already preparing meals for the royal family.”

“I certainly did feel that way at the beginning, but now, I look forward to your cooking. As a chef, your food motivates me to improve myself. Thanks to you, I understand that cooking has no limits.”

He was exaggerating...

Well, it was food from another world, so it might make sense for him to see it that way?

“Well then, Yuna-dono, what was the thing that you let me taste today?!”

Zelef-san asked while stepping a bit closer to me.

Even though I shouldn’t be able to feel hot because of my Bear Suit, I could sense the heat coming from his body. I nudged my chair away from him a bit before answering.

“It’s called cake. It’s similar to the pancakes I had brought over before.”

How many times had I said this by now?

Well, it couldn’t really be helped since it was the only way I could explain it.

“I get that part, but what was that sweet white stuff?”

“Oh, whipped cream?”

“It’s called whipped cream? It was very delicious.”

“Well, it’s still in the trial stage, so it needs some more fine tuning. Also, if you mix different things with whipped cream, you can get all sorts of flavors.”

Making a blueberry or a strawberry mousse might be a good idea in the future.

What I really wanted to make was a chocolate mousse, though. Even if I was able to get my hands on cacao, I wouldn’t be able to make chocolate. Maybe they sold chocolate in some other regions?

If I managed to procure it, the amount of sweets I could make would increase significantly. I really missed the days in Japan when I had played games while eating chocolate and drinking juice.

“So, how did you like the cake? Was it too sweet for you?”

“No, not at all. It was very delicious.”

“There’s still some left; would you like some more?”

They had already finished the one I had brought out on the table, but I had another one in my Bear Box.

“I wouldn’t mind another slice if it really isn’t a problem, but I came here for another reason.”

Zelef-san sounded a bit awkward.

“Why did you come, then?”

“I was wondering if it’s possible for you to teach me how to make it. I won’t reveal the recipe to anybody else, of course. As a chef, I want to know more about this mysterious texture and flavor. I do realize it must have took you a lot of time to create such an amazing recipe. It’s embarrassing for me to ask you to reveal it, and I understand if

you don't want to share it, but..."

Well, it had taken a bit of an effort to reinvent the recipe since I hadn't known the ingredient ratios to make the right mixture.

"Zelef, I believe you promised not to ask Yuna about her cooking methods again."

"Yes, but as a chef, I just have to know it. I couldn't even imagine the concept behind something like that myself, and that makes my soul ache..."

"Yuna already showed you how to make things like pudding and pizza, didn't she?"

"She did, and I apologize, but..."

Zelef-san's voice trailed off, and he lowered his head as the king scolded him.

Just like the king had said, I had already given Zelef-san quite a few recipes. He had been keeping them to himself without leaking them, so it should be fine to show him how to make cake as well.

"I don't mind showing you how to make it."

"Really?!"

Zelef-san was overjoyed when he heard my reply.

"Yeah, it's fine. It has a lot of sugar, though, so try not to make it too often. It's okay if it's just for Eleanora-san, but I don't want to see Princess Flora getting fat because of my recipes."

"Yuna-chan..."

Eleanora-san started to glare at me, but I just ignored her.

"Of course. It is my job to keep the royal family healthy. Even if Princess Flora tells me she wants to eat more, I promise I won't make it for her."

"I won't tell you that!"

Princess Flora said, looking rather displeased.

How cute.

“Are you sure about this, Yuna? I think this every time you pass him another recipe, but shouldn’t they be important to you as a chef? He promises not to leak them, but still...”

Recipes certainly should be important to chefs, no matter what world they were in. Some would even say they were more important than their own lives, especially in case of their family recipes that were passed down from generation to generation.

Yet, my recipes had been obtained from cooking books, television, and the internet. They were just regular recipes of my world, not something special I had created.

Besides, even though they considered me a chef, I didn’t live my life as one. If anyone asked me if the recipes were important to me, I just told them no, unless it could harm my shop in Crimonia, then I had to say yes. My precious employees were giving it their all working there, after all.

So, as long as it wasn’t in Crimonia, I had no problem revealing my recipes.

Even if a cake shop was opened at the capital, nobody from Crimonia would go that far to eat it. I also had no intentions of losing on the flavor front.

“As long as it makes Princess Flora happy, I’m fine with sharing my recipes.”

“You really care about the children. I heard a lot about you and the the children of Crimonia’s orphanage, you know.”

I took care of the children because they were innocent.

Back in Japan, my parents had only complained, and at school, there was a lot of envy, jealousy, and bullying.

I liked the children of this world because they had pure hearts unlike those from Japan who had only been cold-hearted bullies.

The children at the orphanage were honest and hardworking. If they were bad and stole things, I would probably have abandoned them, but I wanted good children to be happy and taken care of.

I knew it was possible they would turn out like Eleanora-san or Mylene-san when they grew up, but I hoped most of them would end up being like Morin-san or Tirumina-san.

“Yuna-chan, how about opening a shop at the capital then? I could help you by finding a good location, procuring the ingredients, and negotiating the price.”

“That sounds like a great idea.”

The king approved Eleanora-san’s suggestion.

I had thought about it before, but I simply hadn’t seen any benefits in opening a shop at the capital.

There had been three reasons I had opened the shop at Crimonia.

One, so that I could eat whenever I wanted.

Two, so that the children from the orphanage had jobs to do.

And three, the money. Not that I really needed it.

So, it had been mostly because of the first two reasons, rather than the third. I had the money I had brought over from Japan, the money I got from defeating monsters, and the money from the tunnel’s passage fee.

All together, it was a lot of money. I honestly didn’t even know if I got more from the shop sales or the passage fee.

So, there was no real need for me to open a shop at the capital.

Still, what about the merits of opening it?

One, I had to manage it. Too much work.

Two, I had to train others. Too much work.

Three, everything was just too much work.

And four, the worst of all, I couldn’t imagine somebody listening to orders from a girl wearing a Bear Suit.

“You could sell pudding and other recipes as well. That way, it would be possible for your shop to become the most popular in the capital.”

“Yes, the other dishes you had brought for us were delicious as well.”

“Sorry, I have no interest in running the number one store in the capital since opening a shop here would just be too much of a pain.”

It had been hard enough to open a shop at Crimonia. Even just thinking about opening another one at the capital without Tirumina-san and Mylene-san helping me sounded impossible.

So, that was why I explained to them the previously mentioned demerits of opening the shop here.

“And here I was thinking I could eat your cooking whenever I wanted if you opened a shop here...”

“Just ask Zelef-san to prepare it for you.”

“I want to be able to eat whenever I feel like it. If Zelef is busy, he won’t be able to cook it for me.”

She had the same idea as me, huh.

“Eleanora-san, why don’t you open the shop, then?”

“Me?”

“I can teach you the recipes, and you manage it yourself.”

A great idea, if I could say so myself.

If she wanted to eat whenever she wanted, she had to put in the effort herself.

I myself had worked hard to open my shop at Crimonia.

“How about opening a branch store in front of the castle?”

The king made an unbelievable suggestion.

“...?”

“I’m sure there would be issues with management, training, labor, and disclosure of recipes. So, why don’t we let the country manage it, then? Nobody would dare consider stealing recipes from a country-owned shop. If we choose our employees wisely, disclosure wouldn’t be a problem at all. The country management would surely find many people. As for the training, we can just leave it to Zelef, who already knows the recipes.”

“Leave it to me?”

“You know Yuna’s recipes the best.”

“But, I already have my job as your head chef.”

“You have a lot of spare time, don’t you? I have no interest in finding a new head chef, so don’t worry about that. However, I do want you to be in charge of teaching the employees and running the shop when you aren’t taking care of our meals.”

“Great, that would mean I could eat whenever I wanted.”

“You’ll get fat if you eat too much, you know.”

“I don’t eat that much, so it won’t be a problem.”

If they were going to do it all for me, I saw no more issues with opening a shop here.

If the castle oversaw the shop like the king proposed, recipes had no chance of leaking out. It also wouldn’t affect my shop in Crimonia at all since it would only sell to the people of the capital.

“Then, all we have to do is find employees, right?”

“You can leave that to Eleanora and Zelef. Also, I will supply the funding for the shop myself.”

“We also have to figure out the location and ingredient list.”

“And, don’t forget Yuna’s share of profits as well.”

“My share?”

“Of course. We will be selling your food.”

“Yeah, it only makes sense for you to get a piece of the cake.”

“Even though the shop will belong to the country, you have a right to a portion of the profits since we will be using your recipes.”

Well, I didn't mind taking what they would give me, but my income was already high as it was.

The three of them weren't done talking yet, though.

“Fufu, I'm looking forward to this.”

“I'm quite excited myself.”

“It'll become the speciality of the capital.”

The three of them seemed to be having fun.

At this point, I didn't think that I would regret leaving everything to them.

Yet, if I had just came here while they were building the shop, I would have never let it have that kind of exterior.

# Chapter 161

## Bear-san Holds A Cake Baking Lesson

Eleanora-san seemed quite pleased with the fact that a shop using my recipes would be opening in the capital.

However, in order for it to work out, I had to teach Zelef-san all of my recipes.

I had given him my pudding recipe some time ago, but it seemed like he had only managed to make it after failing numerous times. Unlike in Japanese cookbooks, there were no pictures in this world. Also, it appeared that I hadn't relayed some parts of the recipe well enough. That was why we decided I would be personally teaching him this time around.

"Should we start now, then?"

"Would that really be okay?"

"There doesn't seem to be a problem, since everybody already finished their cakes."

As I said, all of the plates were already empty, and it was time for me to make an excuse to get away from here, so that I could save Hugging Bear from the queen. She hadn't let go of it all this time and had managed to embrace it even while eating.

Thinking of how to rescue it, I glanced at the queen, who was now elegantly drinking tea with one hand while holding onto Hugging Bear with the other. Hugging Bear looked at me dejectedly.

"I'm going to save you, so wait for me," I called out to it silently.

I then spoke up to begin the Hugging Bear Rescue Plan.

"Your Highness, I'm going to teach Zelef-san how to bake a cake now, so about Hugging Bear..."

"It's fine. I will carry it."

The queen responded and stood up with Hugging Bear still secured in her arms.

Umm, what was fine? Why would she carry it? Could it be that she was coming with us?!

“You shouldn’t bother Yuna and Zelef.”

“I won’t get in the way. I just want to taste-test Yuna’s recipes.”

The queen wanted to come with us because she wanted to eat more... Also, taste-testing wasn’t something a queen should do, right? Didn’t royal families normally have a poison tester checking their food before they ate it?

Well, that was just my own tale on royalty.

“I will go too!”

Now even Princess Flora was saying she would come with us.

Was this royal family going to be okay?

Not to mention, Princess Flora had already eaten two slices of cake. A small child shouldn’t be able to eat three slices at once.

“Well then, I will be heading back to work. Thank you for the meal, Yuna. It was delicious, as always.”

The king said before leaving the garden.

I wanted him to talk to the queen about giving me back Hugging Bear first, though...

“Okay, I’m going to begin the preparations for setting up for the shop, then.”

Eleanora-san said and followed the king out of the garden. I wanted to ask her, “Eleanora-san, what about your job?” but decided not to. She was the type of person who always did what they wanted.

“Yuna-chan, we should get going as well.”

The queen tapped me on the shoulder.

“I’m going, I’m going. Before that though, your Highness, please return Hugging Bear to me,” I protested silently.

Before I could do anything, the queen started to walk off with Hugging Bear resting its head on her shoulder, looking at me with a sad expression. Sorry, I couldn’t save you.

Once we arrived at the kitchen, Zelef-san closed and locked the door.

Eh, what was going on?

“This is to prevent information from leaking.”

Zelef-san answered my unspoken question.

There was indeed nobody else in the kitchen besides us.

“Whenever I’m making the food that you taught me, I always lock the door to prevent people from barging in.”

“Aren’t there other chefs that would want to come here?”

“This is my personal kitchen, so no other chefs will be coming here.”

Was it like this to prevent people from poisoning the royal family’s food?

If there were a lot of people in the kitchen, it would be difficult to figure out who added the poison. They had probably made this kitchen for the head chef only in order to prevent that from happening.

“Also, this kitchen was arranged as a place for me to make your recipes, and only I’m allowed to use it.”

Did I hear him right?

It would make sense for this place to be his private kitchen to make meals for the royal family, but he said this was just a place where he could make my food? Unbelievable.

Had they made this kitchen just to prevent the recipes from leaking? Well, that would explain why there hadn't been any leaks so far...

Still, weren't the royal family members' lives more important than my recipes leaking out?

Maybe I should just pretend I hadn't heard it...

I took all the required ingredients and utensils for making a cake out of the Bear Box and started to make it while explaining the process to Zelef-san, who was following along and taking notes. He asked some questions from time to time, but we progressed without much of a problem.

I wondered if Princess Flora and the queen were enjoying themselves. After all, all they did was watch me bake.

Partway through, Anju-san also joined in after she was done tidying up the garden.

"I see, so this is how it's made. I have to say, you are indeed a skilled chef, Yuna-dono."

"I am?"

"I think you're amazing, given how young you are. Even if I were to compare you to my subordinates, your skills are in no way inferior to theirs."

"You can't compare her to your subordinate, Zelef."

"I didn't do such a thing. Also, those who have gathered here are all capable of making food for the royal family and the nobles. In a way, they are all good chefs."

When he mentioned his subordinates, I immediately imagined them to be his apprentices, but it seemed like it was different in this castle.

Anyway, I didn't really know whether I was amazing or not, but I could understand that he was praising me for my cooking skills.

"Bear-san is amazing?"

Princess Flora inquired.

“Yes, she is amazing.”

“I agree, she truly is amazing.”

Zelef-san and the queen both answered her.

“Bear-san, you’re amazing!”

“That’s not true at all.”

While the sponge cake was in the oven, I made some whipped cream, scooped a bit of it up with a spoon, and brought it to Princess Flora’s mouth, who ate it without concern.

“Delishus!”

As soon as the sponge cake was finished baking, I took it out of the oven, layered strawberries and whipped cream in the middle, then put some more strawberries on the top.

“It’s beautiful.”

“Yeah, and it looks delicious.”

“Thank you very much, Yuna-dono. I learned a lot.”

“You can also try switching out the strawberries with other fruits that are in season. There are many things that go well with cream, so you should experiment a bit.”

“Okay, I’ll try out as many things as I can to see which ingredients match it the best.”

“Well then, it’s time to eat it, right?”

The queen said while looking at the cake longingly.

Yep, it made sense to eat it, but could they really eat more? Well, some time had already passed since they ate at the garden, so it should be fine, right?

I glanced at Princess Flora who seemed really happy.

“I will go prepare the tea, then.”

Anju-san said and left the kitchen.

“Zelef-san, can you get us some plates and forks?”

I asked, and he didn’t waste any time fetching them.

“I bet Zelef’s subordinates would be surprised if they were to see a bear giving orders to their head chef.”

The queen said with a smile.

Oh right, Zelef-san was the head chef of this castle, even though he didn’t look nor act like one.

Zelef-san ignored the queen’s comment and brought over enough forks and plates for all of us.

I proceeded to cut the cake and placed a slice on each of the plates. I made sure to make Princess Flora’s slice smaller; she wouldn’t be able to eat her dinner if she ate too much.

“Here, Anju-san, your share.”

I told Anju-san, who had just returned after preparing tea. Good thing Zelef-san had brought a plate for her as well.

“I still have the cake you gave me before.”

She hadn’t eaten it yet, huh.

“You can give that one to the kids, so join us.”

If I remembered correctly, there were some more children of Princess Flora’s age here

at the castle.

“Is that really okay?”

“Of course.”

“Anju, eat with us.”

“Anju, eat.”

“Also, please tell me what you think of it.”

“Thank you very much, everyone!”

After she distributed the tea (Princess Flora’s had milk added in), everybody started to eat the cake.

Now was my chance to get Hugging Bear back!

There was only one chair in the kitchen, and Princess Flora already had it covered, so everybody else had to eat standing up. Even though there was a table, it would be difficult for the queen to eat while still holding onto Hugging Bear.

As I had expected, the queen put Hugging Bear down on the corner of the table, so she could eat; Hugging Bear finally left her arms.

As she started to eat, Hugging Bear looked at me. I waited a bit and then nodded.

Hugging Bear slowly started to move and made its way to my side of the table while the queen was completely focused on her cake. When she finally noticed, it was already too late as Hugging Bear was out her reach, so it seemed like she was sending it off instead.

“Yuna-chan, I want Hugging Bear-chan back.”

“Don’t worry, your Highness, I’ll hold onto him for now, so please eat your cake.”

The queen continued to eat the cake while looking at Hugging Bear disappointedly. I wasn’t going to give it back even when she looked at it like that. Hugging Bear looked happy to be back in my arms. I would have to comfort it tonight.

After we finished eating, I had to answer some more of Zelef-san’s questions, and the

day was slowly coming to an end.

The queen eyed Hugging Bear the entire time I was chatting with Zelef-san; she must have really liked it.

Well, Hugging Bear did feel rather nice to touch, and it was also cute.

I wondered if it was necessary to give the queen a Hugging Bear plushie, for the sake of Hugging Bear's well-being.

How many plushies should I ask Sherry to make for me?

# Chapter 162

## Bear-san Asks For Some Plushies

After leaving the castle and getting home via the Bear Gate, I had dinner and got ready for bed.

Since Swaying Bear had played with Princess Flora, and Hugging Bear had dealt with the queen, I thought of letting them recover in their Bear Gloves, but since they preferred being out, I summoned them before I went to sleep, like I always did.

Once out on my bed, they happily came up and rubbed against me.

“Thank you for today, Swaying Bear, Hugging Bear. Have a nice rest tonight.”

I dove straight under the blankets after thanking them, and they both got on my sides and assumed their usual manju shapes.

I silently wished them goodnight and soon fell asleep.

I had no urgent matters the next day, so I spent the morning in bed. Even though I wasn't as obsessive as the queen, I did like cuddling with Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear. They kept napping next to me as I lazed around, and just like that, the morning went by.

I couldn't really stay in bed for the entire day, so I switched back to the Black Bear and headed out to the tailor shop Sherry worked at.

I wasn't sure if Princess Flora would want one, but just in case, I would have plushies of both Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear made. If she disliked it, I could just give it to the children at the orphanage or use it to decorate the shop. Heck, I could even put them in my room.

As I walked down the streets in my usual Bear outfit, I didn't get any unpleasant glances like at the capital. Well, some people did still stare, but there wasn't a lot of them, unlike at the capital, where most of the people threw all sorts of glances at me, from scornful looks to interested expressions, shocked responses, and more.

I had been to the tailor shop before, so I got there without a problem.

The shop sold stuff like clothing and handkerchiefs, so there were quite a few customers checking the wares. Most of the customers were local commoners, of course.

A lady in her thirties was running around the shop and helping the customers; it was Narl-san, Sherry's employer.

Once she was done talking with other customers, she approached me.

"Oh, Yuna-chan, it's been a while. Did you come here to buy some clothing?"

She knew that I didn't wear any clothing other than my suit but beamed a business smile at me anyway.

"Want me to pick out some cute outfits for you?"

"While that would be nice, I came here for a different reason. Is Sherry here?"

"Sherry? She should be making clothing in the back, together with my husband."

"Are you guys busy?"

"Not really since we have no urgent jobs at the moment. I will go and fetch her for you, so please wait a moment."

Narl-san headed to the back of the shop and called out Sherry's name. Soon, both of them trotted out from the back.

"Big Sis Yuna?!"

"Hi, Sherry. Sorry for bothering you during your working hours."

Sherry shook her head.

"No problem. So, why are you here? I heard that you were looking for me."

"Yeah, there's something I want you to make for me."

“You want me to make something for you?”

“If you’re busy with work, don’t worry; it can wait.”

“As I already told you earlier, we’re doing just fine, timewise. Sherry, you can take your break now, so why don’t you and Yuna-chan go to the back and talk about it there?”

Narl-san came up with a timely suggestion.

Since we got her permission, we headed to the back without arguing.

“So, what is it that you want made?”

Sherry asked while serving us both drinks and then sitting down.

“Thank you.”

I first thanked her for the drink and took a sip.

“I want you to make a some plushies for me.”

“Plushies?”

If I wasn’t wrong, things like dolls and plushies existed in this world.

I couldn’t say for sure, though, since I had never really looked too deeply into it. I had seen a child holding some sort of plushie from a distance while walking the streets before, but I couldn’t have really told what kind of animal that plushie had supposed to be, though. I had only seen the child hold onto it tightly.

“Yeah, I want you to make plushies of Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear.”

“Plushies of Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear?”

“Can you?”

“Yes, I can make them, no problem.”

I knew Sherry could make them.

“It would help if I could see what they look like before I start making their plushies, but I guess it’s too cramped to let them out here, right?”

Sherry said and looked around the room we were in.

It was by no means a big room; it had a table and a few chairs, plus some extra things all around, so there was no space to summon Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear in their regular sizes. It was a different story if I were to summon them in their cub forms.

“No, it will do.”

I responded and summoned Swaying Bear in its cub form.

“Uwahhh!”

Sherry cried out when she saw Swaying Bear.

“Big Sis Yuna, what is this small Bear-san?!”

“It’s Swaying Bear. Since it’s a summoned beast, I can make it smaller.”

I couldn’t make it bigger, though.

“It’s cute.”

Sherry commented, grasping Swaying Bear with both her hands.

“I want you to make some plushies about this big, would that be okay?”

“Y-yes. It’s fine. Oh, please give me just a moment.”

Sherry said and started to rummage through the drawer behind her. Once she found what she was looking for, she turned back to me.

“Big Sis Yuna, would it be okay if I measured it?”

Sherry said and, with a sharp movement, extended the measuring tape that was now in her hand.

“I have no problem with that. Swaying Bear, stay still okay?”

Swaying Bear cried out softly in response.

“Well then, Swaying Bear-chan, I’ll measure you now, okay?”

Sherry said and approached Swaying Bear.

“First, I’ll measure your arm.”

She pressed the measure tape against Swaying Bear’s arm and noted it down.

“Now, I’ll measure your leg. Can I measure your sole as well?”

Swaying Bear sat down and lifted up his feet, so Sherry was able to measure it more easily.

“Ok, waist this time; make sure you don’t move.”

Swaying Bear obediently stayed still and let her measure it.

“You okay with me checking your tail now?”

Swaying Bear turned around, its cute tail now facing Sherry, who didn’t waste time to measure it.

“And lastly, your head please?”

Swaying Bear nodded, and Sherry quickly measured its head multiple times, making sure to get all of the details she could.

I would have been scared to get measured like that. I actually feared getting all my sizes measured, or better, I feared knowing them. Well, I still had room and time for improvement, but that didn't change the fact that measurement was a scary thing.

Heck, just the thought of it made me shiver.

"Big Sis Yuna, is something wrong?"

"N-nope, nothing. No need to worry about me. You got all the measurements?"

"Yes, I got everything I need."

She neatly recorded Swaying Bear's measurements into her notebook.

If they had been mine, I would have torn it up and burned it to ashes.

"Oh right, is it okay if I make Hugging Bear-chan's plushie using the same measurements?"

"Yep, that's okay."

They should have the same measurements, right?

Well, even if there was any difference, it shouldn't be significant.

"How long do you think it'll take you to finish them?"

"Hmm, I do have my job I need to focus on. Maybe if I did it during the night..."

"Sherry, what are you talking about?"

A man in his early thirties suddenly barged in from the adjacent room.

"Temoka-san."

Temoka-san was the other owner of the tailor shop, and also took care of Sherry. He taught her how to make clothes and improve her embroidery.

“Yuna-chan, it’s been a while.”

“Yeah, it’s been a while indeed. I’m borrowing Sherry for a bit.”

“Oh, that’s fine. The shop isn’t that busy anyway. So, what seems to be the problem?”

He seemed to be a nice person.

“Big Sis Yuna asked me to make plushies of Swaying Bear-chan and Hugging Bear-chan for her.”

“And by bear, you mean that?”

He said and nudged his head towards Swaying Bear, which was still sitting on top of the table.

“Yep, that’s Swaying Bear-chan.”

Temoka-san then took some time to compare the measurements Sherry had written down in her notebook to Swaying Bear.

“Hmm, interesting. In this case, you can take a break from working here for a while.”

“But...”

Sherry was perplexed by his sudden proposal.

Well, of course she would be surprised; she was just told to take a break from work.

“Like I said earlier, we aren’t a busy shop. Narl and I did just fine on our own before you started working here. Besides, I think this will be a good practice for you, so you should try making them.”

“Thank you so much!”

“However, once you’re done, you have to come back here. There are still many things we have to teach you.”

“Okay!”

Sherry replied happily.

From the looks of it, she was in good hands.

For some unknown reason, this couple didn't have children of their own, so they doted on Sherry like she was their own daughter.

Headmistress had even talked to me about them maybe adopting her.

[Those two are both nice people. I think it'll be fine as long as they treasure Sherry.]

[I agree.]

[Well, we will have to see if Sherry accepts them as her parents on her own, though.]

That was what our conversation had been like. I wasn't sure if my opinion had been of any help to her, though.

For now, we just waited to see how things went; if the adoption was sprung upon her suddenly, Sherry might reject it. Headmistress had probably just told them to get along with her and treat her as their daughter.

So, that was why I just watched how things unfolded while not saying anything.

After all, all I had done was argue with my parents, so the only advice I could give was based on my common sense.

"Also, feel free to use anything from the shop to make those plushies."

"Really?"

"Yeah, since making them will be practice for you."

Temoka-san said, gently patting Sherry's head.

Wait, I couldn't just let him lend me Sherry and also provide all the materials.

"I'll pay for all the material costs and the labour fees, so don't worry about making mistakes and take as much time as you need, okay?"

"Big Sis Yuna..."

I intended on paying for everything from the start, so it wasn't a big deal anyway.

I guess the only issue was that I didn't know how much commissioning plushies cost. Making them from scratch should be quite expensive, right?

"Just bill me all the materials used, including those of mistakes."

Hmm, what an admirable thing this was for me to say. Well, there was much to learn from mistakes when creating things.

Just like in the game, if one strategy against an enemy failed, then I would use a different one to ultimately win the fight.

She would be making bear plushies, which nobody had tried before, so there was no need for her to worry about the expenses that would build up from the mistakes.

"Temoka-san, please don't get angry if Sherry makes a mistake and wastes the materials, okay?"

"I didn't plan on scolding her to begin with, you know."

I felt reassured knowing I could leave Sherry in his hands.

"Then, Temoka-san, can I start working on it today?"

"If I said no while you're making such an expression, I would probably be punished by the heavens. We have no urgent jobs, so feel free to start immediately."

"Thank you very much."

Sherry expressed her thanks for receiving permission.

In order to not get in Sherry's way, I thanked Temoka-san and left the store.

I really looked forward to seeing the finished product.

# Chapter 163

## Bear-san Gets The Prototype Plushie

The day after I had asked Sherry to make the Bear plushies, I finally asked Fina to disassemble the Black Tiger, which I had completely forgotten about again.

We finally had the mithril knife, which could cut open the Black Tiger, something a regular iron knife couldn't do. The fact that Fina's dismantling skills were quite high also helped a great deal, of course. I probably wouldn't be able to dismantle a Black Tiger even if I had used a mithril dismantling knife.

While Fina was disassembling the tiger, Shuri stood right beside her, learning the process enthusiastically.

I wondered about this a lot, but what kind of person was I to make children do dismantling for me? Well, it was a bit late to ponder this now, so we could just say it was fine because this was another world, maybe?

Anyway, thanks to Fina, I finally got a Black Tiger rug, so in order to thank her, I gave her some of the meat and other parts as well.

Fina tried to refuse, of course, but I forced her to take it. She tried to explain to me that it was a high class ingredient because it wasn't a monster often encountered, but I didn't really care about that.

If it was delicious, it should be eaten, not sold.

Hmm, maybe I should take it to Anzu and have her prepare it for me?

The next day, I decided to head to the Adventurer's Guild.

It had been over a week since I had finished the request at the mine, so it should be properly processed by now.

When I arrived at the guild, I immediately headed to the receptionist, Helen-san, and asked her about the request I had done at the capital.

"Yuna-san, you accepted a request at the capital?"

She took my guild card and checked it for me.

“The investigation as well as the subjugation of the golems at the mine is indeed marked as completed.”

It matched what Gazar-san had heard.

The golems were no longer appearing in the mine, so the miners had resumed their work. That meant that the golems had indeed most likely been spawning because of either the Mithril Golem or the Bearmonite.

I was very curious about the Bearmonite I had obtained, but the Dwarf Country was far away, so it would be too much of a pain to get it checked.

It would be great if I had a skill that could teleport me to any location I wanted. Well, the Bear Gate did that job quite well, so I couldn't really complain.

Anyhow, Helen-san returned my guild card to me, and I received the payment for my achievements on the request.

“By the way, Yuna-san.”

“Yes?”

“I heard that you renovated your store.”

“I did. What about it?”

“The female adventurers were talking about how you started selling this food that is really delicious.”

“Ah, the cake.”

“Yes. Is it possible to reserve one? By the time I finish my shift, it's all sold out, and it's going to be a while before I get my next vacation. I really want to try it soon since I heard of how delicious it is, though...”

All other women at the reception desk nodded when Helen-san said that.

Well, she was right about the cakes being popular; they were indeed always sold out by the time their shifts ended.

“I went there the other day and asked if I could reserve one, but they told me I couldn’t.”

Oh right, Terumi-san had indeed told me about the requests for reservations, but she had to refuse them all because there were simply too many. I somewhat remembered ignoring the issue and asking her to take care of it.

“So, could you please make an exception, just for me?”

Helen-san asked me while putting her hands together.

“Helen, it’s not fair if you only ask for yourself.”

“That’s right, how could you possibly only ask for your own share?”

The two women sitting at the reception desk next to Helen-san complained.

“I’m Yuna-san’s friend, so I can ask her to make an exception for me.”

When had we become friends? I wanted to say that, but I managed to keep it to myself.

Leaving aside the question of whether we were friends or not, Helen-san had indeed been taking care of me ever since I had joined the guild.

Besides, she didn’t really need to reserve a cake since I had plenty of them in my Bear Box.

“I don’t think we can hold onto a cake for you, but...”

“So, it’s no good, huh...”

All the women showed sad expressions. They should at least finish listening to what someone had to say to them...

“I have some cake with me now, so everyone in the guild can have some.”

I said and brought out an entire strawberry shortcake from the Bear Box, making their expressions instantly change.

“This is the rumoured cake?”

“Yup, make sure to split it up and share with everyone.”

“Uhm, how much do we have to pay for it?”

“It’s okay, we’re all friends here. It’s my treat.”

“Yuna-san!”

Helen-san yelled out, stood up, and grasped my Bear Hand tightly.

“T-thank you so much!”

“It’s not that big of a deal.”

“I mean, the female adventurers were all boasting about how delicious it was; it was so vexing having to listen to them and not being able to eat it myself.”

“Well, if you find it delicious, please come to the shop and eat it when you get your day off.”

“Of course. I’ll request a day off just so I can come and eat it.”

The other receptionists followed suit and thanked me as well.

With that, I was done at Adventurer’s Guild and returned home to stay in and play with Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear. They would start sulking if I didn’t take care of them every now and then, after all.

I also had to reward them for working hard at the castle the other day.

“Come here, Swaying Bear, Hugging Bear.”

Once they trotted over, I embraced the both of them. If I wasn’t wearing the Bear Costume, it would have most likely been difficult to hold both of them at the same time. It would be impossible to let them ride on my shoulders, like a certain yellow mouse liked to do.

So, that was how I spent the rest of my day, laying around and playing with my Bears.

As I was thinking about what to do the next day, somebody knocked on the front door.

I went to open it and found Sherry standing there with a big bag on the ground next to her.

“Good morning, Big Sis Yuna.”

“Morning. Could it be that in that big bag next to you...”

The bag looked even bigger next to the small Sherry.

It was obvious what was inside since she was the one who came here with it.

“Yes. The plushies are done, so I brought them here. If you will like them, I’ll make more of them.”

“Great, come in.”

Sherry hoisted up the big bag and entered the Bear House. She seemed to be having trouble with the bag, so I stepped in to help her. It was amazing that she had even managed to carry it all the way to my house.

The moment Sherry crossed the doorstep, she noticed Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear on the sofa.

“Swaying Bear-chan! Hugging Bear-chan!”

She yelled out and rushed to sit down next to them on the sofa.

She carried such a huge bag all the way to my house, so I made sure to offer her a cold drink.

“Are the plushies inside this big bag?”

The bag was about the size of Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear in their cub forms, so the plushies were definitely inside as they wouldn’t both fit in a bag smaller than that.

Hmm, should I give her an item bag?

I planned on asking her to make me five sets, after all.

“Yes, Swaying Bear-chan and Hugging Bear-chan plushies are in here. It was difficult to bring them since they are quite large.”

She was smiling while saying that, but it was indeed obvious that a bag of that size was difficult to carry around. I definitely had to give her an item bag before she headed back home.

Sherry then opened the bag and took out the Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear plushies.

I took the Swaying Bear plushie into my arms.

Oh, this was well made.

She had managed to make it look quite cute and the size was right on the spot as well.

Hugging Bear and Swaying Bear both curiously approached their plushies, so I placed both of the plushies next to them on the sofa. Hugging Bear and Swaying Bear both looked at their respective plushies with interest.

“Hmm, they don’t feel quite the same...”

Sherry said, comparing the bears to the plushies.

“Is that so? They look the same to me.”

Or at least close enough.

“The faces were difficult to get right since I couldn’t recall it perfectly. They do look a bit different.”

She said a bit, and it really was only a bit.

Was Sherry a perfectionist?

“If you would let me take the two of them back with me, I could make the plushies look

better.”

“I can’t lend them to you, unfortunately.”

“I figured as much...”

Sherry said and lowered her head. Was the quality of the plushies really that important to her?

They looked good no matter how many times I checked them, though.

I wanted to do something to cheer her up, and a good idea crossed my mind.

If I remembered correctly, when Sherry had been taking note of Swaying Bear’s data, she had scribbled a simple drawing of Swaying Bear to make it simpler to write down its measurements.

It must have been hard to get a good image with just a simple drawing. A photo would be very useful in this situation, but getting that would be impossible in this world.

I could just draw it, then.

I was a (provisional) picture book artist, after all. I could draw things other than just my deformed art.

So, that was why I fetched some paper and writing tools.

“Big Sis Yuna?”

“I’m going to draw a picture of Swaying Bear for you, so use that as your reference.”

“Big Sis Yuna, you can draw as well?”

“Well, just a bit. Did you ever look at the bear picture books at the orphanage?”

“Ah! Could it be that you are the one who drew them?! I did think that the drawing of the girl was similar to Fina-chan.”

“Yes. That’s why I can draw to some extent.”

I began sketching only after lining Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear up. Since Sherry had no problem with their body shapes, I decided to draw a big picture of their facial expressions.

As I was drawing the two of them, a thought crossed my mind. Did I need to write down which one was which?

She wouldn't be able to tell the difference since the drawing was black and white. Maybe I should have used some color... Well, even if I colored it, it would still mostly be black and white.

"Big Sis Yuna, you're really good at drawing."

Sherry complimented me while watching from the side.

"Thank you."

I finished the sketch soon after and handed it over to her.

"I can make perfect plushies of Swaying Bear-chan and Hugging Bear-chan with this."

"You don't have to make them perfect. Honestly, even the ones you brought me today are good enough."

I said and held up the bear plushies.

"No, it's not good enough. I'll make them perfect."

Sherry's enthusiasm was amazing.

"It's okay, you don't have to put in that much effort. I'm giving them to a girl that's around four years old."

"If it's a present, then I definitely have to try harder."

"Sigh. Fine, but don't push yourself."

"Okay!"

"By the way, can I have these plushies?"

"They are prototypes, though..."

“I think my Bears like them, though.”

After I had finished sketching them, Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear had started to play with their respective plushies.

“I’m glad they like them. Still, I will make them look exactly the same next time I bring them over.”

Sherry then thanked me and rushed out. I didn’t forget to give her an item bag before that, of course.

As the day was coming to an end, and I was thinking about what to do for dinner, Fina arrived at my house, out of breath.

# Chapter 164

## Bear-san Receives An Invitation

Fina was at my door, completely out of breath.

“Why are you in such a hurry?!”

“Because... this... letter...”

I had no idea what she was trying to tell me.

Before I listened to what she had to say, I took a bottle of water out of the Bear Box and gave it to her. She drank the whole bottle in one go before catching her breath.

“Thank you, Big Sis Yuna.”

“So, what happened?”

I inquired again.

“Didn’t you receive a letter as well, Big Sis Yuna?”

“No?”

Fina was grasping what seemed to be a letter in her hand.

Well, I didn’t really check my postbox very often.

I thought nobody in this world would be sending me letters anyway. It had been the same in Japan. I hadn’t even gotten any personal emails either; the only ones I had ever received had been those from the game company.

“Please go and check your postbox, then.”

“Okay.”

Since Fina insisted so strongly, I went to check my bear-shaped postbox.

Oh, there really was an envelope inside.

I took it out and immediately noticed that it was of a high quality.

“I knew you would receive one as well, Big Sis Yuna.”

Fina said and sighed a breath of relief.

I had no idea who would send me this letter, though.

I looked at the sender’s name.

Who was Misana Faren Gramm again? I faintly recalled hearing that name before.

“Is this person your acquaintance?”

“What are you saying? It’s Misana-sama. We ran into her on our way to attend the king’s birthday party. The noble, Misa-sama.”

Ah, I remembered now.

Misa was Misana’s nickname.

Still, why would Misa send me a letter?

I headed back into the house with Fina to hear the details.

“Fina, did you read yours already?”

“Yes, I have... It’s an invitation to Misa-sama’s birthday party...”

“An invitation to her birthday party?”

I broke the seal on my envelope, took out the letter, and quickly scanned over it. Just as Fina had said, it was an invitation to Misa’s party.

“So, leaving you aside, why did Misa-sama send an invitation to me, a commoner? This is a Noble-sama’s birthday party!”

Fina said while anxiously staring at her letter.

Well, if we compared the two of us, Fina, who made friends easily, was more likely to be invited to the capital than me. If I wasn't wrong, they had met with each other a few times in the capital while I had been running errands.

"Big Sis Yuna, what happens if I refuse?"

There was no point in asking me that since I didn't know, either.

Well, based on my common sense, refusing would most likely be considered rude.

She would probably need a good enough excuse to refuse an invitation of this sort. I honestly had no knowledge of noble etiquette, especially the one of this world. Also, this was a pain for me as well since I had never gone to any birthday parties back in my world. Not to mention, this was a party for nobles. I had nothing against Misa, but if other noble families were attending, then I didn't want to go.

Also, attending a birthday party in a Bear Suit?

All the girls there would be wearing beautiful dresses; I would look like some sort of a comedian wearing my Bear Suit. So, for a different reason than Fina, I also wanted to refuse the invitation myself. Could we refuse it, though?

Since neither of us knew much about nobles, we couldn't come up with a good answer no matter how much we pondered about it.

In that case, we had to ask somebody who did know.

"We'll have to ask Cliff and Noa, then."

"Cliff-sama and Noa-sama?"

"If we got the invitations, I'm sure one was sent to Noa's mansion as well."

"Yes, that makes sense."

Since it was already getting late, we decided to go to Cliff's mansion tomorrow morning.



The next day, Fina came to the Bear House again, and the two of us headed to Cliff's mansion.

We were greeted by the gatekeeper and taken to the same room as always. We sat down on the sofa to wait for Cliff when I noticed Fina seemed nervous.

"Fina, are you okay?"

"Yes, I'm okay."

She definitely didn't look okay, though.

"It's just that, knowing I'm about to meet Cliff-sama is making me a little nervous."

She had stayed at Eleanora-san's mansion and had even seen the king himself before, so there shouldn't be any reason for her to be nervous over meeting Cliff now, right?

"Fina, you've already met the king, so Cliff shouldn't be a problem, right?"

"I just can't! Cliff-sama isn't someone I could normally meet, and I'm not of a social standing to be let into his residence. Am I even allowed to sit on this sofa? What will I do if he gets mad at me? Big Sis Yuna, would it be better if I stood instead?"

"No, it's okay to sit. Also, if Cliff gets mad at you, I'll fight him on your behalf."

"I won't get mad, so please don't pick a fight with me."

Cliff said as he and Noa entered the room.

"Were you eavesdropping?"

"We just heard the last part as we entered."

"It's been a while, Yuna-san, Fina."

"Noa, sorry for coming so early in the morning."

"G-good morning. S-sorry for intruding."

I didn't stand up as I greeted them while Fina jumped up and stuttered her greeting.

"No problem, you're welcome to come, no matter how early or late it is."

Cliff and Noa sat down on the sofa across of us, so there was now a table in between us.

"Thank you. Well then, sorry if this comes out of nowhere, but mind if I ask you something?"

"Sure. It's regarding Misana, right? I was actually planning on sending someone to your place later today."

"So, you received a birthday party invitation as well?"

"Yes, since the party will be hosted at Gran's place."

"Gran-san's place?"

If I remembered correctly, Gran-san was the one who had helped me when I had been purchasing the plot of land at the capital.

"In the letter, she also asks us to bring you two there."

"Can we refuse it, though?"

"You plan on refusing it?"

"I mean, if commoners like us go to a noble's birthday party, won't it cause trouble for Misa?"

As I said that, Fina nodded furiously in agreement.

"I think it should be fine. The people invited are mostly her friends and family."

"But..."

Fina wanted to see Misa, but was still afraid of causing trouble by going to a noble's

party.

“Noa and I will both be going as well, so if anything happens, I will deal with it.”

“You’ll be going too, Cliff?”

I realized it was the birthday party of a noble’s daughter, but should Cliff, a feudal lord, really be leaving his town just to attend a birthday party?

“Well, my daughters will be attending that one. The one I’m going to is for Gran himself.”

“Gran-san will have a party too?”

“Yes, he is celebrating his 50th birthday just before Misana hosts her own party. I’ll be attending his party and since I’m going there anyway, I’ll just bring you all along. Normally, I don’t really go to birthday parties, but it’s his 50th. It will be a bit troublesome, but I don’t intend on missing it. Misana’s party is basically a bonus, so you don’t have to worry about anything.”

“You guys should go; it’ll be fun. I’m sure Misa wants to see you two as well.”

“But, I’m just a commoner.”

Fina said and lowered her head in shame.

“You two are both members of the Bear-san Fanclub, so it doesn’t really matter that you’re a commoner.”

Wait a second, when had that fanclub been made?

“Fina, don’t you want to see Misa?”

“I do, it’s just...”

“If you don’t go, Misa will be sad. She might even cry.”

“Ugh...”

“Misa went out of her way to ask me for your addresses and sent the invitations

herself, you know.”

That was how it had been sent to our homes, huh.

“I will feel sorry for her if you don’t go.”

Well, it certainly made sense that she had sent the invitations because she wanted us to come.

She surely hadn’t sent them for some malicious reasons.

“Think of it this way: wouldn’t you be sad if you sent an invitation to Yuna-san, but she decided not to come?”

“I... I get it. I will go.”

When Noa put it that way, she made it impossible for Fina to refuse.

“Since Fina will be going, you will go as well, won’t you, Yuna-san?”

Fina looked at me. I couldn’t possibly let Fina go by herself. If I said that I wouldn’t go now, Fina would surely cry.

Also, unlike Fina, I had no real reason to refuse the invitation; it was just that I found it troublesome.

“I will go.”

“Yay! That means I can go on a trip with Bear-sans.”

That was her real aim, huh.

“Well then, Fina. We should choose what we will wear for the birthday party.”

“Eh?”

Noa grabbed Fina’s hand and started to drag her away.

Fina looked at me as though she wanted me to save her, but I sent her off with a smile instead since I didn't want to get involved.

"Big Sis Yuna?!"

Since Fina couldn't do anything to stop Noa, she got dragged out of the room.

It was just picking an outfit; it wasn't like she was going to die.

"Anyway, we will be departing from my house in the early morning five days from now."

Cliff ignored his daughter's actions and continued our conversation.

"Is Misa's town far from here?"

"Not really. It takes about three days by horse carriage."

In that case, my Bears would probably only take a few hours to get there.

"I'm sorry, but I will have you to travel with us this time around."

He was right; since we would be gathering at Cliff's mansion, I couldn't just go on ahead with my Bears.

"Just so you know, I know nothing about noble's birthday parties. Is there something we must bring?"

"We will prepare the basic things you will need, but could you get a present that will make Misana happy?"

Ah, a present.

"Can we give her jewels or clothing?"

"I don't think Misana will be happy receiving those as presents."

"You say that, but I have no idea what presents make noble girls happy."

“Why don’t you give her those bear figures you decorated your shop with?”

“Would something like that really be okay?”

“If it was for our daughter, she would have been delighted.”

Well, he made sense.

Wait, if she would be happy with the bear figurines from my shop, then wouldn’t Sherry’s plushies be good too?

Giving girls plushies as a present had been a pretty standard thing back in Japan.

“Thank you. I’ll take it into consideration. So, you said we only need to prepare the present?”

“Yes.”

“Okay, I’ll be heading home, then. Can you take care of Fina?”

“Yea, we’ll look after her properly, so no need to worry about her.”

I was abandoning Fina...

Cough, cough. Fina would take a while to find an outfit for the party, so it was okay for me to head home alone, right?

A noble’s birthday party, huh. I sure hoped it wouldn’t turn out to be too troublesome.

Was what I thought leaving the mansion.

# Chapter 165

## Bear-san Advances To Commerce Rank E

I had already decided on the present, but was that really the only thing I had to prepare?

Since I could make cakes now, maybe I should make a birthday cake for her?

Yeah, making a two-layered cake could be fun. I could also write “Happy birthday!” on it with colored fresh cream.

I should be writing it down on a chocolate plate, but I couldn’t do that without chocolate...

I had all the ingredients for making the cake, so I decided to try making it the moment I got home. It would stay fresh in my Bear Box, so making it in advance wouldn’t be a problem. Still, I should probably drop by Sherry’s place to see how the plushies were turning out first.

“Yuna-san!”

Just as I started to head towards the tailor shop, someone called out to me.

I turned around to look, and saw it was Riana-san from the Commerce Guild. She was the one who had helped me purchase my plot of land here.

“It’s been a while, Riana-san.”

“Yuna-san, are you on your way to the Commerce Guild?”

“Not really, I don’t plan on going there today.”

“Oh, did you come by yesterday?”

Emm, I hadn’t been to the Commerce Guild for quite a while since there was no real reason for me to go there.

Most (if not all) of the things concerning my shop were dealt with by Terumi-san, after all.

Honestly, the only thing I had done myself had been the purchase of the plot of land.

“I was sure that you would have already gone there. Did Terumi-san not mention it to you?”

“Terumi-san? I haven’t really seen her the past few days. So, had something bad happened?”

“Oh no, it’s not that. It’s just that your Commerce Guild rank went up. Yesterday, I asked Terumi-san to tell you to come to the Commerce Guild when you had time.”

“My guild rank went up, huh.”

I didn’t recall doing anything, though.

I had opened a shop, but I left everything to Morin-san, Anzu, and Terumi-san. Well, the sales must be affecting my Commerce Guild rank, so it made sense for it to go up.

“Normally, it takes merchants a whole year to increase their rank to E, you know.”

“Really?”

“Yes. A new merchant starting a new trade has to work hard to bring their sales up. It takes about a year to get their business run smoothly enough to rank up. Many merchants who don’t become successful in a year’s time just give up and quit.”

Unlike at the Adventurer’s Guild, it was difficult to get to rank E at the Commerce Guild, huh.

“We still have to go through the procedure for increasing your rank, so if you have time right now, could you come to the guild with me?”

Hmm, now that I thought about it, even if I went to Sherry’s place now, she shouldn’t have made much progress since yesterday. It should be better to go there in the afternoon and just prepare the cake tomorrow, right?

Since I figured I was in no rush with other things, I decided to go to the Commerce

Guild now.

“By the way, why are you here, Riana-san?”

At this time, shouldn't she still be working at the guild?

“I'm here for work. It shouldn't be my job, but I was asked to do it. I could ask you the same, Yuna-san. You didn't need anything from the Commerce Guild, so why are you in the area?”

“I had some business with Cliff and was on my way back home.”

“With Cliff-sama?”

“There was something I wanted to ask him, so I went to his mansion this morning.”

Riana-san and I chatted about silly topics on our way to the Commerce Guild.

Once we arrived, I noticed there were only a few people inside, probably because the early morning rush was already over.

“Could you please wait a moment? I will return as soon as I finish giving my report.”

Riana-san said and headed to the back. I looked around for a place to wait and quickly decided to sit on one of the chairs by the wall.

Getting a different employee to rank me up would probably have been fine, but it was easier to wait for Riana-san since I knew her already.

Hmm, I normally saw Mylene-san sitting at the reception desk, but she wasn't here today.

Was she finally doing her actual job as the guild master properly?

As I looked around the Commerce Guild, I noticed a few people staring at me. I still got those looks from time to time, huh.

I covered my face with the Bear Hoodie, and kept waiting for Riana-san.

Since I sat there quietly, I couldn't help but overhear two merchants speaking close to me.

“You got a second?”

“What for?”

“Look, that’s the child who wears the bear suit.”

“Dude, don’t point at her. Don’t look at her either.”

“W-why?”

“Haven’t you heard about the young bear lady?”

The merchant asked in surprise.

“I only heard the rumour that the owner of the shop with the giant bear statues also wore a bear suit around town. I just wanted to ask you if that child wearing the bear suit is said owner.”

Sorry for being a child...

I might look like this, but I was 15 years old, you know.

“Are you new to this town?”

“Yes, I came from Mireera two days ago.”

“I knew it. So, how much have you heard about that bear?”

“Only that a bear manages the bear shop, which was recommended to me when I asked for a shop that sells good food at the guild yesterday.”

“I’m sure you found its food delicious, right?”

“Yes. It was the first time I had something that delicious. And, when I asked about who ran the shop, I was told that it was a girl wearing a bear suit.”

“Yep, that Bear Missy over there should be the owner. Still, don’t get any funny ideas, okay?”

“Why? Don’t merchants like to talk about making money? She could make a lot of easy profit if she just shared her cooking methods in other towns.”

“Don’t even try that. You will be kicked out of the Commerce Guild for good.”

“Why would that happen?”

“She’s backed by the Foschuroze family and the Commerce Guild itself.”

“Seriously?!”

“Yeah. That’s why nobody from this town dares to even approach her. I have no idea how you planned on getting her cooking methods out of her, but she isn’t someone you should pick a fight with.”

“If what you told me is true, then you’re probably right...”

“It’s your choice whether to believe me or not. I’m just warning you as a fellow merchant.”

“I’ll accept a warning from a fellow merchant and won’t try to cross such a dangerous bridge, then.”

The merchant said while nodding in resignation.

I had thought that fellow merchants would get along poorly, but it seemed like that wasn’t true at all.

Well, I had heard that merchants valued their connections, so it sort of made sense for them to get along.

“A wise decision. As fascinating as the bear’s recipes are, there isn’t a single person dumb enough to pick a fight with that young bear lady.”

“Well, that makes sense if both the nobility and the Commerce Guild are backing her.”

“You really know nothing, huh.”

The other merchant said, amazed.

“Why would you say that?”

“You know, that young lady bear is also a rank C adventurer.”

So, my rank had spread, huh.

Well, it wasn't like I was hiding it. Anyone could find out if they just looked into it.

Although, that old guard who normally stood by the town entrance seemed very suspicious.

"You bastard, are you making fun of me just because I'm new to this town?!"

"You think I'm lying to you? If you don't believe me, just ask anyone else. Every merchant from around here will tell you the same thing."

"You must be joking..."

Yup, that was a joke, right? About everybody knowing, I meant.

"Well, I warned you. Now, what you do is up to you."

The other merchant said and left.

The first merchant took another look at me then left as well.

The rumours about me must have been spreading around again...

According to Noa, the Foschuroze family was backed by the royal family, and that was why things had been so peaceful till now.

Though this was unrelated to the merchants' conversation, I was sure that if anybody harmed the children working at my shop, they wouldn't be let off easily.

This wasn't due to me being backed by the nobles, but rather, just Cliff making sure the children weren't bothered. I should probably thank him for that, but I was a bit reluctant to just genuinely admit that I was grateful for his help...

While I was still pondering if I should openly thank him or not, Riana-san returned from the back.

"Thank you for waiting, Yuna-san."

Riana-san sat down at her reception desk and started the rank up procedure.

“Here you go. Your Commerce Guild rank is now E.”

“Thank you.”

I thanked her and took back my guild card.

I had now officially become rank E, huh.

“Normally, I should congratulate you for becoming a full-fledged merchant, but I feel like that doesn’t really apply for you.”

“Becoming rank E means becoming a full-fledged merchant?”

“As I must have mentioned before, a new merchant has to pay income taxes like any other merchant, and that makes their first year rather difficult.”

That made sense. It must take a lot of time to build a business from scratch and make sure that everything goes according to plans. Without a good business understanding, it was hard to profit quickly.

“You really are amazing, though. You already became rank E, even though you only joined the Commerce Guild a few months ago.”

“Well, it’s all thanks to everyone working at my shop.”

They were all doing their best working hard for me.

Hmm, I had to reward them somehow.

“Well, in your case, I’m sure you’ll also hit rank D pretty soon.”

She was probably right. I had the income from the tunnel’s toll fees, and the cake sales were going up day by day.

Well, unlike with the Adventurer’s Guild rank, there was honestly no real use in my Commerce rank going up at the moment.

I thanked Riana-san again and left the Commerce Guild.

Since I was hungry, I decided to go get something from the food stalls before heading home.

When I finally reached my Bear House, a pouting Fina was waiting for me there.

# Chapter 166

## Bear-san Makes A Birthday Cake

“Big Sis Yuna! You’re so mean! How could you leave without me!?”

Fina yelled at me and angrily clung onto me.

I had thought that she was going to tackle me, but I still managed to catch her properly.

“Sorry, but I thought choosing a dress would take a long time.”

I couldn’t just tell her that I ran away because I hadn’t wanted to get caught up in it.

“I look forward to seeing you in a dress, though.”

“Big Sis Yuna, you aren’t going to wear one?”

“No, I won’t. I don’t look good in dresses anyway.”

“There’s no way that’s true. I’m sure that you would look beautiful in a dress.”

“Thanks.”

I knew she was just trying to flatter me, but her telling me that still made me happy.

“Oh right, Big Sis Yuna. I have something to ask you.”

“What is it?”

“What are we going to do for her birthday present? What should we get her? Well, Noa-sama said a present wasn’t necessary, but don’t you agree that we should bring something at the very least?”

Was Noa trying to be considerate of Fina because she was a commoner?

Well, some people were happy with people just coming to their party and didn't care about the presents, and I was sure that Misa wouldn't mind not receiving a present if that meant Fina would be able to come to her party. After all, who would want to hear that someone couldn't come just because they couldn't afford to bring a present?

Fina didn't want to come empty-handed, but she most likely didn't know what sort of present would be acceptable for a noble like Misa.

Well, if I hadn't asked Cliff, I wouldn't know either.

"There is no way I will be able to buy a present that will make Misa-sama happy."

Fina said with a troubled expression.

"Also, if I give her something weird..."

"How about we give her a present together?"

If Fina couldn't find a good present on her own, then sharing one with me wouldn't be a bad idea.

Also, if people made fun out of it when they saw it, I would share her embarrassment.

"Give her a present together?"

"Yup, if we give her one together, you will feel less anxious, right?"

"True, but are you really okay with that?"

"Of course. I'm thinking of baking a cake for her. What do you think?"

"A cake?!"

"Yep, and we can make it together."

"Are you really sure about making a cake for her?"

"Yeah. So, will you make one with me?"

"I will. Thank you, Big Sis Yuna."

Unlike her previous tackle, she now embraced me warmly.

“I was thinking of also giving her Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear plushies.”

“Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear plushies?”

Of course, she didn’t understand because I had never mentioned them before.

Rather than try to explain, I decided to show her the prototype plushies, which Sherry had brought me yesterday. Since they were now serving as my room decoration, I took Fina inside the Bear House.

“Big Sis Yuna! What are these cute plushies?!”

Fina said and hugged the plushies tightly.

“They look just like Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear!”

I thought so too, but I couldn’t have managed to convince Sherry, who had the soul of a true craftsman. Her embroidery was very good as well, so maybe it was just in her nature to be a perfectionist.

“I had Sherry make them for me. I was hoping to make Princess Flora happy with these, but I’m sure Misa will like them as well.”

“Yes, she will definitely like them.”

Fina said and hugged the plushies tightly again.

Did she maybe want them as well?

Well, she was only ten years old. Also, she had lost her father at a young age, and her mother had been ill, so she had probably never gotten any children toys... The same must have been true for Shuri.

In that case, I should give them both some plushies as presents too. Although they were children who did dismantling work, they were still children nonetheless.

Hmm, how many should I ask Sherry to make, then?

If I asked for too many, it would end up being hard for Sherry to make them all on her

own. I should probably discuss this with Temoka-san.

“I’m going to Sherry’s place to ask her to make the plushies for Misa now. Did you eat lunch yet?”

I had already eaten some food from the food stands, but if she was hungry...

“I ate it with Noa-sama.”

“Were you fine with that?”

She must have been nervous eating with the nobles again.

“Yes. It was only with Noa-sama, so I wasn’t too nervous.”

She was okay with girls of her age, huh. Even though Noa was a noble, Fina must have felt much more at ease with her, compared to a feudal lord like Cliff. Besides, Noa wasn’t like a daughter of some sort of malicious noble family that often appeared in manga or novels. She was nice to a commoner like Fina.

She did get a bit weird when it came to my Bears, but all in all, she was a good child.

Since we had both eaten already, we decided to go straight to the tailor shop.

Yet, just as we were about to exit the Bear House, the very person who we were going to see was standing right at the doorstep.

Sherry looked a bit strange, though. She was swaying left and right.

“Big Sis Yuna, and even Fina-chan. Are you two going out?”

“We were just about to head to your place, actually.”

“My place?”

Sherry said and let out a small yawn.

“I wanted to ask you for a favor, Sherry. Why did you come here, though? Did you finish

the plushies already?”

It had only been one day. Wasn't that a bit too quick?

“Yes. I made them without even taking time to sleep.”

She said and smiled.

They weren't something I needed right away, you know. I quietly started pat her head. Why had you worked so hard? Sherry just kept smiling as I petted her head. She had eye bags like a panda...

Could it be that she had gotten those panda eyes because she was making bears?

I shivered at that thought.

“You didn't really have to rush so much, you know.”

“I know, but I just had too much fun making them.”

She was obviously tired, even though she was trying her best to smile.

Hmm. I could heal her with my magic, but it was probably best to just let her sleep in this case.

“I brought them with me, so would you mind taking a look at them?”

“Before that, I will lend you my bed, so go and catch some sleep.”

I had to get Sherry to get some sleep before I could even consider looking at the plushies.

“Big Sis Yuna, I'm fine.”

She definitely didn't look fine. Not only was she swaying side to side, she also kept yawning.

“Go to sleep!”

I told her strongly this time.

“I’m happy that you worked so hard to make these for me, but I didn’t want you to sacrifice sleep over them.”

“Big Sis Yuna...”

“So, go get some sleep right now.”

“Okay.”

Sherry obediently said and nodded.

I let Sherry into the Bear House and led her to my room. She fell asleep the moment she got into my bed.

“Good night, Sherry-chan.”

“Why were you trying so hard?”

I said as I petted her head.

I could see that Sherry was having a lot of fun making the plushies and that she was in no way forcing herself to do it, but that didn’t mean she should be sacrificing her sleep over them.

“It’s because everyone wants to be of use to you.”

“Of use to me?”

“You’re a benefactor of everyone at the orphanage. They all respect you and are all happy to be of help to you in any way they can.”

Fina explained to me.

I understood that Sherry wanted to help me, but it still troubled me that she had stayed up all night to make the plushies for me.

Besides, I was no benefactor, nor was I someone to be respected. I just did what I wanted to do.

I had given the children of the orphanage a job just because I had found out about clucker eggs by some chance. I had asked them to help at the shop because we had known it would have been busy and that we had needed more people.

Also, everybody was working for me, and that meant I had to repay them, not the other way around. There was no reason for them to thank me. To put it more bluntly, the whole thing was just give and take.

They did their jobs, I paid them money, and got what I wanted. I had to explain this to Sherry, so that she wouldn't keep working without even taking time to sleep.

"Big Sis Yuna, what should we do? Sherry-chan won't be able to make the plushies like this."

"We should bake the cake first, then."

"Okay."

So, we began making the birthday cake.

Well, we were just going to make a basic strawberry shortcake with the only difference being that it would have two layers.

I made the sponge cake for the bottom layer while Fina took care of the top one. We then split some whipped cream between ourselves and finished creating the cake together.

"Big Sis Yuna, I'm going to write it, okay?"

"Okay."

I left the role of writing down "Happy Birthday" to Fina.

"Uuu, I'm nervous."

"It's okay even if you mess up, so don't worry and just write it."

"O-okay."

Fina took a deep breath and began to write with strawberry whipped cream. She did

it slowly and carefully wrote down each letter.

“I... I did it.”

Fina said, finally releasing her breath.

“We’re done, then.”

“Happy birthday” was now written in nice pink letters on the top of the cake.

“I hope Misa-sama will like it.”

“I’m sure she will. We worked hard to make it, after all.”

“Yes, we did.”

“We should put it away before something bad happens to it.”

I said, put the cake into a container, and sealed it tightly with a lid before placing it into the Bear Box.

“Big Sis Yuna, your item bag is so strange. The food you put inside doesn’t spoil at all.”

“Yeah. It’s made out of a special material, after all.”

I really did appreciate it being able to do so. I just couldn’t accept the fact that all my abilities came from the Bear, though. I would be happy if at least this effect was unrelated to the Bear...

Well, it was better than getting thrown into another world without anything at all.

After the cake was safely stored away, we cleaned the kitchen, and by the time we finished, Sherry came down from upstairs.

# Chapter 167

## Bear-san Makes Plushies

Sherry walked into the kitchen while rubbing her eyes.

“Good morning, Big Sis Yuna, Fina-chan.”

She looked sleepy, probably because she had just woken up. She looked a lot better now, at least.

“Did you sleep well?”

“I did. What are you two doing?”

“We just finished making a cake.”

“A cake! You two made a cake?!”

Sherry reacted strongly at the word ‘cake’, and her sleepy expression disappeared in an instant. Well, she was a girl, after all.

“Do you want some?”

“Can I really?!”

Was it really okay for her to eat right after waking up, though?

I looked at her face, and she seemed pretty excited, so it should probably be fine.

“Just one slice, though. It would be a problem if you couldn’t eat the dinner Headmistress and the other children prepare for you.”

I got both of the girls to sit down and took out a cake from the Bear Box. I cut three slices, one for each of us.

“It looks delicious.”

“You okay with black tea?”

“Yes, I’m fine with it.”

I took out the tea and poured it just like Lala-san had shown me. Soon, a nice fragrance started to drift around. With everything in order, we began to eat.

“Ahh, it’s so good.”

“Yeah, it’s delicious.”

Fina and Sherry both seemed to be enjoying the cake. It had been a while since I last had some cake too. Cake was delicious, as long as I didn’t eat it too often.

“Oh right. Big Sis Yuna, Swaying Bear-chan and Hugging Bear-chan plushies are both finished.”

Right, the very reason Sherry had come to my house was so that she could deliver the plushies.

Sherry took the plushies out of the item bag I had given her yesterday.

“It... It’s so cute.”

Fina reacted strongly and embraced the Swaying Bear plushie. That left the Hugging Bear plushie for me.

Both plushies looked similar to the ones she had brought over yesterday, but these two did look a bit better.

“Their faces were a real challenge to get right.”

Sherry said and pointed at the head of the Hugging Bear plushie.

She then happily proceeded to explain in detail what parts were the most difficult and

how she had managed to overcome them. She really liked sewing, huh.

“By the way, Big Sis Yuna. Did you need something from me?”

“Yeah, I do. There’s a girl I want to give the plushies to. Could I ask you to make some more plushies for me in five, no, four days time?”

I said then looked at the plushies in front of me.

She had already finished them, didn’t she?

I could just give these two to Misa and have her make the ones for Princess Flora and the other children later.

I happily looked at the Hugging Bear plushie again just as Sherry asked me something.

“Bi-Big Sis Yuna. About those plushies, uhm, could you wait just a bit longer than normal?”

“...?”

“Ehm, you see... when I was making the plushies at the orphanage, some of the younger children wanted to have them, but when I told them I couldn’t give it to them because I was making them for you, they ended up crying, so... I promised to make them their own plushies. I will pay for the materials myself, of course. Also, I will make you new plushies within four days, I promise. That’s why, you see...”

Sherry lowered her head as if this was difficult for her to say.

Acting like this, even though she was a child as well...

“You can give these two to the children. Also, I will still pay for the material costs of all the plushies, so you don’t have worry about that at all.”

I was planning on giving some plushies to the children at the orphanage anyway. It would just be a bit earlier like this. As long as I got the plushies for Misa before we left in five days, there should be no problem.

“Will two be enough for all the children, though?”

There were a lot of young children at the orphanage. Two plushies surely wouldn't be enough.

If they ended up fighting over them, they could damage the plushies. Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear's hands and legs might even get ripped off. Even if they were plushies, that would be sad. Sherry, their maker, would surely be sad as well.

"I'll work hard to make enough of them!"

The way she said that made me a bit worried that she would skip sleep again.

I should really talk to Temoka-san.

"You can't skip sleep anymore, okay?"

"...Okay."

I was definitely worried, so I made Sherry promise me that she wouldn't start making them today.

Since I also wanted to help her out a bit, I decided to go to the tailor shop tomorrow.

"Get plenty of rest tonight. If you look tired tomorrow, I'll get mad at you."

"Okay."

Sherry replied and headed back to the orphanage.

She still seemed a bit suspicious, but I would just have to believe her for today.

When I returned to the house after seeing off Sherry and saw that Fina was still standing there, I suddenly remembered something.

"Oh right, I have completely forgotten. Fina, can you tell Terumi-san that my Commerce Guild rank just went up?"

"Big Sis Yuna, your rank went up?!"

"Yep, I raised it today. This is all thanks to the hard work of Morin-san, Terumi-san,

Anzu, and all of the children from the orphanage.”

Thanks to the children of the orphanage looking after the cluckers, I got eggs to make things like pudding and cake.

Morin-san’s bread and Anzu’s dishes were both very popular while Terumi-san played a big role as she was the one supervising everything. She made sure that both the shop and the Commerce Guild got enough eggs, stocked up on ingredients and regulated the prices for my shop, and kept track of the sales.

It wouldn’t be an exaggeration to say that Terumi-san was a true manager of everything. Hmm, when I put it this way, wouldn’t it be a huge problem if Terumi-san quit?

“Fina, please tell your mother not to quit, okay?”

I asked Fina with a serious face.

“Umm, I don’t really get it, but I can just tell her that, right?”

Fina tilted her head trying to understand the meaning behind my words then left the Bear House.

The next day, Fina and I headed to the tailor shop, and when we got there, Narl-san and Temoka-san were in the middle of setting up the shop.

“Good morning. Is Sherry here yet?”

“Yes, she came in early. She’s in the back, making plushies.”

Now I was worried if she had properly slept or not. After getting permission from Temoka-san, I headed to the back.

“Morning, Sherry. Did you sleep well?”

“Yes, I did. I woke up early, though, and ended up interrupting Temoka-san and Narl-san’s breakfast when I came here.”

She laughed to play it off.

Sherry had no panda eyes this time, so it looked like she had slept properly.

“Did the children end up fighting over the plushies?”

“It seems like they were about too.”

Sherry said and laughed again.

“Still, they quieted down when I told them that I would make one for everybody.”

“They are good children.”

“Yep!”

Sherry replied happily as if I just praised her actual younger siblings.

“Okay then, is there anything we can do to help you, Sherry? We’ll do anything you tell us to.”

“Yes, we’ll help you.”

“We can’t work as quickly as you, though. Even Fina and I combined can’t compare to you. We will do our best work at half your pace, okay?”

“Would you mind if I joined you in that case? I think I can be half as useful as Sherry myself.”

“Temoka-san?!”

Temoka-san was now standing at the door, which I had left open on my way to the back.

“Temoka-san, what about your job?”

“Don’t worry about that. The shop isn’t busy anyway.”

That wasn’t something he should be saying proudly...

Well, I had planned on asking him for help since making the plushies for all the younger children of the orphanage would take a lot of time. I didn't plan on making him work for free, though.

"Temoka-san, I will pay you for your work, then."

"I don't want money; I just want to join in on the fun."

After saying that, Temoka-san walked over to Sherry, and listened to the instructions on how to make the plushies.

This guy was definitely losing his battle against life.

Still, although I had no intention of taking advantage of Temoka-san's kindness, I knew nothing about making plushies.

Whenever I was troubled, I called for Terumi-san. Hmm...

I whispered into Fina's ear to get Terumi-san for me, and she left the shop without objections.

I then headed over to Sherry to help her in any way I could.

Sherry and Temoka-san had already begun the preparations.

"Umm, so what should I do?" I thought silently.

"Big Sis Yuna, can I leave the tail and ears to you?"

Sherry said and proceeded to give me a few pointers to help me start out. Making the tail was probably possible, at the very least.

Following Sherry's instructions, I managed to slowly make several tails and ears, and after a while, Fina returned, bringing Terumi-san with her.

"Yuna-chan, it's a rather busy morning, you know."

Terumi-san seemed to be angry.

Well, of course she was going to be mad; I called for her during the morning rush hour.

“I’m sorry. There’s just something I wanted to ask you to do for me, no matter what.”

“I heard from Fina. It’s plushies this time, right?”

She seemed exasperated, but still smiled.

“Well then, I will go speak to Narl-san now, so don’t mind us.”

“Thank you very much, Terumi-san.”

“It’s fine. Also, I won’t quit or anything, so you don’t have to worry about that.”

Terumi-san said and flashed another smile my way before leaving the backroom.

I wondered what that was all about for a while before remembering that I had asked Fina to pass on a weird message to her yesterday.

I really needed to thank Terumi-san for everything she did for me.

# Chapter 168

## Bear-san Departs For Sheelin

The plushies we would be giving Misa as a present were completed the day before we would depart for her party. Since it would act as a present, we made sure to tie a red ribbon on each of them.

“It’s finally done.”

“Yes. I hope Misa-sama will like them.”

From what Noa had told me, Misa was already a part of the the Bear-san fanclub, so these plushies would definitely make her happy.

I put the plushies into the Bear Box so that we wouldn’t forget to bring them. It would have been bad if we had forgotten them.

Sherry and Temoka-san were both resting in a corner of the room, finally done with today’s work.

“I’m exhausted.”

Sherry said something unusual for her while slumping against her chair.

“Thanks for the hard work.”

“Everybody just wants so much of them...”

Even though the children at the orphanage didn’t normally show their selfish sides, the plushies were something new and rare, so most of the younger children wanted one of their own.

Sherry had told me that the children who cried a lot stopped just by hugging a plushie. Getting the children to sleep was easier as well. Headmistress was very thankful for the plushies because of that. I was really happy to hear that the plushies were of use

to them.

“Big Sis Yuna, how many more plushies do I have to make?”

“With the ones for the children at the orphanage...”

I had to give them to Princess Flora and the queen. Hmm, Noa would definitely want a set of her own, and I shouldn't forget about Fina and Shuri. I also wanted some spares to keep as well... So, doing a quick calculation, I got to...

“Can you make ten more sets?”

“That many?!”

“I need some spares as well. Well, I'm not in a hurry with those, so take your time. If Temoka-san has other work to do, please prioritize that instead.”

“I'm getting paid for making the plushies for you, so I can't just neglect this job either, you know.”

Well, Terumi-san had helped me negotiate, so I could ask them without any reservations, right?



The next morning, Fina and I arrived at Cliff's mansion at the arranged time.

Cliff, Noa, and two escort guards were already waiting for us with three horses. Wait, there was no carriage?

“You're here, huh.”

“Are we late?”

“No, we just came out a minute ago.”

“Yuna-san, Fina, good morning!”

“Noa, you're so energetic even in the morning, huh.”

“Of course. I'm going on a trip with Bear-sans.”

She looked like a child on its way to the amusement park.

She was really looking forward to going on a trip with Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear, huh.

“Ready to head out?”

Cliff asked and got onto the horse.

“We’re not going by carriage?”

I asked just to make sure.

“There’s no point if nobody is going to use it, right?”

There were three horses, all already taken by Cliff and the two guards.

So, only Noa was left over.

“Noa said she wanted to ride your bears, so I figured bringing a carriage would be completely unnecessary, and we will also be able to travel faster this way”

That was fine and all, but what if it rained?

We would most likely just have to find shelter if that happened, huh.

“Can I ask one more thing?”

“Yes?”

“Why are there only two guards coming with us?”

When he had gone to the capital previously, Cliff had brought five guards with him.

“We will be traveling a shorter distance compared to the time I went to the capital. Also, we have you with us. I was actually planning on going without any guards, but

Rondo refused to let me go without at least two guards.”

“But, you aren’t paying me for escorting you, right?”

“Speak to Rondo once we come back and have him pay you.”

“I’m just kidding, I don’t really need payment. Still, keep it in mind for when I bother you with something later on.”

“I must warn you now: there are things that even I cannot do.”

“Okay, if there will be anything like that I will just ask the king instead.”

The king owed me one as well, after all.

“You say some scary things. Sadly, I know you’re serious, which makes it even worse. I guess I will have to take the bait since you’re indeed lending me your services. Just let me know if something comes up.”

I succeeded in getting Cliff to owe me another favor.

He didn’t realize that if I kept accumulating these small favors, I could turn them into a big one. I had nothing to ask of him at the moment, so I was just saving them up for now.

Once we got out of the town, I summoned Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear.

The thought of horses being startled by them crossed my mind, but the horses just stayed still. I worried every time even though past experiences had shown me that it should be fine.

“Looking at them again, they’re just amazing.”

“Swaying Bear-chan! Hugging Bear-chan!”

Since Fina and Cliff already knew about my summons, they didn’t react as much.

The two guards, however, were shocked when they saw the bears getting summoned.

One person got really excited, though.

“Yuna-san! Which one will you let me ride on?! If possible, I want to ride on them both!”

“We’ll do the same as last time then, and switch between them. Start with Swaying Bear for now, and we will switch halfway.”

“Okay!”

“Also, you should already know this, but Fina will be joining you as well.”

“Of course. Come on, Fina!”

Noa grabbed Fina’s hand and pulled her to Swaying Bear.

“N-Noa-sama...”

Swaying Bear lowered its back to let the two of them climb onto it. I got onto Hugging Bear, so I wouldn’t be the one to delay our departure.

“Okay, ready to head out?”

Like actual escorts, one of the guards took the front while the other took the rear, and we headed out.

Just a few minutes into the journey, however, I found our pace slow, and I had no trouble knowing why.

It was because we had to match the horses’ pace. I hadn’t traveled with a horse in quite a while now, but were they always this slow? Once again, I had to acknowledge that Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear were just too quick.

Now that I thought about it, what speed were Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear really able to travel at? I didn’t have a speedometer to gauge their speed, so I couldn’t really find out, but I did know that they were faster than horses at least.

“Noa! Don’t you feel like we’re going a bit too slow?”

“Really? Yeah, it does feel a bit slow. I’m just happy I got to ride the Bear-sans; it’s been so long since the last time.”

Noa said, clinging onto Swaying Bear's neck.

"Oh right, Cliff?"

"Yes?"

"What kind of place is Sheelin anyway?"

Sheelin was the town Misa lived at.

"It's not much different than Crimonia, but we will pass by another town on our way there, and that town gets a lot of traffic since it's closer to the capital. Well, thanks to you, there are more people coming in from Mireera, so Crimonia gets more traffic these days as well."

Well, from what I saw, we were heading in a direction a bit west from the capital. That must have been how we had met Gran-san before on our way to the capital.

We moved towards Sheelin at a steady pace, stopping from time to time to let the horses rest. We switched Bears during these stops, of course. They would sulk for sure if I didn't treat them equally.

Soon, the sun was already setting, and the guard in front turned back to speak to Cliff.

"Cliff-sama, I think this will be a good place to stop for the day."

"You're right. Let's set up camp for tonight here, then."

Cliff told everyone after speaking with the guard.

I thought it was still a bit early, but it was as good a time as any. The horses didn't have unlimited stamina, unlike Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear. They had to rest, so they could travel tomorrow.

"Father, we're camping here?"

We were on the main road with a dense forest on the left ahead of us.

“Yes. Monsters might come out from that forest ahead if we camp there. Since we didn’t go by carriage, we traveled quite a distance, so we don’t really have to force ourselves to keep going today.”

Cliff explained to her while getting off his horse and tying its reins to a nearby tree. The guards did the same with their horses, of course.

I also got everyone off Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear to let them relax a bit.

They weren’t speed maniacs (at least I didn’t think so), but having to slow down their normal speed stressed them out a bit; they had wanted to speed up countless times on our journey.

Hmm, this probably meant that I wasn’t really suited for escorting. Well, even if I ever got asked to escort someone, I would most likely refuse since it sounded boring.

“Yuna, you can bring out your house, right?”

“My house? Oh, the Bear House, you mean?”

“Yes. You don’t have worry about bringing it out in front of these two guards; their lips are sealed.”

Hmm, the Bear House, huh.

I did want to sleep in a soft bed and take a bath.

“At the very least, I would like my daughter to stay with you.”

“I’ll be fine, father. I’ll sleep together with the Bear-sans.”

It seemed like Noa was getting used to the fact that she could be ‘together with Bearsans’.

Well, the guards had seen the Bear House before when I had taken care of the ten thousand monsters, so I had no real reason to hide it.

“Okay. Some people might pass by this area, though. Could we go to that spot there, with the three trees?”

I pointed out the spot a bit away from the road.

“Yes, that’s fine.”

After getting Cliff’s permission, I moved to that spot and took out the Bear House there, making sure to use the trees as coverage. When it got dark, nobody should be able to see it.

Cliff and the guards also tied their horse reins to the trees.

“Well, I knew you could store big things like the Black Viper in your item bag, but it’s still surprising to see a house brought out like that.”

“Uuu, I would have been happy with camping outside.”

Noa murmured while gazing at the Bear House with a sad expression.

“Don’t worry, Noa. I will keep Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear out to protect us, so you can still sleep together with them.”

“Really?!”

I nodded.

“Big Sis Yuna, I want to sleep with them as well.”

Fina interjected happily.

“Then, how about all three of us sleep with them?”

I said and turned Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear into their cub forms then approached the door to the house.

“Well then, we will keep a lookout.”

The guards said and started to feed the horses.

I knew that they have their job as guards, but it felt a bit awkward having the two of them sleep outside while we stayed inside the house.

“These two will know if any monsters or people come near, so you don’t need to keep a lookout, you know.”

I said, pointing at the Bears by my feet.

The guards looked at the Bears before looking at each other.

“.....”

The two of them looked at Cliff in the end.

“Yuna, are you sure? Just as they say, they are here to watch the surroundings.”

“There is no need for that at night. Instead, they should just work hard during the day.”

Traveling all day got boring, so the guards might fall asleep tomorrow if they stayed up tonight.

“Okay then, you two can rest for the night.”

The guards both bowed to thank me.

“Yuna-dono, thank you very much.”

After that, I led everybody into the Bear House to spend the night.

## Chapter 169

# Bear-san Spends The Night In Her Bear House

“Sorry for intruding...”

Although Fina and Noa had been inside the Bear House countless times before, they still entered it like any other house.

“The last time I came in here was when I heard that unbelievable story at the capital.”

Oh right, Cliff had been inside the Bear House before too.

Cliff’s two guards followed him in.

“Father, you have been in this house before?”

“Yes. Just once though, and only for a couple of minutes.”

While Cliff explained to Noa, I noticed that the two guards had just stopped dead in their tracks, as if they weren’t sure what they should do.

“Okay, I will prepare a meal, so take a seat wherever you like.”

“I already brought along some food, though.”

“Everyone is worn out from the journey, so I will prepare something warm to eat.”

“I will help you, Big Sis Yuna.”

“Me too!”

Fina and Noa both offered to help me.

I had planned on making something that didn’t require their help, though. Still, I decided to let them help me so that I would not hurt their feelings.

“Alright then, I will accept your kindness. You two can take a rest as well.”

“Will that really be okay?”

One of the guards asked while looking around the room nervously.

It was safer than camping outside, so I couldn't understand why they were so nervous.

Still, if they just kept standing there with their huge bodies, they would get in the way of my cooking.

“If you keep standing there, you will be in my way, so please sit down.”

I told them bluntly.

“Do as she says.”

The guards looked at each other again before finally sitting down.

Now that they were seated, I headed into the kitchen.

“Could you two help me set the table?”

After giving some more instructions to Fina and Noa, I took out some of Morin-san's bread and Anzu's vegetable soup from the Bear Box.

I thanked the Bear Box for keeping the bread fresh and the soup warm, before evenly distributing the food into the bowls Fina and Noa brought me.

“Okay, can you take these to the table?”

I handed the dishes to Fina and Noa, who didn't waste any time in taking everything to the table while I prepared some drinks.

Would this be enough?

I prepared seconds and then returned to the dining room.

“Yuna, I really appreciate this.”

“Don’t mind it. Now then, I know you’re all hungry, so hurry up and eat.”

They didn’t waste any time and started eating.

Morin-san’s bread was delicious as always, and Anzu’s soup was great as well. I felt like having rice tomorrow, so I considered making some. In that case, some meat would go very well with it, but did I have any meat dishes stocked?

If not, I would just have to make one.

“I never thought that I would be able to have a meal like this while traveling.”

Cliff said while I was figuring out tomorrow’s menu.

“Yuna-san, this is delicious.”

Noa said while eating happily.

“There’s more, so let me know if you want seconds, okay?”

“Okay. Can I have some more soup, then?”

As I poured some more soup into Noa’s bowl, one of the guards looked at me.

“Yuna-dono, if I may, I would like some more of this delicious bread.”

“I would like some more as well, please.”

The two guards asked timidly.

Morin-san’s bread was delicious indeed.

I gave the guards some more bread.

“Big Sis Yuna, can I have some more soup too?”

“Sure thing. Fina, you should eat more, or you won’t grow up to be as big as me, okay?”

When I said that, the atmosphere in the room changed. Like, it got quiet. It felt strange, as if everybody was wanting to say something, but didn't know if they really should.

Had I said something weird?

That atmosphere lasted until Fina finally responded.

"Y-yeah. I will eat a lot and grow up to be big like you, Big Sis Yuna."

"Here's more bread for you, then."

I gave her some more soup and bread.

"Thank you, Bi-Big Sis Yuna."

"Does anyone else want seconds?"

"Yes, I will have some."

"Here, have some soup."

The strange atmosphere finally disappeared, and everyone got a second serving.

Once our stomachs were full, I was able to sit down and rest.

"I'm getting sleepy now that I'm full."

"Me too."

Fina and Noa said, both looking quite sleepy indeed.

"Take a bath before you go to bed, okay?"

"Okay..."

"Okay."

The two of them replied sleepily.

On our way to the capital, I had made sure that they had taken a bath, so they shouldn't find it weird taking one now. However, there were still some people here who found it strange.

"There's a bath here?"

Cliff asked me.

"This is a house, so isn't it normal to have a bath?"

"Well, that's true, but this is still different, right?"

Cliff asked and looked around to see if anybody else agreed with him.

"Father, any house would have a bath."

Noa disagreed with him. Fina also nodded in agreement to her statement.

The two guards didn't look convinced, though.

"Besides, you can't clean yourself and relax after a day's journey if you don't take a bath."

"That's true, but..."

"Anyway, you three will go after we girls are done."

"We're taking one too?!"

"Of course you are. I can't have you guys getting into my beds all sweaty."

Who did they think was going to have to wash and dry their bed sheets...?

"A bed..."

"This place is next to the main road with nothing around, right?"

"Yes, but being able to have a delicious meal, take a bath, and even sleep in a bed..."

Cliff was completely amazed hearing that he could sleep in a bed while the two guards just whispered amongst themselves.

“Well then, I’m going to wash the dishes, so the two of you can take a bath first.”

“Ehh... Yuna-san, aren’t you going to join us?”

“I have to take care of the dishes first.”

There was no way I could take a bath knowing there were dirty dishes laying around.

“Yuna-dono, can you please leave the dishes to us? We don’t feel right not doing anything...”

The guards asked me.

Well, that would help me out, plus the two of them would be happy, so I accepted and decided to take a bath with Fina and Noa instead.

“Oh right, feel free to treat yourselves to any drinks in the fridge.”

I told the men before heading to the bathroom with Fina and Noa, Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear following close behind.

Once we reached the bathroom door, I asked the Bears to keep watch for us.

“I don’t think anybody will try to barge in, but if they do by any chance, stop them for me, okay?”

Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear cried out softly in reply.

“They’re not coming in with us?”

“No, I need them on lookout duty.”

I really didn’t think any of those three would try to peep on us, but it was better to be safe just in case.

“I hoped they would come with us, though.”

“Well, that can’t be helped. Should we go in, then?”

Once we entered, I took off my Bear Suit and got into the bath.

For a Japanese person like me, the day only ended when I took a bath.

I couldn’t really enjoy the bath at my own pace since the other two were rather noisy, but it was refreshing enough.

After we got out of the bath, we returned to Cliff first.

“The bath is free now, so go ahead, you three.”

“Emm, what happened to your suit?”

My suit?

Oh, he was talking about the White Bear Suit I was wearing now.

“It’s for sleeping.”

“You’re a bear even when you sleep?”

“Yep.”

“Yuna-san, the white bear outfit is cute as well.”

“Your pajamas are cute too, Noa. Yours too, of course, Fina.”

“Thank you.”

As we complimented each other, Cliff just watched us with a stunned expression.

“What the heck is going on? We are in the middle of a trip, right? We are still next to the main road, right?”

“Father, what are you saying? Did you turn senile already?”

“Of course not. I was just thinking if any of this is supposed to be normal.”

That just made it sound like we weren't acting normally.

"Oh right, Cliff, can we talk about the room assignments before you guys take a bath?"

"If there's a bath, there must be bedrooms as well, huh."

Why was he stating something so obvious?

"There are three bedrooms upstairs. The first room is mine, and I will sleep there together with Fina and Noa. You guys can use the other two rooms."

"Will that really be alright?"

"Yeah, you can take a room for yourself or share it with the guards; you three decide on that."

"Okay. We really appreciate this."

"Cliff-sama, we would be okay sleeping here, though."

The guards pointed at the room we had just eaten in.

"You will get in the way if you sleep there. I have bedrooms, so use those to sleep."

I shut them up with a single line.

"Well then, we're going to sleep, so turn off the lights after you're done taking your bath, okay?"

"Okay. We will gratefully accept your hospitality, then."

Cliff replied before heading to the bath.

We also headed to my room, with Fina and Noa following behind me, carrying Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear respectively.

The bed in my room was bigger than the ones in the other rooms so that I could sleep with Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear at my sides even if they weren't in their cub forms. Still, with Fina and Noa, the bed might feel a bit cramped.

“Big Sis Yuna, are you sure there is enough space for the five of us?”

“Yeah, we will manage.”

I put the nearby table and chair into the Bear Box then took out another bed of the same size and put it right next to mine, making a double-sized bed.

“There is no problem now, right?”

“How wide!”

Noa collapsed onto the bed while still holding Hugging Bear, and Fina did the same soon after with Swaying Bear.

“We have to wake up early tomorrow, so go to sleep straight away, okay?”

“Okay. Hugging Bear-chan, let’s sleep together.”

Noa said and continued to embrace Hugging Bear.

Fina crawled under the blanket, bringing Swaying Bear with her.

I hoped that the Bears would be fine sleeping this way. Well, Fina and Noa weren’t hugging them too tightly, so Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear shouldn’t feel uncomfortable.

“Okay, I’m turning off the lights now.”

“Okay. Good night, Big Sis Yuna.”

“Good night, Yuna-san.”

“Good night, you two.”

It didn’t take long for them to fall asleep, with me following soon after.

# Chapter 170

## Bear-san's Journey To Sheelin, Day 2

The next morning, I managed to get up without being woken up by anyone, probably because we had gone to sleep early.

I rubbed my eyes and looked out the window, seeing only a faint light before the sunrise.

I let out a yawn and stretched. Only then did I notice that Fina was up as well, holding Swaying Bear between her legs.

“Good morning, Big Sis Yuna.”

“Morning. You're up early.”

“We just woke up. Right, Swaying Bear?”

Swaying Bear cried out softly in response.

Fina didn't seem sleepy, though, so maybe she actually woke up earlier than me.

On the other hand, the other girl of Fina's age was still sleeping soundly.

Even though she was sleeping, she kept embracing Hugging Bear. Her long and beautiful golden hair was even covering Hugging Bear's face.

Hugging Bear appeared to have no problem with it, but I still moved the hair off its face just in case.

Hugging Bear, which was obediently letting Noa embrace it with its eyes closed, opened them when I petted its head.

“Let her sleep a little longer, okay?”

“Uuu, Hugging Bear, Swaying Bear...”

Noa talked in her sleep and pulled Hugging Bear closer to her.

After patting her head as well, I climbed out of the bed.

“Well then, Fina, I will go prepare breakfast.”

“I will help you.”

“No need for that. Instead, could you wake up Noa for me in a few minutes?”

I said as I changed into the Black Bear, and headed down to the first floor.

Huh? Someone was already there?

“Cliff?”

Cliff was sitting on a chair all by himself. I looked around and didn't see the two guards.

“Yuna?”

“You're up early.”

“Yes. It's because I didn't sleep that well.”

“Oh, did the bedding make you uncomfortable? I even put on a brand new bed sheet... Could it be that you can't sleep unless you're in a high quality bed?”

“Of course not. I couldn't relax after seeing you take a house out in the middle of the road and being told to sleep inside it.”

What an absurd reason.

“Cliff, you're the one who told me to take it out.”

“I did, but that's for my daughter's sake. I had no idea it would hit me this hard, though.”

I would probably have a hard time relaxing if I had to camp outside, though. Heck, I would be too scared to camp outside if I didn't have Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear with me.

“Are the guards still sleeping?”

Cliff was the only one here, so were the guards still asleep even though their master was awake?

“No, they’re working right now.”

“Working?”

Oh, it seemed like they had woken up and were doing their jobs.

“Rabon is taking care of the horses, and Goju is cleaning the bathtub.”

Even though he told me their names, I had no idea who was who.

“Taking care of horses and cleaning the bathtub, you said?”

“Yes, Goju is cleaning the bath to thank you for yesterday’s meal and being allowed to use your bath.”

“So, you didn’t tell him to do it?”

“No, he asked me on his own. I hope it isn’t a bother?”

“Of course not, it saves me the trouble of doing it myself.”

As soon as I responded, one of the guards entered the room.

Hmm, who was this one?

He came from the bathroom, so...

“Cliff-sama, I have finished cleaning the bathtub.”

“Thank you.”

“Yuna-dono, I would like to thank you for yesterday. The bath and the bed were very nice.”

Unlike Cliff, this guard seemed to have slept well.

“That’s good to hear. Cliff didn’t find them as appealing.”

“I didn’t say that. I just couldn’t relax, that’s all.”

How was that different from what I had just said?

“Anyway, thanks for cleaning the bathtub.”

“Oh no, we would like to thank you, instead, for letting us use it.”

He straightened his back as he thanked me, and for a second, I thought he was going to salute me.

“By the way, where’s Noa? You all slept together, right?”

“She’s still sleeping. I’ll let her sleep until I prepare breakfast.”

“Should I go wake her up, then?”

“I already asked Fina to do it. Well then, I’m off to prepare breakfast now, so you can just wait here, Cliff.”

“Cliff-sama, I will go help Rabon first.”

“Sure, go ahead.”

I went to the kitchen and prepared a simple breakfast. Just as I started placing everything on the table, Fina and Noa came down from upstairs with the Bears in their arms.

“Yuna-san, Father, good morning.”

Noa greeted us.

“Morning.”

“Good morning, Noa. Fina, breakfast is ready, so can you go outside and call the guards?”

“Okay.”

Fina said and headed outside while I used the time to finish setting up the table. Fina returned with the guards right on time, and we all sat down to eat, Fina and Noa setting the Bears aside, of course.

“Cliff, how much further to Sheelin?”

I asked since I had no idea how far away Sheelin was. My Bear Map didn't show places I hadn't gone to yet; if I opened it, the unknown areas were just black voids. If Sheelin was still far away, I would take a nap on top of some high quality fur for sure.

“We traveled quite a distance yesterday. Since we could already see the forest, we might be able to reach it tonight if we push our horses a bit. Still, it will trouble Old Man Gran's family if we arrive at night, so we should take it slow and camp out once more.”

“Cliff, you're being considerate of the other side, huh?”

“Of course. Even though we are friends, we would cause them trouble if we arrived in the middle of the night. We have no reason to hurry, either. We just have to make it in time for Gran's birthday party.”

Okay it was settled, then. Since we would only get there tomorrow, I would take a nap on top of Swaying Bear or Hugging Bear.

Once we finished breakfast, I put away the Bear house, and we resumed our journey to Sheelin.

We carried on peacefully, making sure to let the horses take frequent breaks. Everytime someone passed by, they looked at Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear in shock, but not much else happened.

It was so peaceful that my detection magic didn't even detect any monsters.

We ate lunch, but after a while, I got hungry again, so I had some potato chips on top of Swaying Bear. Noa and Fina looked like they wanted some as well, so I shared it with them as well.

I would feel bad for Hugging Bear if they sprinkled it with crumbs, so I asked them to eat carefully. Just in case, I looked down at Swaying Bear's back and saw a lot of crumbs. I brushed them away carefully so that it wouldn't notice, but Swaying Bear turned its head back to look at me as if asking what was wrong.

"It's nothing."

I said, trying to fool it.

Eating chips made me thirsty, so I took out some fruit juice, but since the cup kept shaking, I realized it would be impossible to drink it. Hmm, I should probably get some canteens.

Cliff had some kind of a leather waterskin, which he could drink from even while riding on a horse. I never had to drink something while riding, so the thought of needing a canteen hadn't even crossed my mind. Oh, Fina and Noa both had one as well. As expected of people who lived in this world; they were always prepared.

As we were steadily advancing towards Sheelin, the guard in front told us to stop.

I looked to see why and saw a stopped carriage in front of us.

"Father, that carriage is stopped there."

"Yeah, it is."

"Why did it stop, though?"

"I'm not sure. Maybe it broke down, but there's the other thing as well..."

The other thing?

"Cliff-sama, I will take a look, so please wait here."

"Be careful."

The guard nodded and rode towards the carriage.

"Cliff, why did you tell him to be careful?"

“Just taking precautions, that’s all. There have been cases of thieves luring in unsuspecting people who think there was an accident, and attacking them when they get close enough.”

Such things happened in another world as well, huh. I should probably be more careful, too, because even though I could easily handle a surprise attack from things like thieves, I could still end up getting others involved.

Anyway, when the guard reached the carriage, a man came out from behind it. A woman and a child followed him soon after. They talked for a while, then the guard returned to us.

“Cliff-sama.”

“What happened?”

“The wheel of the carriage is stuck in the furrow, and they can’t get the carriage to move.”

It had nothing to do with thieves, it seemed.

“If we help them, could we get it out?”

“We won’t know unless we try.”

“Alright, we should at least take a look, then.”

We all headed over to the carriage.

As we got closer I noticed that the woman was holding a baby and the child next to her was a girl, around Princess Flora’s age. They were just a regular family, no matter how I looked at it.

“Why, if it isn’t Cliff-sama. We apologize for taking up the road.”

The man and woman both bowed. The little girl grabbed onto her mother’s clothes as she looked at me. When I waved at her, she hid behind her mother.

I wasn’t that scary...

“You know who I am?”

“Yes, we live in Crimonia and have seen you before, Cliff-sama.”

“Well, if I heard right, one of your wheels is stuck in a furrow, right?”

“Yes. Due to this bad luck, the carriage is completely stuck. We’re sorry for causing you trouble; I hope there is enough room for you to pass by on the other side of the road.”

“Rabon! Goju!”

Cliff called out to his guards.

The two of them got off their horses and headed to the wheel that was stuck in the furrow.

“Cliff-sama?”

“I don’t know if we will be able to help, but we will try at least.”

“Oh no, to have you lend us help...”

“Do you have a better idea?”

“Well, no, but...”

“With four men here, I think we can make it work out somehow.”

“Please wait, Cliff-sama. Let the three of us try first.”

One of the guards proposed, not wanting Cliff, a noble, to dirty his hands with such work.

Well, that made sense. I had never seen a noble lift a carriage, not even in manga or novels.

“Thank you for helping us.”

The husband said with another bow, and then, together with the guards, tried to lift the carriage. The carriage didn’t even budge, however.

Could it be that this was my turn to shine?

Wait, if I lifted something that even three grown men couldn't, wouldn't that be kind of weird?

Pretty sure I would have been made fun of if I had told them that it was 'The power of the Bear'.

"I will help, too."

"No, we can't have you helping us, Cliff-sama."

The man tried to refuse his help.

Well, it was common sense that a noble shouldn't be lifting carriages.

"Don't worry about it. You're citizens of my town. It's my job to help you."

"Cliff-sama..."

The man couldn't refuse Cliff after such a kind gesture.

Letting Cliff try seemed intriguing, but it was about time for me to step in. I felt bad for the family, after all.

"Why don't you let me try?"

"You?"

"Yup."

I nodded and recited the spell for earth magic, making the furrow rise. Naturally, the wheel rose along with it.

I had filled in the furrow, too, so it was like killing two birds with one stone. With this, other passing carriages wouldn't get stuck in it, either.

Eh, why didn't I just lift it back out, you might ask me? I could use spells, so why would I do something as silly as that? Besides, everyone would have looked at me weirdly if I had done that.

“You know, if you could do something like that, you should have said so straight away.”

“I wanted to let you act like the kind feudal lord you are so you could show off your good points.”

“I’m a normal person, unlike you.”

No, he wasn’t. He was a noble.

“Um, thank you very much.”

“Thank you, Bear-san.”

The little girl hiding behind her mother also thanked me. She had been staring at me the entire time.

“I’m not scary, you know.”

“Yeah, I know.”

“My daughter is a fan of yours.”

“A fan?”

“When she saw you in town, she kept saying ‘Bear-san, Bear-san’ happily.”

Really?

She hid behind her mother the entire time, so I figured she must have been scared of me.

“Why are you here, though? You don’t seem like merchants to me.”

“My mother lives in Sheelin. We went to visit her to show her our newborn son. We were on our way back to Crimonia when this happened.”

The man said while gently patting the baby’s head.

“I see. I hope that he grows up to be a healthy boy. I know that raising children is difficult, so keep it up.”

“Yes, thank you for your concern.”

“Well then, we will continue on our way. Be careful on your way back, okay?”

“Of course. Again, thank you for helping us. You really saved us.”

“The one who saved you is this bear here.”

“It was nothing, so don’t worry about it. You do have your children with you, so make sure to travel safely.”

“Yes, we will.”

After exchanging farewells and seeing that their carriage was moving properly, we resumed our journey to Sheelin.

## Chapter 171

### Bear-san Reaches The Faren Gramm Residence

The day after we helped out the family with their carriage, we finally spotted Sheelin in the distance, just before lunch time.

Its gates seemed similar to those of Crimonia.

“Cliff, wait a moment.”

I called out to Cliff and stopped Hugging Bear.

“What’s wrong?”

“There will be panic if we approach the town with Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear. Would you mind if I unsummoned them here?”

It was my first time coming to this town, so I didn’t want to do anything that would make me stand out.

“You’re right. You may unsummon them here.”

Cliff said while nodding towards Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear.

“Ehh, I have to part with the bears?”

Noa protested and clung onto Swaying Bear’s head. Meanwhile, Fina obediently climbed off of Swaying Bear.

“I’m just unsummoning them for a while. I would feel bad for them if the villagers were afraid of them.”

“Just make them into baby bears, then.”

“Even if she summoned them in their cub forms, we would still have to put them in a cage while we’re in town.”

Cliff helped me convince her.

“Noa, do you want the bears to go into a cage?”

Noa shook her head.

“Besides, you’ll be together again when we head back home.”

“Okay...”

Noa said and obediently climbed down from Swaying Bear.

“Swaying Bear, Hugging Bear. Thank you for letting us ride you. Please take care of us on our way back as well.”

Noa patted them one last time before saying goodbye.

I then unsummoned the Bears and started walking towards the town. It was already close, so we shouldn’t have any problems getting there on foot.

Noa and Fina both followed me without complaining.

It didn’t take long for us to reach the town gate, where I went through the usual ordeal of inquiring looks and ‘bear’ whispers. Even though I was used to this happening in every new town I entered, it still felt uncomfortable, so I pulled down my hood to cover my face.

“Your identification cards, please.”

A guard at the gate asked us.

As soon as he saw Cliff’s card, though, his facial expression changed.

“You’re free to enter.”

As expected, once the guard realized Cliff was a noble, his attitude changed drastically.

Cliff took back his card, touched the crystal board that checked if he was a criminal, and stepped ahead into the town, allowing for others to get checked as well.

Noa and Fina had no trouble, either; all they had to do was show their citizenship cards.

Once it got to my turn, and I showed him my guild card, though...

“You’re the adventurer Yuna-san?”

“Yep.”

The guard asked, comparing the card with me.

Was he surprised that a young girl like me was an adventurer? Or, was it my rank which surprised him?

Wait, could it be my new commerce rank, maybe? Yeah, he was probably shocked to see a merchant Bear.

“Is there a problem?”

“No... Please touch the crystal board and head in.”

I took back my card and did as he said.

The crystal board didn’t turn red, of course, since I wasn’t a criminal.

“These people are all guests of the Faren Gramm family. No need to report their arrival to the higher ups as I will be taking responsibility for them.”

Cliff said, turning back to face the guard.

“Yes, sir!”

The guard said after straightening his back.

How admirable of Cliff to vouch for us.

Anyway, we were able to head to Gran-san's residence without any additional trouble.

A few minutes later, however...

"They are staring at us."

"Yep, they are."

"Why are they looking at us, though?"

"Well, everyone is staring at us, so..."

"....."

Cliff, the guards, Noa, and finally Fina all commented before looking at me.

"Maybe they are staring because Cliff and Noa are nobles."

With the guards escorting them, the two of them stood out for sure.

If I saw nobles walking out and about, I would look at them and wonder what was going on as well.

"No, they're all looking at you! You're wearing a bear suit, after all."

Cliff said exasperatedly, finally remembering what must have been the reason.

"Why didn't you say so in the beginning, then?"

"I had just forgotten how out of place and weird your suit is. You corrupted me before I knew it!"

"Yuna-san's suit is not weird but cute! People are looking at her because they think she looks cute."

Noa didn't seem to be lying when she said that. Thank you for always having my back, Noa.

Well, I was used to people staring at me, and I just wouldn't be able to live in this world worry free without my suit.

“If you really don’t like standing out so much, we can split up, you know.”

“If we do that, I will go with Yuna-san.”

“I’m going with Big Sis Yuna as well.”

Noa and Fina said, grabbing onto me.

What nice children they were.

“We can’t do that. It would be too dangerous with just the three of you. Instead, we should hurry along and get to Old Man Gram’s place as quickly as we can.”

We couldn’t really hurry, though, since we couldn’t ride Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear here, so our only option was to walk.

Cliff wanted to bring Noa up onto his horse, but...

“I will walk together with Yuna-san.”

She rejected him, leaving him slightly hurt.

Quickly walking down the road, while attracting more stares, we eventually arrived at a large mansion, about the same size as the Cliff’s one.

Nobles’ mansions were huge no matter where I went, huh.

There were even two guards standing in front of the main gate.

“Good day, I’m Cliff Foschuroze.”

“We’ve been waiting for you, Cliff-sama. Would you mind showing us your identification and invitation cards, so we can make sure everything is in order?”

Cliff did as they asked.

“Thank you, everything seems to be in order. I’m guessing the girl next to you is your daughter, Noire-sama? Somebody will be coming shortly to guide you inside, so please

wait just a moment.”

One of the guards headed into the mansion while the other one looked at me curiously.

“By the way, is this girl wearing a bear suit your attendant?”

Rather than being suspicious of how I was dressed, it felt like he was troubled by how he should interact with me.

“No, the ones accompanying me are these two guards. She is here to attend Miss Misauna’s birthday party.”

“Misauna-sama’s party... If you have an invitation, would you please show it to me?”

Fina and I both handed over our invitations.

The guard quickly scanned them over and then completely changed his attitude.

“Please excuse my rudeness.”

He said, straightening his back.

It seemed that as long as one had an invitation, they were treated as guests, no matter if they were a commoner, an adventurer, or a bear.

Soon after, a maid came out of the mansion.

“Cliff-sama, sorry to keep you waiting.”

The maid said and gave Cliff a polite bow.

She looked to be about twenty years old and had brown hair. She was quite pretty, in fact.

I had already thought about this with Lala-san, but did nobles choose their maids based on their looks?

Most of them were beautiful, after all.

“Meshun, it’s been a while.”

“Yes, it has. I’m glad that you’re doing well, Cliff-sama. Noire-sama, you’ve grown so big.”

“Yup, I’m taller now.”

They already knew this maid, it seemed.

After the maid finished giving her greetings to Cliff and Noa, she turned to me.

“Thank you for waiting, Yuna-sama, Fina-sama.”

“You know about us?”

“Yes. I’ve heard about you from Misana-sama and Gran-sama.”

Meshun-san said and smiled.

What had they said about us, I wondered. We hadn’t spent that much time together, so it shouldn’t be anything strange, right?

“Please follow me. I’ll be showing you to your rooms.”

“Would it be possible for me to see Old Man Gran first?”

Cliff asked Meshun-san as we began walking.

“Yes, no problem, but he’s greeting some other guests right now.”

“When he has time, then. Could you let him know?”

“Yes, of course.”

After walking through the mansion for a while, Meshun-san stopped in front of a door.

“Cliff-sama, Noire-sama, please use this room.”

“Eh, I have to be in the same room as Father?”

“Yes, Yuna-sama and Fina-sama will be staying in the room next to yours. The guards

will stay in a room down the hall.”

“I want to be in the same room as Yuna-san and Fina.”

“There are only two beds in each room, unfortunately.”

“I can sleep together with Fina. Fina, you’re okay with that, right?”

“I will just sleep on the floor, then.”

“I can’t let you do that. Let’s sleep together.”

“If you really are okay with that, Noa-sama...”

Meshun-san gave Cliff a troubled look.

“Sorry about this, Meshun. I’ll be fine by myself.”

“Okay. In that case, Cliff-sama, please use the room here. Yuna-sama, Fina-sama, and Noire-sama, please use the room next to his.”

“Thank you.”

“Would you like to have lunch?”

“Lunch would be good. Will you prepare it for us?”

“Yes. I will bring it to your rooms immediately.”

I wanted to take a walk through the town and eat at some food stands, though. Well, I probably shouldn’t be going off on my own, right?

“Well then, I will now show your guards to their room as well.”

Meshun-san said and took the two guards with her.

Well, we were inside a guarded mansion, so letting them leave shouldn’t be a problem at this point. Heck, Noa even took walks around Crimonia all on her own from time to time, so there should really be no reason to have them still tagging along.

Cliff didn’t seem to be concerned at all and entered his room.

“Yuna-san, let’s go into our room.”

Noa said and dragged me into our room, which really, as I immediately noticed, only had two beds.

“Ahh, I’m so tired...”

Noa said, flopping down on top of one of the beds.

“Big Sis Yuna, is it really okay for me to be here?”

Fina worried about what to do while standing by the door.

“I kind of want to ask the same thing about myself...”

A commoner and an adventurer. Neither of us had the social standing to participate at a noble’s party.

We wouldn’t be here if I didn’t have to.

“Big Sis Yuna, why did your expression turn dark all of a sudden?”

“Sorry, I was just thinking about the party, but at least the one we are going is Misa’s and not Gran-san’s...”

Misa’s party was only for friends and family, after all.

“That’s not fair. Yuna-san and Fina should go to Grandpa Gran’s party too.”

“We don’t have invitations, though. Also, unlike Misa’s party, Gran-san’s party will have many nobles attending, not just his family and friends.”

Just that fact alone was enough for me not to want to attend.

“If I had a choice, I wouldn’t want to attend either.”

Fina backed me up.

“Uuu, even you’re against me, Fina...”

Noa started pouting.

Fina tried to comfort her just as somebody knocked on the door. It was Meshun-san, bringing our food.

“Your meal is ready.”

“Thank you.”

“Where’s Father?”

“Cliff-sama went to give his greetings to Gran-sama.”

“Is it okay for us to eat without him, then?”

“Yes. I already set his portion aside, so you don’t have to wait for him.”

Cliff was giving his greetings to Gran-san, huh. Was it really okay for us not to go as well?

Well, if we had to, Cliff would have told us to accompany him. I really didn’t know much about this world’s etiquette, though...

We proceeded to eat our meal and discussed what we were going to do in the three days before Gran-san’s party. Then, the door swung open...

# Chapter 172

## Bear-san Explores The Town

The door swung open, and Misa's head peeked inside before she rushed into the room.

"Big Sister Noire!"

"Misa!"

The two of them embraced each other, excited by their reunion.

Misa then looked at us happily.

"Yuna-san and Fina-chan, you two came as well."

"Yeah, we did receive an invitation from you, after all."

How could I tell her that we wanted to refuse when she was smiling like that?

"Misa-sama, I would like to thank you..."

"You don't have to be so polite."

Fina tried her best to give a formal greeting, but was interrupted by Misa.

"Everyone who come for grandfather's party also give their greetings to me. I'm tired of them already."

Being a noble sure seemed troublesome.

Luckily, I was just a humble adventurer.

Hmm, looking at Noa, though, being a noble didn't seem that difficult. Maybe it was just because Misa was having a party.

“Could it be that you came here to escape from them?”

“Yes. When I heard from Meshun that Big Sister Noire arrived, I escaped from my room to come here.”

Misa said, with a big smile on her face.

Was it really okay for her to leave her room like that?

“Oh right, Misa. Is it okay for us to take a walk around the town?”

“Hmm, I think it should be. Some other guests also went out.”

Well, that made sense. There was no way they could keep us in our rooms until the party. People wouldn't put up with that.

“Okay then. Fina, want to take a walk around town with me?”

“Yeah, I'd love that.”

“I want to go, too.”

Noa said, raising her hand.

“I don't think you can just come with us, Noa.”

“Why not?!”

“Don't you need to get Cliff's permission first?”

Noa was a noble, after all.

“Fine, I will go and get his permission then!”

Noa said, darting out of the room.

Just a moment later, however, she returned together with Cliff.

“I got his permission!”

That was just too fast, not to mention that she even brought Cliff back with her. Well, from what Meshun-san had told us, he had met with Gran-san, and he must have just come back from that.

“Yuna, can you take care of Noa until the party?”

“I don’t mind. What are you going to be doing, though?”

“I have work to do. There are many people I have to meet, after all. I also have a few things to discuss with Old Man Gran. And, because of all that, I won’t have much time to spend with Noa. There’s no way I could make her stay in her room until the day of the party, of course, and I know I won’t have to worry if she’s with you.”

I was rather pleased by the fact that Cliff trusted me.

“Noa, I’m letting you go outside, but you must not wander away from Yuna, okay? If you run off and she won’t be able to protect you, I won’t let you go outside again.”

“Thank you very much, Father. I will make sure to stay close to Yuna-san. Even if I have to cling onto her, I won’t leave her side.”

She said and grabbed onto me.

I pulled her off of me then turned to Misa.

“Okay, we’re going to take a walk around town, so could you please tell Gran-san we said hi?”

I asked her to deliver the message for us, so we could head out immediately.

“I-I want to go, too.”

Misa said.

I would feel bad for her if she couldn’t come with us, but, just like Noa, we couldn’t take her without getting permission first.

If we were to take her along, she needed permission from either Gran-san or her

parents.

Her parents? They weren't dead or anything, right?

If my memory wasn't failing me, they should be alive. When we had met Misa on our way to the capital, she had mentioned something about her parents going there ahead of her.

"I don't mind taking you with us if you get permission from your parents first."

I would be troubled if they thought I kidnapped her, after all.

"Really?!"

I saw no problem in adding another person or two to our sightseeing group.

Besides, Noa and Misa weren't the types to wander off on me.

I trusted Fina the most, of course, as I knew she wouldn't do anything that would cause me worry.

"Yes, as long as they allow you to go."

"Okay. I will go ask Father and Mother, then."

Misa said and darted for the door, just like Noa had. Just as she opened it, though...

"Grandpa!"

"What's this? So, this is where you've been, Misa?"

Gran-san walked into the room.

"Cliff, you're here as well, huh."

"I am really sorry for leaving so suddenly."

Cliff said and bowed apologetically.

“Now, no need to be so formal here.”

“Why did you come here, though, Old Man Gran?”

“I heard that Yuna, who had taken quite good care of me back on our way to the capital, just arrived. I figured that I would come and greet her.”

If anything, hadn't he taken care of me by guiding me through the capital, sorting out the bandit problem and even helping me purchase a plot of land at the capital?

“It's been a while, right? Young Bear Lady, Fina.”

“Ah, yes. I'm Fina.”

Suddenly hearing her name being mentioned by Gran-san, Fina acted suspiciously.

Also, my name wasn't 'Young Bear Lady'.

“Thank you for coming for my granddaughter's party.”

“I came because I myself wanted to see Misa as well.”

“I appreciate it.”

He proceeded to thank me for saving them from the orcs again, and then...

“Grandpa, can I go for a walk in town with Yuna-san and the others? They said they wouldn't let me go with them if I didn't get permission.”

“For a walk in town?”

Gran-san looked at me.

“If Young Bear Lady goes with you, I see no problem with that.”

He was leaving her to me as well?

Well, I didn't really mind it, and Misa also seemed excited to come with us.

After finishing our greetings, the girls and I set out to sightsee the town.

“Yuna-san, where are we going?”

“I don’t really know this town, so I planned on just walking around. Does anybody have a place they want to go?”

I asked them.

“Any place is fine.”

“Wherever you want to go, Big Sis Yuna.”

“I just want to get out of the house.”

Nobody had a specific place in mind, huh.

“Okay, then we’ll just wander around a bit. But, stay close to me, okay?”

They all obediently agreed.

As we wandered around, many people stared at us.

A normal girl wearing a Bear Suit and three beautiful young girls.

We were an eye-catching group, indeed.

Wait, all I could hear was ‘bear, bear, and bear’.

It seemed like the girls wouldn’t start catching attention till they were a bit older, huh.

Pondering when exactly that would be, I turned to the three of them.

“Want to eat something?”

We had eaten lunch not long before going out, but wandering the town might have made them hungry.

“Yes, I do.”

“Me too.”

“I wouldn’t mind it.”

They all approved, so I asked Misa where we could find some food stalls.

According to her, just like in Crimonia, quite a few of them were lined up at the plaza.

Food stalls were the quickest way of finding local specialties. I honestly wanted to check out other shops as well, but that might get boring for the girls, so food stalls would have to do.

Just as we were about to reach the plaza, we crossed paths with a few girls and boys dressed in beautiful clothing. They all seemed to be older than Fina but younger than me. Next to them stood a guard-like person, wearing a black mantle. This didn’t mean much coming from me, but it was a suspicious-looking figure.

Judging by how the boys and girls were dressed, they should be nobles, right?

When they noticed us, they smirked and looked at me. No, wait, they were looking at Misa.

When she saw them looking at her, she hid behind me.

Was there something wrong? Well, just by looking at them, I could tell that these children had bad attitudes. Their guard had an evil look as well.

Still smirking, the group walked over to us.

# Chapter 173

## Bear-san Hears About Sheelin

I wasn't sure if Misa knew these kids, but judging by the fact that she hid behind me...

"Yuna-san..."

"Big Sis Yuna..."

"....."

Noticing Misa's behavior, Fina and Noa also grabbed onto my suit. At this rate, I wouldn't be able to move if something were to happen.

"Don't worry, I'll protect you no matter what happens. That's why, just in case if something does happen, please let go of my suit for now."

They all obediently let go of it.

Things would have definitely gotten messy if I had tried to move around while they were grabbing onto me.

"And here I thought I just saw some weirdly dressed person, but you were standing right next to them, Misana. Are you taking this weird bear out for a walk?"

One of the boys said, making the others laugh.

Crap, it had been a while since I wanted to hit someone so badly.

There would be trouble if I hit a noble, though.

It would be okay if I was the only one who got into trouble, but Gran-san might end up being blamed for it as well. Also, Fina, Noa, and Misa were all here. I couldn't let them get hurt because of me.

Still laughing, the kids came right up to us, making Misa, who was still hiding behind

me, even more frightened. Was she being bullied?

If she was frightened, I had to protect her.

“Can you please not come any closer?”

I asked them.

“What do you think you’re doing?”

“I’m the guard of these children.”

“What’s this, Misana? You have a bear as your guard?!”

The boy and his lackeys laughed again.

This mood was getting quite sickening.

“I guess a bear is pretty strong, right?”

The boy said and laughed even harder.

I didn’t care that he was laughing at me, but him frightening Misa was pissing me off.

She was literally shaking behind me.

I noticed that Noa and Fina were holding her hands to support her.

What good children they were.

Anyway, it would be best to get out of here quickly.

“If you have no business with us, then we’ll be heading off.”

“Wait. I’m talking to Misana right now. Misana, I will be going to Old Man Gran’s party, you know. Why don’t you thank me? Tell me, ‘Thank you very much for attending his party.’”

If he was going to Gran-san’s party then he was a noble for sure.

Gran-san must have it rough if he had to invite such an uneducated brat like him.

“If you would like, I could even come to your birthday party.”

“You don’t have to come.”

“What’s with that attitude? I’m telling you that I will come.”

“You don’t have to come.”

Misa repeats herself, making the boy angry.

“Are you sure you should be saying that? Your family might end up being ruined, you know.”

“.....”

“You should try to get on my good side, you know. Then, even if your family gets ruined, I might consider hiring you as my maid.”

The boy laughed again while Misa just looked down in silence.

I didn’t know what the situation was between them, but this kid was annoying, and Misa was upset.

I had to get her out of here as quickly as possible.

“Everyone, let’s go.”

I ignored the boy and tried to leave.

“Wait. I’m not done talking yet.”

The boy walked over and tried to grab Misa’s arm, but I stood in front of him to prevent him from doing so.

“What are you doing? Move! You’re just a guard wearing a weird outfit, so don’t get in my way!”

“I’m getting in your way because I’m a guard. I will not allow any further insults from

you.”

We glared at each other.

“You think you can get away with defying me in this town? Don’t act like you’re a big shot just because you’re some weirdly-dressed guard from the Faren Gramm family. Look, this is what a real guard should look like.”

The boy pointed at the man in the black mantle.

He did look quite strong, especially because of those evil looking eyes of his.

“You aren’t fooling me. How could a girl wearing such a stupid outfit be a real guard? Misana, if you end up at my place, I’ll even consider lending you one of my guards.”

“Big Sis Yuna is strong, so there is no need for that.”

Misa said proudly to defend me.

“What’s so great about this weird girl?!”

“You know, if you can’t even go outside without your wonderful guard, why don’t you just go back crying to your Mommy? ‘Mommy! I can’t even go outside without my guard!’”

I mocked the boy to get back at him.

“You bitch!”

The boy immediately got angry at my provocation.

Wow, his boiling point was pretty low.

Nobody must have ever made fun of him till now, huh.

The boy tried to punch me in his anger, but I stopped his fist with the Bear Hand.

“Dammit, let go!”

The boy tried to pull away, but to no avail.

“Will you let us pass?”

I asked in a more serious tone.

“Shut up! Blood!”

When the boy called out, the man in the black mantle quickly moved forward to attack. He was faster than I had expected, so I had to let the boy’s hand go to evade him.

The boy lost his balance and fell onto his back, making the girls behind me laugh.

It must have looked funny to his lackeys, too, since they also burst out laughing.

“You bitch!”

“It’s not my fault. If you have a complaint, tell him. He suddenly tried to strike me. Also, didn’t you order him to attack me yourself?”

The man in black tried to help the boy up, but he shook away his hand and got up on his own.

“Blood, do something about this weird bear!”

“Randall-sama, look around you.”

The guard warned the boy.

Because of all the commotion, people began to gather around us.

When the boy noticed them, he became frustrated.

“Tch, we’re leaving.”

He told his followers then looked at me.

“Don’t think you’ll be let off easily for going against me.”

He said and finally left.

Oh, did he just threaten us like all villains did before they left!?

What was with his group of lackeys, though? They must also be somehow related to Misa for sure.

As we watched them leave, I felt Misa grab my suit again.

“They left, so everything’s okay now.”

In order for her to calm down, we found a bench and rested for a while.

“What’s wrong with that guy? Acting all smug like that.”

“He is Randall, from the Salbert family. They are the lords of this town.”

Noa answered my question.

I knew it, he was a noble.

Well, if he had gotten invited to Gran-san’s party, he had to be a child of someone important.

He was the type of noble I had imagined before meeting Cliff. A cheeky and self-centered type of person. I hated people like him the most.

Still, a son of a lord, huh.

“I thought that the lord of this town was Gran-san.”

“That’s right, grandpa is also a lord.”

“Uhh, can a town have two lords?”

This was the first time I heard of a town having two lords.

I had never heard of anything like that back in my world.

“I don’t know much about it, but a long time ago, both families were awarded this territory for their contribution to the war, and since they got well together, they just split it equally. But, as time passed, their relationship worsened, bringing us to the situation of today.”

Noa explained to me.

A town having two lords still seemed weird to me.

Like, who took care of maintenance? Who collected the taxes?

There had most likely been no problems when they had been getting along, but now that their relationship has worsened?

They must be fighting over money for sure.

“I’m surprised they can run the town like this.”

“That’s because grandpa governs the east side, while the Salbert family governs the west.”

“You mean this town is split in two parts?”

Misa nodded.

Could they really do that?

Well, it seemed like they could, since the town was functioning like that. What an idiotic arrangement.

Had the king been stupid back then?

How could he have let two families run the same town just because they had happened to get along?

As time passed, relationships changed. There was no guarantee that their children would get along as well, especially when succession of town’s assets was on the line.

When I had first met Misa, things had already seemed to be going poorly for her family. I was glad that I hadn’t ended up in this town instead of Crimonia when I had first come into this world.

Yeah, thank God I had met Fina in the forest. If I had just walked in a different direction,

I might have ended up here.

I patted Fina's head.

"Eh, Big Sis Yuna?!"

Fina was surprised by my sudden patting, but I ignored her and continued our conversation.

"Just because he's the lord's son doesn't mean he can be rude to you."

"I hate him. He always says mean things to me."

This was the first time I heard Misa using strong language like that.

Well, he was cocky enough to demand appreciation for him attending a party.

The problem probably laid with how his parents had educated him. I shivered, knowing that such nobles existed.

"He attacks you like this every time?"

"Yes, and it's gotten worse lately. As soon as he sees me, he starts insulting Father, Mother, and Grandpa."

When he had noticed Misa earlier, he had indeed had the look of a bully noticing his target.

I could tell that he had a bad personality just by looking at his face.

"And a guy like that has been invited to Gran-san's party?"

"Yes, because he's still the son of this town's lord. Grandpa didn't like the fact he had to invite him, either."

Relationships between nobles were just so difficult, having to invite people they didn't want coming.

Hmm, this wasn't limited just to the noble society, was it? When you wanted to hang

out with your friends, there were times when you had to invite people you didn't want to. I had never had this problem, of course.

The same was true in the workplace, judging from what I had seen in dramas and movies.

Even though it was important to socialize, it was just so troublesome, having to invite people you didn't like, just to keep your connections.

“Were the children with him nobles as well?”

The boys and girls who were following Randall also laughed at Misa, so they must be mean as well, right?

“I think they're the children of this town's merchants.”

“Merchant's children?”

“Yeah, I always see them together.”

Did that mean that they were there to flatter him?

What a sad life, having to sell themselves out on flattery at such a young age. They would have to bow down to him for the rest of their lives.

It was the same with my world, though. When you went to school, you had to bow down to your upperclassmen. When you went to work, you had to bow down to your superiors. It was never any different; you had to sell yourself out by flattering those stronger than you to lead an easy life.

I had become a hikikomori so that I hadn't needed to struggle with impressing my seniors.

Yeah, shutting yourself in was indeed the best way to avoid dealing with those types of troublesome, hierarchical relationships.

I bet the parents of those merchant children did the same.

I could almost see the gaudy merchants borrowing the power of a lord to earn money illegally.

Conversations like ‘What a cunning fellow you are,’ followed by ‘Oh no, not as much as you, my lord,’ must be a daily occurrence to them.

Anyway, back to the problem at hand. I was also curious about that inexcusable statement he had made. Something about Faren Gramm family getting ruined soon.

I was curious, but I also hesitated to ask Misa something as delicate as that.

At this point I honestly didn’t care for food anymore. What should we do, then?

“What do you want to do now? Want to go home for the day?”

“I’m okay.”

Misa said with a smile, but she couldn’t deceive me. It might have just been a fight between children, but I should probably talk to Gran-san about this. Dealing with nobles should be left to nobles, after all.

If it had been a monster, I would have taken care of it myself, but this...

Still, if we headed back now, Misa would feel responsible for it and blame herself for ruining a fun sightseeing.

“Okay, let’s go wander around some more before heading home, then.”

“Okay.”

“Great.”

“Thank you, Big Sis Yuna.”

The three of them replied happily.

In order to cheer Misa up, I decided to hit some food stalls after all.

“Big Sis Yuna, are you sure we can have these?”

“Don’t worry about the money. Uncle, give us four skewers!”

I gave a skewer to each of them.

“Thank you.”

The three of them seemed to enjoy eating them.

I also got us some drinks to go with our skewers. Ah, this was such a bliss. If we just hadn't ran into that noble idiot, we would have had a great time. I didn't say that out loud of course, so Misa wouldn't get sad.

Fina and Noa didn't mention what happened, either. They really were raised well.

Although we didn't really look around much, Misa seemed to be in a better mood, so we decided to head back.

# Chapter 174

## Bear-san reports to Gran-san

When we returned to Gran-san's mansion, Meshun-san came out to greet us.

"Welcome back. I didn't expect you to return so quickly."

"We ran into a bit of trouble."

Meshun-san stared at me.

It wasn't my fault, okay.

Well, they had noticed us because of me...

"We ran into an annoying brat called Randall, from the Salbert family. We came back early because of him."

We had wanted to stroll around for a while longer, but none of us had been in the mood after that encounter.

Meshun-san's smile disappeared when I mentioned Randall.

"Randall-sama, you say? Did he do something to you?"

"He harassed Misa."

Meshun-san quickly turned to Misa.

"Misana-sama, did he hurt you?"

"Big Sis Yuna protected me, so I'm okay."

"I see. Yuna-san, thank you very much for protecting Misana-sama."

Meshun-san said with a deep bow.

“So, the families really don’t get along, huh?”

“Sadly, yes. Our relationship has been bad for a few years now, but it got even worse recently, especially Randall-sama’s remarks towards Misana-sama.”

“Has nobody complained to their family about his behavior?”

“We have, but it seemed to have had little effect. Before, they always told us things like, ‘We’ll keep a better eye on him,’ or ‘We’ll scold him about it.’ Lately though, they just say that parents shouldn’t involve themselves in their children’s arguments.”

This must have been the difference between how the bully and the bullied looked at the situation, huh.

“In that case, shouldn’t we report it to Gran-san at least?”

“Yes, that might be a good idea. Just talking to the parents isn’t doing much, but Gran-sama might have more luck with it.”

“So, can I speak with him right now?”

“Hmm, since it’s regarding Misana-sama, I think you should be able to. He’s currently having an important discussion with Cliff-sama, however, and he told me not to let anybody near his study.”

It would be best to just go and try to speak to him now, and if he said no, I could just come back later.

I told Misa and the others to head back to their rooms while I went to meet Gran-san.

“We’re going too.”

“I’ll be fine on my own. It’s been a while since the three of you have been together, so why don’t you go play in our room?”

I managed to convince the three of them then headed to Gran-san’s study with Meshun-san.

“Gran-sama and Cliff-sama are in this room.”

“Thank you.”

I knocked on the door and entered when I heard a reply from inside.

“Excuse me.”

“Yuna?”

Cliff and Gran-san both look at me, surprised.

The two of them must have been discussing something, judging by the documents spread out all over the table in front of them.

“Is something wrong?”

“I came to talk to you about Misa. I considered coming later, but this was important enough to come right away.”

“Did something happen to her?”

“We ran into an idiot named Randall, from the Salbert family.”

Their expressions changed when I mentioned his name.

“Was everything okay?”

“No one got hurt, but he did make fun of Misa.”

Though, even verbal abuse was probably quite hurtful to a child like Misa.

“Again...?”

Gran-san muttered, sounding annoyed.

“I only heard a bit about this, but are your relations with the Salbert family really that bad?”

“It’s bad, and has gotten even worse lately. This harassment began a few years ago. It was very minor at first, so nobody really knew who was doing it. That’s why we have been ignoring it until recently, but now, they harass us without even trying to hide it, like Randall bullying Misa openly for instance. I complained to his parents about this, but they just told me not to interfere with mere children’s quarrels.”

Gran-san told me, obviously frustrated.

Did Randall’s parents not understand that words could hurt as well?

Some people could never recover from bullying, and a few even ended up killing themselves over it.

“So, does that mean you are getting harassed yourself, Gran-san?”

It seemed like the conversation would get long, so I took drinks out of the Bear Box for the three of us.

The two of them gladly took their drinks and took a long sip.

“The Commerce Guild master is now under the control of the Salbert family.”

“Didn’t you try to object to that?”

“We did, but without any real evidence...”

“How did you find out about it anyway, then?”

“Ah, that’s because more and more merchants are working for the Salbert family.”

Cliff, who had been just silently listening till now, cut into the conversation.

“More and more goods are being supplied only to the districts owned by the Salbert family, making other people unable to buy them anywhere else but there.”

“Yes, and because of that, my districts began to suffer.”

“Did you try to talk to the Commerce Guild about it?”

“Yes, and the merchants said that they are free to sell their products wherever they want to.”

“Well, your residents should still be able to buy things, right? They just have to go to one of the Salbert districts.”

“Yes, but that hurts the merchants in the Faren Gramm districts. Some are even moving to the Salbert districts.”

“Do guild masters really have such influence?”

“It’s less about influence and more about corruption. If one of the shops here tries to purchase something from the Commerce Guild, they are offered only ridiculous prices.”

“And, that’s why merchants are migrating to Salbert area, since it is now the only place to get normal prices.”

“What a low move, making competitors from another area unable to buy things.”

Cliff then reacted to my comment in an unexpected way.

“Yuna, you... Did you already forget what you did to me?”

He asked with a stunned expression.

I had done something to Cliff? I didn’t recall anything, though.

I tilted my head, not understanding what he was talking about.

“Why you... You actually forgot? You asked Mylene not to sell any eggs to me.”

I clapped my Bear Hands together.

Ah, I had done something like that.

If I remembered correctly, it was because I had thought that Cliff had been the one responsible for reducing the monetary support to the orphanage.

Yes, that was it. How petty of him to bring up something from so long ago.

Well, I did understand what Cliff was trying to tell me. If you got on the guild master’s good side, they were more likely to help you out.

“Well, this is pretty much the same thing as what you did to me. Still, the scope of it here is much bigger, which makes it much worse.”

“Also, more and more influential people are starting to support the Salbert family, even further increasing the strain on my districts. Cliff and I were just discussing what could be done about it.”

“Old Man Gran, you should really have mentioned this to me earlier.”

Oh, so that was what they were talking about before I had barged in.

“I’m sorry, but I didn’t want to trouble you with this.”

“Even so, with the situation having degraded to this point...”

“I didn’t think that they would actually go all out and try to ruin us like this.”

Gran-san lowered his head towards the much younger Cliff.

“By ruin, you mean your family, right?”

“Yes. Without our income, our family is well on the path to ruin. We’ll have to forfeit our lands to the king and be forced to give it up to somebody else.”

“It is very likely that the lands will fall into the hands of the Salbert family. Just by looking at the reports on their revenue, you can see that they are doing an excellent job as lords of their area.”

Obviously, since their income was going up, the Salbert family looked good on paper.

Tax records didn’t show what kind of illegal things they did to increase it, after all.

“Anyway, we are trying to find a countermeasure against this. We’re sending in some goods from Crimonia, but being on the bad side of the Commerce Guild is a real problem.”

“That’s why I’ve invited many important merchants and wealthy people to my party. We cannot let the Salbert family’s plan go through. We cannot let his son inherit everything that is to this town.”

“We have to oppose them by winning some of the merchants over, or we are done for.”

“Yes. The guild master won’t stay put if he learns of our plan.”

So that was the purpose of this grand party.

There was more to this than just the argument between Misa and Randall.

From Randall’s perspective, Misa’s family was an opponent who they could steal the territory from. His way of speaking implied that he thought his family had already won. He had even said that he would make Misa his maid. If Misa ended up being kicked onto the streets, I would take care of her; there was no way I would let that idiot have her.

Of course, the best way to do that was to make sure that Gran-san’s family won this fight against them. From what I had heard, it seemed that Gran-san was losing in numbers, though.

Would Cliff lending his assistance be enough to turn the tables, maybe?

Well, if my assistance was necessary, I would make sure to help in any way I could. Not much I could do in this situation, however.

At the very least, I should be able to help out if it comes to an all out fight, but persuading merchants wasn’t really my thing.

The most I could do right now was protect Misa.

Our conversation ended, and just as I was about to get up, there was suddenly a lot of noise coming from the hallway, and Meshun-san barged into the room without knocking.

# Chapter 175

## Bear-san Does Cliff Another Favor

“I’ve got bad news, Gran-sama!”

Meshun-san said after rushing into the room with a pale face.

“What happened?!”

“The head chef Botts-san was attacked and is badly injured.”

“.....”

“.....”

Gran-san and Cliff were both lost for words for a while.

“How’s his condition? Will he be okay?”

“His wounds are currently being treated.”

“Where is he? Take me to him.”

Gran-san left the room with Meshun-san, leaving Cliff and me behind.

“It has come to that, huh.”

Cliff murmured to himself.

“What do you mean?”

“Like I told you earlier, many influential people have been invited to Gran-san’s party so that we can try and get them on our side. Now, the head chef is injured and will most likely be unable to cook for us, meaning we won’t be able to serve food at the party. We’ll have to postpone the party, which will ruin Gran-san’s image.”

“Why don’t you just call in some other chefs?”

“Botts worked as an assistant head chef at a first-class restaurant in the capital. A regular chef is no good for such a grand party. If we cannot serve food that will convince those influential people that our side is still in power, the prestige of the Faren Gramm family will collapse, and all of the people currently lending us their support will also disappear.”

Even though it was just cooking, it was still a very important part of the negotiations, huh.

People always ate delicious food during negotiations. Politicians discussed things while eating at traditional Japanese restaurants, while big companies held receptions.

It only made sense that people would get angry if they were served a simple cup ramen during an important meeting.

Good food made people happy, which made them more open to negotiations.

That was how important cooking really was.

Without good food, the mood would be ruined, discussions would turn stale, and negotiations would become harder.

“Is this the Salbert family’s doing?”

“That seems to be the case. Now, it might be difficult to find another chef with enough skill in this town.”

Cliff pondered what to do next with a fist on his forehead.

“Hmm, could I maybe ask you to bring someone for us? Who, though... with the time we have left, we really have to find someone in this town.”

Well, I couldn’t really prepare all the food myself. To begin with, I didn’t even know how to make food suitable for a noble’s party. The most I could do was probably make a big cake.

I could maybe use the Bear Gate to get some food from Crimonia or the capital and bring it here by using my Bear Box.

Well, I could also bring the cooks through the Bear Gate, but I really didn't want to reveal I had it even though I felt bad for Gran-san.

"Yuna, with your bears, maybe... No, never mind."

Cliff was about to ask me for something but changed his mind.

I already knew what he was going to say. He wanted me to use Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear to bring him cooks from elsewhere.

Yeah, that was the best method. This way, people wouldn't learn about the Bear Gate. The Bears were also well known in Crimonia if we were to get some cooks from there.

A round trip to Crimonia would take the Bears two days, so it was indeed possible to get them here in time.

Wait, they would probably need several days to prepare all the food, and it would be too late by then...

As we were searching for a solution, Gran-san reentered the room.

"Old Man Gran, how is he?"

"His condition isn't serious, but he isn't able to use his hands normally."

"So, he is out of the danger?"

"Yes, but I don't think he will be in condition to cook in time."

"Then, for the party..."

"Not possible..."

Gran-san said, shaking his head.

He then sat down, leaving Cliff to mull it over. Soon, both of them drifted off in a gloomy mood.

"Where was he when he was attacked?"

"I believe he went to inspect the ingredients that were going to be used for the party. Somebody attacked him as he was traveling down a vacant street."

“The culprit?”

“We don’t know. I ordered my subordinates to search for witnesses, but all they could gather was that it was at a place where not many people go to, making it harder to find possible witnesses. And, even if there were some, they most likely won’t come forward.”

“Do you think it was someone from the Salbert family like we thought?”

Cliff suggested them as the culprit again.

“Most likely, since nobody else has a reason to attack him.”

Gran-san agreed with Cliff.

“What should we do then, Old Man Gran?”

“We have to find a cook that is as good as Botts, no matter how difficult it may be. We cannot cancel the party, but we have to serve good food at all costs.”

“Do you have anyone in mind?”

“I can think of two people, but I don’t know whether they will accept or not.”

The two of them went silent again.

Cliff downed the tea I had brought out previously in one go and then looked at me.

“Yuna, can you look after Noa?”

“I’m sorry, but could you look after Misa as well?”

“I don’t know what the Salbert family is planning to do, so please stay by their side.”

“I really didn’t think that they would openly attack us like this. I was naive, it seems. If anything happened to my granddaughter, lady Noire, or lady Fina, I would regret it for the rest of my life. Please protect the three of them.”

The two of them bowed to me.

They didn’t even have to ask me, though, since I would protect them regardless.

They were my important friends and were like sisters to me.

“If, like today, somebody approaches us, what should I do?”

“I’m sorry, but please don’t go outside for the time being since I don’t know what might happen if you do. Of course, I know they would be safe if they’re with you, but it’s better not to push it. I would like you to stay put in your room until the party.”

“They will be safe inside the residence, but please stay by their side, okay?”

I would like you both not to take the hikikomori lifestyle lightly.

I could stay holed up inside for a few days, no problem. After all, I had been a hikikomori for several years.

Even without a computer or television, we could always find things to do since we would all be staying locked up together.

With the four of us, we should be able to find plenty of ways to entertain ourselves.

I left the two of them in the room, so they could continue their discussion, and headed back to my room, where the three girls were waiting for me.

When I got there, Fina, Misa, and Noa were all standing by the entrance.

“What’s wrong?”

“Um, we heard that Botts-san got attacked...”

“Oh, you heard about it already?”

“Yeah, we overheard the maids talking about it. Also, everyone was panicking, so...”

True, everybody I had passed on my way here seemed to be in a rush.

It would be weird for them not to notice that something was going on.

“Yuna-san, do you know anything about it?”

“I only know that Botts-san was attacked and injured, but his life is not in danger.”

“That’s good.”

Misa looked relieved.

“However, it seems that he won’t be able to cook for a while.”

I told them since there was no point in hiding it.

“What about the party, then?”

“Gran-san and Cliff are looking for someone else to take his place.”

It should be fine as long as they could find a new chef.

Though, based on what I had heard so far, that seemed rather difficult.

After some time had passed, dinner was brought to our room. It was a simple meal since the head chef was injured, but everyone ate it without a complaint.

Noa went to sleep in Misa’s room since she didn’t want to leave her alone, leaving only Fina and me to sleep in this room.

As usual, I summoned Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear in their cub forms for security reasons.

Fina sat down on the bed and hugged Swaying Bear nervously, so I took Hugging Bear into my arms and sat next to her.

“Big Sis Yuna, do you think everything will be okay?”

“Yeah, Cliff and Gran-san will do something about it.”

The situation honestly seemed rather bad, but I told her that to reassure her.

“You’re right. I’m sure Cliff-sama will be able to do something.”

“And, after Gran-san’s birthday party is a success, we will be able to go to Misa’s birthday party and celebrate with her.”

“Yup. I really want to give her our present. I hope it will make her happy.”

“We worked hard to make it, so I’m sure she will like it.”

It didn’t take much longer for Fina to start feeling sleepy and let out small yawns. I was about to turn off the lights when somebody knocked on the door, and Cliff’s voice was heard behind the door.

What was he thinking, coming to girls’ room this late. He said he had something to discuss with me, so I reluctantly let him in.

“Sorry, I know it’s late.”

“So, what is so important?”

“We didn’t want to involve you in an affair between nobles, but at the rate this is going, the Faren Gramm family might end up ruined, and I don’t want that to happen. Old Man Gran has been taking care of me since I was a little boy, so I want to help him and would like to borrow your strength to do so.”

Cliff said and bowed.

A noble like Cliff was lowering his head towards me...

The chefs they had tried to get must have been no good, huh.

“That’s fine, but what do you want me to do?”

“First, the party must succeed without fail. We need a chef who will be able to make food that can satisfy nobles and wealthy merchants.”

That was an absurd request.

“Cliff, do you understand what you’re saying?”

“Of course I do. I know what I’m saying is unreasonable. It’s just that there’s no person in this town who can make such lavish foods. Some had been threatened, some were bribed, while the others simply refused. There’s nobody left here, so the only thing we can do now is to bring someone from another town. A horse won’t be fast enough for this, however. We need your bears.”

I looked at Hugging Bear, which was still within my arms.

It seemed like it really was our only choice at this point.

I recalled the sad expression Misa had made when we had encountered Randall. Her birthday party was coming up, and I wanted her to enjoy it.

“Okay, I get it, I just need to bring a cook here.”

“So, you accept my request?”

“I just don’t want Misa to be sad, that’s all.”

“Thank you. I have an invitation for a Crimonia chef here. This...”

“I’ll take it just in case. I might not need it, though. I have an acquaintance who is a good chef.”

I answered while taking the letter.

“Who is it?”

“That’s a secret. However, I believe him to be a top-notch chef, so you don’t have to worry. I just don’t know if he’ll accept or not, so I will keep the invitation in case he refuses. Okay then, I’ll head out now.”

“You’re heading out now?”

“It’s best if I go as quickly as I can, right? So, could you just give a simple explanation to Noa and the others for me?”

“Okay, I’ll let them know.”

“Also, I think they will be safe inside the residence, but please take care of the three girls until I return.”

“I’ll have someone accompany them, so please don’t worry.”

“Anyway, I have to change, so could you leave? Also, I will pick a good time to leave, so you don’t have to worry about it.”

“Yeah, that would be great. Alright then, please take care of this for me.”

Cliff seemed to believe me and left the room.

“Big Sis Yuna, are you leaving now?”

Fina had been listening in on our whole conversation.

“Hmm? I’m not going.”

“Eh?”

Fina looked at me, surprised.

“I mean, I have the Bear Gate, and if I go now, it will still be in the middle of the night. So, it makes more sense for me to leave early in the morning instead.”

I had told Cliff I would be leaving now only to make him think that I was going to leave in the middle of the night with one of my Bears.

Yet, in reality, I would just head out by using the Bear Gate in the morning.

“I... I see. You’re right, but is that really okay?”

Fina asked, tilting her head.

“It’s fine. Come on; it’s getting late, so I’ll turn off the lights now.”

I made Fina lie down before collapsing onto the bed myself.

“Oh right, Swaying Bear, Hugging Bear. Wake me up early tomorrow, okay?”

They cried softly in response.

Now then, how should I persuade Zelef-san tomorrow?

Well, both Eleanora-san and the king owed me a favour, so it should work out, right?

I could always figure out the details later. I embraced Hugging Bear beside me and fell

asleep in no time.

## Chapter 176

# Bear-san Goes To The Capital To Fetch Zelef-san

\*Petchi Petchi\*, \*Petchi Petchi\*.

I was sleeping nicely until something soft began tapping my face.

As I opened my eyes, I saw Hugging Bear's paw in front of me.

Oh right, I had to leave first thing in the morning today.

I looked out the window and saw it was still dark.

"Thank you, Hugging Bear."

I thanked Hugging Bear and petted its head before getting out of bed.

Doing so, I woke up Fina, who sat up immediately.

"Big Sis Yuna, are you leaving now?"

"Oh, did I wake you up? I'm sorry, Fina. You can sleep in a bit more."

"No, I wanted to see you off, so I asked Swaying Bear to wake me up too."

I was pleasantly surprised by her response.

I thanked her and changed into my usual Black Bear Suit.

"Well then, I'm leaving now. If something happens, call me using your Bear Phone, and I will return as quickly as I can. Otherwise, please wait for me here without going outside since that could be dangerous."

I felt a bit anxious knowing I wouldn't be around for a while. Well, as long as they stayed inside the mansion, they should be fine.

Taking some precautions, like the Bear Phone, wasn't a bad idea, though.

"Okay. I'll call you if anything happens. Big Sis Yuna, you have to be careful as well, okay?"

I patted Fina's head, unsummoned Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear, and headed out onto the balcony.

Stopping just long enough for Fina to send me off, I jumped onto the roof.

This place should do, right?

The center of the roof was a good blindspot, so I set up the Bear Gate there.

I laid it down against the roof, so nobody would be able to see it.

Checking one last time, I opened the door below me, and transferred to the Bear House at the capital.

As soon as I passed through, though, I fell down due to the direction my body was facing.

It felt like jumping down a hole on the other side, but since I exited through a normal door here, I ended up buckling down.

It didn't hurt at all, but it was still rather embarrassing. I was glad nobody saw me.

I had breakfast at my Bear House then headed to the castle when the sun hit the sky.

It was still early morning when I reached the guards at the castle gate.

"Hello. Can I head inside?"

"Yes, feel free to enter."

Just as I was about to head inside, another guard ran over to me.

"Please wait a moment."

The guard told me.

“I’m not here for Princess Flora today but rather want to see His Majesty and Eleanora-san. Would that be okay?”

“Oh. Please wait a moment, anyway. Eleanora-sama has already arrived at the castle, but I don’t know where she is right now. As for His Majesty, unless you had a prior arrangement...”

Well, it made sense for me not to be able to meet the king on such sudden notice.

Still, they didn’t know where Eleanora-san was, so I wondered what was she up to now.

“Could I talk to Zelef-san, then?”

“I don’t have the authority to permit that either, unfortunately.”

Could it be that I only had permission to visit Princess Flora?

Maybe it would be quicker if I just went over to her room like usual and waited for the king and Eleanora-san to show up there?

Just as I decided to do so, I noticed Eleanora-san heading over to me.

“I knew I saw a bear from far away. It was you after all, Yuna-chan. How rare for you to come here this early, though.”

Usually, it was a pain when Eleanora-san appeared out of nowhere, but it was rather useful today.

“Eleanora-san, I have a small favor to ask for. Is now a good time?”

“What is it? If it’s okay with you, could we discuss it while walking? It’s part of my daily routine to take a stroll in the morning and patrol the area.”

I accepted her request, and we began walking towards the castle.

“So, what is it? It’s rare for you to ask me for a favor, Yuna-chan.”

“Well, I asked you, but it’s really meant for the king.”

“Oh, is that so?”

“Do you think I could borrow head chef Zelef-san for a few days?”

“Zelef? May I ask why?”

I proceeded to explain about the situation at Sheelin.

“Oh, Cliff did mention something about this in a letter to me. The Salbert family, huh. I haven’t heard many good rumors about them.”

So, there really were bad rumors about them.

“Sorry, but I can’t give you permission to borrow Zelef without consulting His Majesty first.”

Well, he was the head chef of the royal family, so that made sense. I had to get permission from the king himself, then.

“So, shall we go and see His Majesty right away?”

“Would that really be okay?”

“Yes, no problem. I have to report to him that you have arrived, anyway.”

Was that a rule around here? That everyone had to report me coming here to him?

Well, I was okay with it now, as long as I could meet him. Following Eleanora-san, we headed deeper into the castle.

As we passed by various people, they all bowed and greeted us. Eleanora-san responded by only giving a light greeting each time. Wow, she was rather popular around here.

Heading down a hall, we reached a door guarded by two soldiers.

“Oh, Eleanora-sama. Could the person next to you be the rumored Bear Missy?”

What did he mean by the rumored? I wanted to question him about it but decided it was probably better to ignore it as I could already imagine the reason why.

Weird rumors would continue to spread anyway, whether I knew about them or not.

“Yes. We have some business with His Majesty, so can you let us pass?”

“Please wait a moment.”

The guard knocked on the door and got confirmation from within.

“Go ahead.”

Receiving permission to enter, Eleanora-san and I walked into a spacious room, where three people were working on something. One of them was the king himself, then there was a man of similar age standing next to him, and sitting by the desk on the left was a handsome man in his mid-twenties.

He resembled the king for some reason.

“What’s the matter? You came here so early in the morning, not to mention to see me.”

“I just have a small favor to ask of you. I would like to borrow Zelef-san for a couple of days.”

Talking to him was a bother, so I cut straight to the chase.

“Zelef? What for?”

I had to explain the same thing as I had done with Eleanora-san all over again.

“The Salbert family and Faren Gramm family, you say?”

The man standing beside the king spoke up.

Who was he? This was the first time I had seen him; I was pretty sure of that. Well, him being here meant that he was an important person, right?

“Splitting that territory... Grandfather really did something quite unnecessary.”

The king said, sounding annoyed, and leaned against his chair.

“Well, it can’t be helped now. It must have been the best option, given the situation at the time.”

“Still, it turned into the situation we have today because of that. What a bother.”

I wondered if he had also said that to the previous king who had decided to split the territory into two.

Still, I agreed with how he felt. If that king hadn’t split it, we wouldn’t have had this problem now.

“Did you already know what’s happening there right now?”

“I have a basic understanding of it, based on the reports I have received. If I’m not wrong, the Salbert family is responsible for some nasty harassment, but that is about it, as most of the small details don’t reach the capital.”

“The Salbert family’s revenue has gone up lately while the Faren Gramm family’s has plummeted. Although the Faren Gramm family has been submitting their reports, they did not record anything specific in regards to the reason as to why that is happening.”

Well, to put it simply, the reports had made it seem as if the Faren Gramm family was failing to attract as many customers while the Salbert family was doing their best to procure as many as the could.

That, in return, had raised question as to what the Faren Gramm family was even doing.

“Turf wars between noble families happen everywhere. Although it is cruel to say this, the Faren Gramm family is powerless against them.”

It seemed that way to me as well.

Could Gran have played it out better?

The more I heard about it, the more it felt like he had already fallen too far behind in the beginning rounds.

“Still, there really are some bad rumors going around regarding the Salbert family.”

“Embezzlement, coercions, violence, all sorts of bad things, yet there isn’t any tangible evidence of their deeds. Without it, we can’t act against them.”

Well, that was how bureaucracy worked.

Even the king himself couldn’t act without any real proof. So much for justice.

“There’s also a rumor that the Salbert family is affiliated with the Bornard company.”

The handsome blonde man, who had stayed quiet till now, cut in.

He definitely looked similar to a certain someone.

The king noticed me staring and realized why.

“That reminds me, Yuna, is this your first time meeting Elnart?”

“Elnart?”

I had never heard that name before.

When I tilted my head, the handsome man laughed.

“To think that there is somebody who often comes in and out of the castle but does not know who I am. I am the legitimate child of King Furott, Elnart. It’s a pleasure to meet you, Yuna-san, the Bear.”

Ah, he resembled the king, or better he was the prince.

“You know about me?”

“I’ve heard about you from Father, Mother, and Flora. Not to mention that, every time you come to the castle, Father pushes all of his work onto me.”

His smile was scary for some reason.

Was it my fault?

I only came to see Princess Flora and never called for the king to come as well.

I would prefer if he didn't blame me for this.

I glared at the king, who cleared his throat before speaking up.

"The Bornard company, you say?"

Oh, he changed the conversation.

He used one of my best techniques, the hidden move 'Topic Change'.

Well, I was curious about the Bornard company, so I inquired with Eleanora-san.

"You've never heard of them, Yuna-chan? The Bornard company is the biggest company in the capital. They employ many merchants and do business all throughout the land. Their influence is so powerful that even nobles don't dare go against them."

"Yes, but with all the good rumors come the bad as well."

"Could it be that they are behind the actions of those merchants as well, then?"

"There may be somebody pulling the strings from the back, but it's also possible that they are completely unrelated."

"Although, I heard that the Bornard company seems to be aiming for Gran-san's territory, which could be a problem."

Well, if they used their many merchant pieces in the right way, they could easily corner an entire town. Then they just had to keep them on defensive, until their economy ran dry.

Did this world have an underground world of some sort as well?

Well, if the Bornard company and the Salbert family were indeed related, then it would most likely be difficult for Gran-san to get those merchants and influential people he was hoping for to his side.

The party wouldn't be able to change the outcome at this point as it had already been decided.

Still, if the party failed as well, the ruin of Faren Gramm family would come even sooner. Well, it was possible that the Salbert family wasn't related to the Bornard company, but according to the information we had, that seemed to be quite unlikely. Either way, we needed a chef for at least the party to succeed.

"Well then, are you going to lend Zelef-san to me or not?"

Even though I now knew that Bornard company might be involved, there was nothing I could do about it.

The one thing I could do, however, was to bring Zelef-san to Gran-san's mansion.

"Let me think. I can't act on their chef being attacked, but since this is for the birthday party of the Old Man of the Faren Gramm family, I can permit you to borrow Zelef."

Yeah, one chef being attacked wasn't enough for the king to be able to take action. It was just the chef of a noble family who had been attacked, not the noble family members themselves. We didn't know who was the culprit, either.

The Salbert family was the most suspicious, of course, but they weren't found as the direct culprit.

The king couldn't deal with every small problem other feudal lords might bring him; he didn't have time for that.

It would be like complaining to the prime minister and asking him to investigate some suspicious people just because some people got attacked in their neighborhood.

It was Gran-san's job to find the criminal. If they were a commoner, then they could be judged appropriately by him. Only if there was proof that the Salbert family was involved could Gran-san bring this matter before the king.

"However, I will process this as a request from Eleanora. Is that okay?"

The king said, turning to Eleanora-san.

“That’s fine. Cliff will be at the party as well, so we can use that as an excuse if any nobles complain.”

It would be a waste of time to stay here any longer, so I decided to head to Zelef-san’s kitchen once I was excused.

# Chapter 177

## Bear-san Asks Zelef-san For A Favor

After getting permission from the king, I headed to the royal kitchen.

For some reason, the king himself accompanied me instead of Eleanora-san.

It was because of the conversation Eleanora-san and the king had.

“Eleanora, I’ll accompany her, so you can get back to work.”

“Wha-Why? I can escort her, no problem.”

“No, you should return to your work. It’s better for me to tag along, so I can explain the situation to Zelef.”

“My job right now is patrolling the castle, and I can easily stop by the kitchen to explain it to him in your stead.”

“What about the matter from the other day, Eleanora-sama?”

The man next to the king asked Eleanora-san.

“Not done yet, Zangu.”

Eleanora-san averted her eyes while replying.

“I asked you to treat it as an urgent matter, didn’t I?”

The man, who seemed to be named Zangu, asked her nicely but firmly.

“Ugh, I get it. Yuna-chan, see you later. Let me know if this guy says anything weird to you.”

“Please return here as quickly as you can, Father, and don’t run off like you usually do. Just like Eleanora, you have a lot of urgent business to attend to.”

The prince lectured the king.

“Don’t worry, I will come straight back. Also, don’t make it sound like I skip work all the time.”

“You skip work every time this bear comes here!”

The prince said, looking at me.

Why was he looking at me, though?

It wasn’t my fault that the king decided to skip work. I never asked for an audience with him; he sought me out on his own. So, could the prince please stop looking at me like it was my fault? Well, this time around it was my fault, but as for all of the other cases, I had nothing to do with it.

For some reason, I felt like the prince hated me...

I didn’t recall ever doing anything that would make him hate me, though.

He shouldn’t blame me because the king passed his work onto him, right?

If he really wanted the king to do his job, he should just tie him to his chair.

That way, the king would have to do his work and not pass it onto the prince. The king also wouldn’t be able to bother me anymore, so it was like killing two birds with one stone. I should suggest this to him when I had the opportunity to meet with him in private. I had no problem with him hating me, but it could be a problem if he decided to cause me trouble because of it.

Not to mention that he was Princess Flora’s older brother, so I should leave a good impression, or he might try to interfere with my meetings with her.

Anyway Eleanora-san unwillingly went off to work while the king and I headed to the royal kitchen, where we were met with several chefs in the middle of their cooking.

“You sure have a lot of cooks.”

“They have to prepare meals for everybody working at the castle, and that’s a lot of food.”

I noticed that all of the chefs were now looking at us. Well, the king himself just visited their kitchen, so it only made sense for them to look at him in surprise.

“It’s the bear.” “What is the bear doing here?” “Is she ‘the’ bear?” “Yes, she’s the rumored bear!” “Wow, I can’t believe that she really is a bear.” “What, is this your first time seeing her?” “Hmm, she’s younger than me.” “Not to mention, she’s small.” “Why does she wear that costume, though?” “Dude, she can hear you.” “The head chef will scold you if you make her mad.”

I had heard what all of them had said, so it was a bit late to warn them now.

Wait, instead of the king, were all of their gazes directed at me?

Wasn’t that weird?

Normally, if the most important person in the country arrived at your workplace, wouldn’t you notice them first?

“Oi, somebody should go talk to the bear.” “You go.”

They all started shoving each other.

No, no, shouldn’t you be greeting the king of the country rather than me?

They were all so weird...

Since nobody dared to approach us, I decided to call out to them, making one of the chefs finally come to us.

“Your Majesty, Yuna-dono, what brings the two of you here today?”

The first one to speak to us was Zelef-san, of course.

Not to mention that he actually knew how he should greet us. First the king and then me. As expected of the royal head chef.

“Could it be that you brought over a new recipe today?!”

Zelef-san asked me, his eyes glowing like that of an excited child.

“No, I came here to ask you for a favor, Zelef-san.”

“You want to ask me for a favor?”

“Zelef, I want you to accompany Yuna to Sheelin.”

Zelef-san was surprised by the king’s sudden request.

“Sheelin? Why would we be going there?”

“The Faren Gramm family is hosting a party. Their chef got injured, however, and he cannot prepare the required meals. That’s why, Yuna came here to ask for your help.”

“Yuna-dono did?”

Zelef-san looked at me, so I spoke up.

“Can I ask this of you? You were the only one I could think of asking since you’re the only person I know who can make food suitable for noble parties.”

“If His Majesty gives his permission, then of course, I will help. Would it be okay for me to be away for a while, Your Majesty?”

Zelef-san turned back to the king.

“Both you and I owe Yuna a favor, so make sure you complete her request properly.”

“Of course, Your Majesty. Yuna-dono, I will come with you to Sheelin to prepare the food for the party.”

“Thank you, Zelef-san.”

“No need to thank me. You always show me new delicious recipes, so all I’m doing is returning the favor.”

It would bother the other chefs if we continued our conversation here, so we decided to head to Zelef-san’s personal kitchen. Before we left, Zelef-san gave a whole lot of

instructions to someone who appeared to be the assistant head chef.

“So, what kind of party will this be? How many people will be attending? What sorts of guests are coming? When is the party?”

I explained it to him the best I could.

“Will we even make it in time?”

“We will ride my summoned beasts.”

“You will let me ride on your bears?!”

“Well, there’s no way we are getting back on time if we go by horseback. With my Bears, it shouldn’t take more than two days, I think.”

I wasn’t sure how much time exactly would it take since I hadn’t tested it yet, but we should make it in time.

“I see. Still, we don’t have much time. Will I have time to buy all the ingredients?”

“I don’t know if Sheelin will have all the ingredients you want, so how about we buy some here at the capital before heading out?”

Based on the conversation we had had in Sheelin, they most likely wouldn’t be able to procure all the ingredients needed for a noble party, especially with the Salbert family obstructing us. Yeah, it would be best to buy everything we could at the capital before we left.

“I don’t think we have any time to waste. Your Majesty, may I get permission to take ingredients from the castle instead?”

“Yeah, I don’t mind, but make sure to report how much you will be taking.”

“Of course.”

“Oh, I will pay you for the ingredients. I will have Gran-san repay me later.”

There was no such thing as a free lunch, after all.

“It’s okay, you don’t have to worry about paying us.”

“No, I have to take care of the payment properly.”

Well, the one paying in the end would be Gran-san, though.

“Alright then, I’ll give you the bill later.”

“Your Majesty, may I also get permission to borrow another item bag? With this amount, even my item bag won’t be able to hold all of the required ingredients.”

“That’s okay, I can just put it all into my item bag.”

“Really?!”

“Yup, it’s really huge.”

“Okay, let’s head straight to the pantry to collect the ingredients, then.”

“People will get mad at me if I don’t return soon, so I leave everything to you, Zelef.”

“Okay, I will take care of it, Your Majesty.”

Splitting ways with the king, Zelef and I headed to the pantry on our own.

It was right next to the kitchen, most likely because it was convenient to have it nearby.

I immediately noticed it was refrigerated when we entered.

“I would like to pack these into boxes before storing them in your item bag. Is that okay?”

“Yeah, sure. Also, take as much as you need. The party mustn’t run out of food.”

Zelef quickly began stuffing boxes with ingredients and passing them to me.

“Yuna-dono, I would like to thank you.”

“…What for?”

I had no idea what he could be thanking me for.

Heck, if anything, I should be the one thanking him for doing this for me.

“I have been more or less stuck at the castle since the day I became the royal head chef, so I’m quite happy about this trip. It’s not like I dislike my current position in the castle; I like doing it and am delighted to have earned His Majesty’s trust. Also, because of my current position, I was able to meet you and got to taste your delicious recipes; I’m very grateful for it.”

“I’m glad to hear that you don’t think of me as a bother.”

“I could never think of you that way. I’m very excited for the shop we will be opening even though I’ve gotten busier because of it. Opening it will be a valuable experience.”

“Oh right, how is that going by the way?”

“Eleanora-sama is managing most of it at the moment, so I’m not sure. I am training some chefs for it already, though. The only problem I have right now is deciding the menu...”

“I see.”

“Well, thinking of what recipes to serve is fun in its own way as well.”

I was glad to hear that he was enjoying the experience.

Still, it looked like I was bothering him during a busy time even though he didn’t show it. I would have to thank him by thinking of a new recipe to bring him.

Yep, a new recipe should be a good way to thank him.

# Chapter 178

## Bear-san Departs For Sheelin with Zelef-san

I continued to put away all the ingredients Zelef-san was passing to me into the Bear Box.

The amount of the ingredients he gave me was huge, but it was better to take everything we could, rather than having him panic because we didn't bring enough.

Anyway, the Bear Box didn't get any heavier no matter how much I put inside.

"Mind if we also drop by the wine cellar? Serving wine at a noble party is a big necessity."

Wine, huh? I didn't know much about noble parties, but from what I had read in manga and novels, it did seem that wine was always present. I could clearly imagine nobles drinking wine from fancy glasses.

Once we collected all the required ingredients from the storeroom, we headed down into the wine cellar, where Zelef-san pointed out which wine I should put into the Bear Box.

Hmm, I didn't drink alcohol, so I couldn't tell if it was of good quality or not just by looking at it.

Well, I couldn't tell the difference even if I drank it...

"Do we have everything now?"

I asked as I put away the last bottle.

"I just need to grab some seasoning from my kitchen, and we are all set to go."

We returned to his kitchen, where I had to pack away all kinds of seasoning.

Hmm, maybe he had something I would like to use myself? I should probably ask him

to show me his collection the next time I came here.

“Yuna-dono, I have everything I need now.”

“Okay, I want to head back as quickly as possible, so are you okay with leaving now?”

I knew we would make it in time, but I still wanted to hurry back because I was worried about the girls.

“Yes, I don’t mind if we leave right away.”

“You didn’t forget anything, right? We won’t be able to come back to grab something you forgot.”

“I should have everything I need. Oh, actually, please wait just a moment.”

Zelef-san trotted back into the kitchen.

“I almost forgot my kitchen knife. I would be fine with using the knives from their kitchen, but a familiar knife is still the best, after all.”

Okay, it seemed like he had everything now.

Hmm, he was still wearing his chef outfit, though.

It would be hard for us to travel with him wearing that outfit, so I asked him to change clothes first.

“I’m okay with what I’m wearing, though.”

“You’ll stand out like that.”

“Compared to your outfit, Yuna-dono, I don’t think I stand out at all.”

Zelef-san said, glancing at my Bear Suit.

I know, I know. People stared at me even if I was just walking around.

However, the problem at hand was that I didn’t want the Salbart family to find out that I brought a chef with me. Zelef-san might get attacked if they did, after all.

“Also, I feel most comfortable wearing this outfit.”

Zelef-san said, grasping his clothes.

True, the clothes we wore every day were the most comfortable, so I completely understood his feelings.

If I had to take off my Bear Suit, I wouldn't be able to calm down.

Still, he could get attacked if they saw him wearing the chef outfit, so I made him put a large mantle over it to hide it.

With our preparations finally finished, we left the castle and were met by Eleanora-san standing next to a horse carriage parked by the gate. She had prepared it so that we could get out of the capital quicker.

Eleanora-san really was amazing, taking note of even such small details. Walking all the way from the castle would have taken us quite a bit of time, so this was a lifesaver. Also, if we were to ride in some sort of an open carriage, we would stand out too much, mostly because of me.

We thanked Eleanora-san, and climbed into the carriage. Thanks to it, we were able to leave the capital in no time, and when we put enough distance from the city walls, I summoned Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear.

“Oh, they came out from your gloves!”

Zelef-san said, impressed.

“I didn't think they would be this big, though.”

Had Zelef-san never seen them at their full sizes before?

“Which one may I ride on, Yuna-dono?”

I glanced at the Bears and then back at Zelef-san.

“Zelef-san, you aren’t afraid of them at all, huh.”

“I’ve already seen how docile they are as cubs, and Princess Flora always talks about how much she loves to play with them. There is no reason for me to be afraid of them.”

“I see. Most people find them daunting in their adult form, though.”

“They do seem a bit frightening, but their expressions are still the same, so I’m not scared of them at all.”

I was happy to hear that he thought of them this way.

I would feel bad for my Bears if Zelef-san was afraid to ride them.

“Okay then, Zelef-san, would you mind riding Hugging Bear?”

“Hugging Bear-dono is the white one, correct?”

Zelef-san approached Hugging Bear.

“Hugging Bear-dono, I may be heavy, but please bear with me.”

Zelef-san bowed to Hugging Bear, which nodded in response before lowering its back so that Zelef-san could get on more easily.

“Thank you very much, Hugging Bear-dono.”

It took some time for the plump Zelef-san to climb onto Hugging Bear, which stood up only after ensuring that Zelef-san was settled on it properly.

It seemed like Hugging Bear didn’t have any problem even with Zelef-san’s extra weight, so I jumped onto Swaying Bear.

“Okay, let’s get going then. We’ll start out slowly but speed up as you get used to it.”

After traveling for a while...

“This feels more pleasant than horseback.”

“Zelef-san, you can ride a horse?”

I kind of felt bad for asking this, but I just couldn't imagine him riding a horse.

“I tend to avoid riding them, but I'm obligated to know how to ride them in cases of emergency, so at least know how to. I'm by no means good at it, though...”

He said the last part rather quietly, but I was still able to hear it.

What was the part about there being cases of emergency? Did he mean having to ride with the army in times of war so he could cook for them?

“Well, it doesn't seem like I will have to ride them often, though.”

Well, that made sense since the country was at peace right now.

Maybe he would have to join the soldiers when they were sent to subjugate monsters far away?

I couldn't see the king doing that anytime soon, though. Was he really practicing for the sake of emergency or was it something else?

After Zelef-san got a bit more used to riding, we raised the speed and hurried of towards Sheelin. After several hours of nonstop traveling, I decided to take a short break and switch Bears.

“Zelef-san, please ride Swaying Bear this time around.”

Hugging Bear had shown a sad expression when Zelef-san had approached it. It wasn't as if Hugging Bear didn't like Zelef-san; it just wanted me to ride it.

“You would like me to ride on Swaying Bear-dono now? I don't mind, but is it because I did something wrong?”

“No, it's just that if I only ride on one of them all the time, the other one starts sulking.”

I explained to him.

“I see. Okay, I will ride Swaying Bear-dono this time around, then.”

Zelef-san immediately understood the problem. He thanked Hugging Bear for taking him this far, then went up to Swaying Bear.

“Swaying Bear-dono, please bear with me as well.”

I approached Hugging Bear, and it happily rubbed against me.

After petting its head, I jumped on, and we all continued our journey.

We proceeded smoothly, without encountering any monsters along the way. Well, even if any monsters had appeared, they would have been low-level ones, which wouldn't be able to catch up to our speed.

The only monsters that would be able to catch us were dragons or wyverns, but luckily, those didn't appear this close to the capital.

As some more time passed, I noticed that Zelef-san began dozing off on Swaying Bear.

Seriously, what a fearless man with the nerves of steel. Well, it was fine since it was impossible to fall off my Bears, but that would be way too dangerous to do on horseback.

Several hours later, the sun started to set, and the sky darkened.

We could ride through the night with my Bears, but we should be able to make it in time even if we camped it out. The party was in two days, and if all went well, we should arrive at noon tomorrow, with more than enough time for Zelef-san to make all the preparations.

I called out to Zelef-san and told him that we would be camping for the night.

When we stopped, he crawled off Swaying Bear and petted him as thanks.

“Thank you very much, Swaying Bear-dono.”

Swaying Bear cried softly in response.

I took out some firewood and started a fire before making two chairs for us to sit on

comfortably.

I decided to hold back and not bring out the Bear House this time around.

“Okay, now for some dinner...”

“In that case, let me...”

Zelef-san tried to offer to cook for us, but there was no need for that.

I took out some of Morin-san’s bread and Anzu’s soup.

“Oh, it seems my skills aren’t needed this time around.”

“Don’t worry, you will have a lot of cooking to do once we reach Sheelin.”

“I will do my best to exceed all of your expectations.”

Zelef-san said and then happily started to eat the soup and bread I offered him.

“Yuna-dono, did you make this?”

“No, both the soup and the bread are sold at shops in Crimonia.”

“They are both very delicious. I love them.”

“I will tell the people who made it that the head chef of the royal palace complimented their food.”

I jokingly said.

“It’s not like I’m just trying to flatter them, though. I really do find them delicious. The people who made them really understand the basics, hence they are able to make their food taste so well.”

Zelef-san said before resuming his meal.

“I should head to Crimonia when I have some free time.”

“It’s not my place to say this, but you’re welcome to come anytime.”

“Please take care of me when the time comes, then.”

Once we finished eating, we just laid down for a while.

Having nothing to do, I decided to brush Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear.

“Swaying Bear-dono and Hugging Bear-dono are really quick. What’s more, they were comfortable and were able to keep this pace even with me on them.”

Zelef-san laughed and rubbed his bulging stomach.

“Zelef-san, aren’t you like this because you eat too much?”

I had heard that chefs often got fat because they did a lot of taste-tests.

“It hurts to hear that from you, you know... It’s my duty to taste the dishes that my subordinates make; it’s the only way I can properly critique them.”

“I see. You’re training them well, instead of just having them learn by watching you do the cooking.”

“Some chefs indeed have their subordinates learn that way, but I believe it’s too naive to think that they will learn well like that. My subordinates are also all skilled chefs working at the royal castle, so most of them can easily learn recipes by just seeing them once.”

It made sense for them to be that skilled if they had been hired to work in the royal kitchen.

“Yuna-dono, where did you learn how to cook?”

Hmm, that was hard to answer.

It wasn’t like somebody had taught me; I had learned on my own by finding recipes in cooking books and on the Internet. It would be difficult to just say I hadn’t been taught by anybody, and I couldn’t just tell him how I had actually learned it...

“I’m sorry, it’s okay for you not to tell me. I was just curious since you are able to make so many mysterious dishes...”

Zelef-san noticed that I had gone quiet, so he apologized with a bow.

“That’s not it. It’s just that I wasn’t really taught by anybody specific, so I didn’t know how to answer.”

“So, you created all those dishes yourself?”

I tilted my head, thinking how to explain it to him.

“Those are all dishes from my hometown, and I learned how to make them there.”

“Your hometown, you say?”

“Yeah. They are the recipes of my hometown and not my own.”

“Is that so? The world is a big place, isn’t it?”

Yes, it was a big place indeed. I hadn’t thought that the universe could have had multiple worlds. The universe really was big, wasn’t it?

“I would like to visit the country you’re from one day, Yuna-dono.”

I found no way to respond to that, so the silence returned.

Zelef-san must have noticed my mood as he didn’t say anything else, either.

“Shall we head to bed?”

“I suppose we should. Who is going to keep watch, though? I don’t want to boast, but I’m not really good at staying awake...”

That wasn’t something to boast about anyway.

“We’ll be fine. Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear will let me know if something dangerous approaches us.”

I said, glancing at the Bears next to me.

“I see. Yuna-dono, your summoned beasts are simply amazing.”

“Heh. Anyway, you can relax and sleep comfortably. Also, if you might think of trying to attack me, Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear will not go easy on you, either.”

I warned him with a smile.

“That’s a terrifying thought. Well, I will be fine since I don’t want to die, and I have never thought of doing anything like that anyway.”

Zelef-san laughed then curled up into his blanket.

I settled myself between Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear and fell asleep in no time.

# Chapter 179

## Bear-san Brings Zelef-san To Sheelin

In the early morning, the sun shone onto my eyes and woke me up. I had rested well, settled in between Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear.

Morning already, huh. Luckily, we had gone to sleep early, so I woke up easily.

“Good morning, you two.”

I greeted Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear then got up.

Sleeping between my Bears felt nice, but snuggling up in a bed was still the best.

Zelef-san stirred in his blanket next to me, most likely woken by me.

“Good morning, Yuna-dono.”

“Morning. Let’s eat breakfast and then head out quickly.”

“Okay.”

We ate a simple breakfast, packed up, and headed out in no time.

I looked at the Bear Map and saw that we were already getting close.

Based on the distance we had already traveled, we should arrive at noon as long as nothing happened.

“Zelef-san, are you feeling okay? You’re not too tired, are you?”

“I’m fine. Riding on your bears is comfortable unlike horseback, where I get all sore in a couple of hours. I’m not feeling tired at all.”

Yeah, it seemed like everything would be fine as long as nothing bad happened.

We had plenty of time since we headed out so soon after sunrise.

Taking just one break this time, the gates of Sheelin were upon us before the sun had even reached its zenith.

Hmm. While I wanted to enter as quickly as possible, having to explain the Bears to the gatekeeper could be difficult.

“Zelef-san, I want us to walk from here on out; is that okay with you?”

“Eh? We’re going to walk from here?”

“It’s hard to explain the Bears to the guards, so it would be easier for us to get off here and walk through the gate.”

“Oh, I see. Okay, let’s walk then; I could use some exercise anyway.”

Zelef-san said and looked at his big belly.

He couldn’t lose that much weight by only walking a bit. Not to mention, this was going to be more like a stroll through the town, and with this distance, there was no way it would have any effect on his weight. Well, if he did it every day, maybe, but in just one day? No way.

Not like I should be the one to talk, though. I never took off my suit or exercised on my own.

My natural stamina was literally zero. I did remember taking the suit off once and trying to work out for a bit, but I quickly gave up. There was no way I could do it often enough for it to show any progress...

Anyway, I unsummoned Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear, and we walked to the gate.

“Aren’t you the bear from the other day?”

“Yes. Here’s my guild card.”

I didn’t want them to start questioning us, so I presented my guild card and rushed through the gate.

Well, they didn’t ask anything about Zelef-san, so they must have recalled Cliff saying that I was in his care.

Nobles really had a lot of influence, didn't they?

"This is Sheelin, huh?"

Zelef-san said, his gaze passing over the town.

"Isn't Sheelin rather close to the capital? Have you really never been here before?"

"I was born and raised in the capital, so I've rarely left. Instead, I've spent most of my time learning how to cook."

So, that was how it was.

If he hadn't been learning how to cook since his childhood, he most likely wouldn't have become the royal head chef.

I wouldn't be able to do that, since I couldn't focus on just doing that one thing. I was the type of person who tried out a lot of things but never really finished one.

Doing new things was fun at first, but I also got bored of it soon and dropped it. Basically, I was a stereotypical, useless human being.

On the other hand, there were a lot of people in this world who focused on one thing until they finished it.

As we walked towards Gran-san's mansion, Zelef-san was being pulled to every food-selling place we passed by.

"Zelef-san, you will have time for that after the party."

"But..."

"No buts. We need to hurry; the party is tomorrow."

"Uuu..."

I had to keep dragging Zelef-san all the way to Gran-san's mansion. I feared we might run into Randall again, but we managed to get there safely.

The guards at the entrance were surprised to see me return so quickly.

“Can we enter?”

“Yes. We heard about the situation from Gran-sama and were told to let both you and your guest pass.”

Since they had been notified, they weren't suspicious of Zelef-san and let us enter.

Once inside, Meshun-san rushed up to us.

“Yuna-sama!”

“I'm back. Can we meet with Gran-san and Cliff?”

“Yes. They told me to notify them as soon as you returned.”

“Zelef-san, are you tired?”

“I'll be fine; no need to worry about me.”

“Okay then. Meshun-san, please take us to them.”

We followed Meshun-san to Gran-san's study.

“Gran-sama. Yuna-sama has returned.”

Meshun-san said before entering. I followed her soon after, leaving only Zelef-san outside.

“Gran-san, Cliff, did anything happen while I was away?”

I said stepping through the door. With a quick glance around the room, I noticed someone else who I didn't recognize was inside.

“Yuna?!”

“You're back!”

“Yeah, I just got back. Umm, who is this?”

I wasn't sure if I could talk about Zelef-san in front of them.

“This is my son, Leonardo. He might be timid, but he is my son nonetheless.”

“Father, saying that I’m timid is a bit... Anyway, I heard that my daughter and father are both indebted to you. Umm, Bear-san?”

“You can call me Yuna.”

“Yes, that’s right. I’m sorry. My daughter and father always talk about a bear. When I saw that you really are wearing a bear costume, I ended up calling you a bear as well.”

Unlike Gran-san, Leonardo had a thin stature and seemed to have a rather timid personality. I almost doubted the fact that he was an actual noble.

“So, Yuna, did you bring us a chef?”

Cliff asked me, recalling the reason I even left in the first place.

Did that mean it was okay to introduce Zelef-san in front of Gran-san’s son?

“Yep, he’s here.”

As soon as I said that, Zelef-san walked into the room.

“At Yuna-dono’s request, I have come to prepare the food for your party, Gran-dono. My name is Zelef.”

Zelef-san said with a small bow.

“Zelef... Please excuse me. Due to my age, I am having trouble remembering things, but have we met before, Zelef-dono? I feel like I’ve seen you somewhere before...”

“Yuna, you... When you said you knew a chef, you meant...”

While Gran-san looked at Zelef-san with a pondering expression, Cliff only showed amazement.

Leonardo-san, on the other hand, wasn’t able to say anything and just stood there with

his mouth open.

“Cliff, have you met Zelef-dono before?”

“Old Man Gran, you’re still too young to forget things. You know him as well. Even Leo noticed.”

“We’ve met already? I vaguely remember seeing him before, but I cannot recall when. Zelef-dono, I apologize for not recognizing you.”

Gran-san apologized.

Well, at least Cliff and Leonardo-san had recognized Zelef-san.

“Oh no, please don’t worry about it. This is most likely the first time we have met face to face.”

“Is that so?”

“I am currently working as the royal head chef. We might have exchanged greetings at the king’s birthday party, but even I am not completely sure.”

“The royal head chef?!”

Gran-san cried out in shock.

Meanwhile, Cliff and Leonardo-san didn’t seem surprised at all.

“Yuna, the chef you were talking about was Zelef-dono?”

“Yup, the only excellent chef I knew was Zelef-san.”

“Yuna-dono, I am honored that you think of me so highly.”

Zelef-san said, somewhat embarrassed by my praise.

Gran-san panicked a bit after learning who Zelef-san was, but managed to collect himself and asked us to sit down.

“Will you really be making the food for us?”

“Yuna-dono requested His Majesty for me to come with her, so I’m here on his orders.”

“His Majesty’s orders...”

Once the king was mentioned, the room went silent.

Gran-san and his son were shocked, while Cliff looked flustered.

“Yuna, how on earth did you manage to get the king to send his royal head chef here?”

“Hmm? I just asked him.”

“You can’t just waltz up to the king and ask something like that. I have never heard of the royal head chef cooking for another noble’s party.”

“Really?”

Well, it did seem a bit weird for the king to accept my request so easily.

“This is just...”

Cliff sighed.

“Well, I believe we made it so that this is considered to be a request from Eleanora-san.”

“From Eleanora?”

“She said that Cliff attending Gran-san’s party should be enough of a reason for the king to consider her request.”

“That means I will have to personally thank His Majesty and also write a letter to Eleanora in the near future.”

Cliff said with a tired expression while Gran-san seemed troubled. Leonardo-san had been just standing there in shock this entire time.

“So, what were you three up to before I barged in?”

“We were discussing what to do in case you didn’t make it back in time.”

“Oh... And?”

“We couldn’t come up with anything. There’s nobody left in this town who could cook for a noble party. Or, at least nobody up to par with it. We were ready to give up, basically.”

“We couldn’t delay the party because the guests have already taken time off to attend it. Our last resort was going to be holding an alcohol-only party.”

“I thought some children were attending as well?”

“We would just serve juice for the children.”

Just hearing about it sounded boring.

Drinks were great when you had some food to go with them, but only drinking from beginning to end seemed like a terrible party.

“Well, now that you’re here, Zelef-dono, we no longer have to worry about that outcome. Thank you for coming.”

“Oh no, please thank Yuna-dono. I too am indebted to her, so me coming here is just repaying a small piece of that debt.”

“Is that so... This is the second time you’ve saved me, Yuna. Thank you.”

Gran-san gave me a deep bow from across the table.

“You don’t have to worry about it. If your party got canceled, then Misa’s birthday party might have gotten canceled as well, which would end up upsetting her. I did this for the girls.”

While I appreciated him thanking me, the main reason I was doing this was because I wanted the girls to be happy. Well, Gran-san had helped me out in the past, but that wasn’t much compared to those girls’ smiles.

“Okay then... Zelef-dono, the party is tomorrow. Will you have enough time to prepare everything?”

“I have already gathered all the necessary ingredients from the capital. If I manage to

do all the basic preparations today, we should make it in time for the party.”

“That’s great to hear. We are counting on you, Zelef-dono.”

Once Zelef-san mentioned the ingredients, I recalled the deal I had made.

“Oh right. About those ingredients, the king will send me a bill, which I will forward to you when I get it. “

“A bill from His Majesty...”

“Yup, so please take care of it when I send it to you.”

“I will have to go and thank His Majesty in person. I mustn’t forget to set an appointment with him.”

“No, Old Man Gran, you shouldn’t do that. Don’t forget His Majesty did this on Eleanora’s request.”

“I should go and thank Miss Eleanora, then.”

They made this into a troublesome noble conversation...

The nobles sure had it tough, having to hide unofficial requests under official ones in order to mind their public appearances.

Cliff might have realized what was going through my head, so he spoke to me.

“Yuna, you see, normally you can’t just waltz in and meet the king. You have to send a letter a few days prior to secure an appointment. This is the proper way of doing it, so you are the strange one here, just casually walking in like that.”

How was I supposed to know that?

When I visited Princess Flora, the king always showed up without me making any prior appointments. Also, this time around, I was able to meet him just fine thanks to Eleanora-san.

Thinking of it like this, was I really the strange one?

# Chapter 180

## Bear-san Learns About Zelef-san's and Botts-san's History

Since the troublesome conversation continued, I decided to just get up and leave.

I didn't understand noble etiquette, so I found it boring.

Zelef-san felt the same way, so we promptly told them we had to start the food preparations and rushed out.

We then told Meshun-san we got permission to start, so she took us to the kitchen.

I wanted to see the girls first, but since I was holding onto the ingredients, I had to go to the kitchen before that.

"This is the kitchen. Feel free to use anything inside. I will fetch you some help now, so please wait a moment."

Meshun-san said and left promptly.

Zelef-san had requested for some people to help him with some basic things like fetching and washing ingredients.

Gran-san had asked him how many people he needed, and Zelef-san had said that three people should suffice.

I had thought that only three assistants was a bit insufficient, but he had explained to me that there wasn't that much he needed help with.

"Well then, Yuna-dono, could you bring out the ingredients?"

"You want me to take them out here? I can bring them out in the refrigerated pantry as well."

Well, that might also just give him extra work.

“I will start the preparations immediately, so it will be easier to have them here for now. We can just put them away later.”

I started to take out the boxes of ingredients in the corner Zelef-san had pointed out to me while he checked out the cookware.

There would be about fifty people attending the party, mostly neighbouring nobles, merchants, and other influential people.

That was a lot of food to prepare, especially considering that the guests had high standards.

Just as I finished taking out all of the ingredients, the hallway in front of the kitchen got noisy.

“Botts-san, you have to rest!”

“Move! Gran-sama asked me to do this. I can’t just go back on my promise!”

“But, with your hands like that...”

“There’s no way I can leave the cooking to some random stranger.”

“If you’re talking about the chef who was brought here today, it’ll be fine. Gran-sama acknowledged that individual.”

“That’s for me to decide. Open the door!”

I heard coming from the hallway.

From what I could gather, it sounded like the head chef of this residence, Botts-san, was rather angry.

I guess nobody had properly informed him about the situation.

While I was thinking about what to do, Zelef-san walked to the door.

“Zelef-san?”

“Any chef would obviously get angry knowing somebody took their job. I will explain this to him personally.”

Zelef-san opened the door, so that Meshun-san and a man with bandaged hands could enter the kitchen.

“So, you’re the chef that...”

The moment the man laid his eyes on Zelef-san, however, he stopped talking.

“...Zelef?”

“...Botts?”

“Zelef, what are you doing here?”

They seemed to know each other.

Well, they were both high class chefs, so it made sense that they did.

Even more, Zelef-san was the royal head chef, so I was sure many people had at least heard of him. Well, this time around, Zelef-san also seemed to know this man.

“What do you mean? I’m the chef in charge of cooking for Gran-dono’s party. You know, the one you were about to complain to.”

“Eh? Zelef, you’re the chef? Aren’t you the royal head chef?”

“I am, but I came here at Yuna-dono’s request after hearing that their chef got his hands injured.”

Botts-san looked at me, and then...

“A bear?”

“This is Yuna-dono, an adventurer. She’s done a great deal for me, and that’s why I agreed to help with this party.”

“An adventurer? Who has done a great deal for you? And a bear on top of that?”

He didn’t have to split that sentence into three questions...

Even I was now starting to doubt myself.

“Zelef-san, you know this man?”

“Yes, we worked together at a restaurant before I began working at the castle.”

“At the time, Zelef was the head chef’s assistant while I just worked as their subordinate.”

Botts-san chipped in.

Wait, hadn’t I heard that Botts-san was the assistant?

Meeh, I couldn’t recall it well enough.

“Yes, that was why the previous royal head chef even noticed me and invited me to work at the castle.”

I see, so that was how Zelef-san came to be at the castle.

“Still, I heard rumors that you became the assistant head chef after that, Botts. Why are you here now?”

Ah, I was right, Botts-san had been an assistant for a while.

“I got into an argument with the head chef and got fired.”

“An argument?”

“He kept blaming his own mistakes on the other chefs and harassed them. He would even sometimes hit them. Eventually, I got fed up and confronted him about it... Which didn’t end well for me, of course.”

“I don’t recall head chef Morouge being that kind of person, though.”

“Morouge retired due to age and was replaced by a chef named Borzak. This happened not long after you left. He is good at cooking but has a terrible personality.”

“So, you argued against him and quit?”

“I had the assistant position, so I endured for a while, but everybody has a limit...”

“And then?”

“Borzak pressured the Chef’s Guild and made it impossible for me to find another job at the capital.”

Botts-san started to get irritated. Was it because he was recalling his past?

“I don’t know what exactly he told the Chef’s Guild, but rumors about me acting violent against my superiors started to spread, and nobody was willing to hire me.”

“Why didn’t you try to deny the rumors?”

“I did, but the difference in influence between a head chef and his assistant was just too much. Most people believed him, as he’s as good at flattering people as he’s at cooking.”

“And then, you came here?”

“Yes, I was depressed about not being able to get a job and ended up drinking at a bar, where Gran-sama found me and took me in.”

Wait, Gran-san at a bar? Did nobles go to bars...?

“I need to make this party a success to repay at least a little bit of the kindness Gran-sama showed me when he took me in.”

Zelef-san looked at Botts-san’s hands, which were wrapped in a large number of bandages.

“How are your hands?”

“They will be fine, but I won’t be able to cook for a while.”

“I’m glad you’re well enough to be able to say that.”

Zelef-san said with a smile, making Botts-san laugh.

“Yes, but I can’t repay Gran-sama like this. It’s making me hate myself.”

“You were attacked, Botts-san. It wasn’t your fault.”

I finally said something. It wasn’t Botts-san’s fault that he had been injured.

“Yes, I was attacked, but it’s still my fault for going out on my own despite knowing that the Salbert family might aim for me. Gran-sama always tells me to take some guards with me when I go out, but I find that troublesome, so I normally go out on my own.”

“Botts, I didn’t really hear much about the situation, but is it really true that whoever attacked you is related to the Salbert family?”

“There’s no evidence, but based on the current conflict between the two families, and the fact that whoever attacked me aimed for my hand, that appears to be the case. Well, there’s always the possibility of it being completely unrelated, but...”

Botts-san said and laughed.

Well, I was glad to see that he was able to laugh it off like this even though he had just gotten attacked and injured so recently.

“I understand your feelings, Botts. Please rest and leave this to me.”

“Zelef...”

“Am I not good enough?”

“No, I can leave it to you, Zelef.”

Botts-san said, shaking his head slowly.

“I will do my best, then.”

Zelef-san said and sent Botts-san another smile.

“Zelef, it’s been a while, so would you mind if I watched you cook?”

“Of course. We used to watch each other cook to improve all the time, after all.”

“How nostalgic...”

“Well then, I will show you how much I have improved in order to not betray your trust, Botts.”

Zelef-san began to prepare the ingredients, with Botts-san watching him happily despite his injury.

Soon after, three maids arrived to help Zelef-san with the basic preparations, and I realized it would be best for me to quietly leave the kitchen, so that I wouldn't interrupt their work.

I went back to my room and found all three girls waiting for me inside.

“Big Sis Yuna!”

“I'm back. Did anything happen while I was away?”

Well, from what I had seen so far, nothing should have happened, or I would have already heard about it.

“Yes!”

Oh, I was wrong. Noa seemed rather angry. Had something just happened?

“Eh? Did that stupid noble kid do something again?!”

“No, not him. When I woke up yesterday morning, you were nowhere to be seen, and Fina looked sad and all alone by the window. I asked her what happened, and I found out that Father asked you to find him a chef.”

“Sorry for leaving without saying anything; it was an emergency.”

“We know you had no other choice, but we were still lonely without you.”

“Since you're back, Big Sis Yuna, does that mean you already found a chef?”

“Yup, I brought an excellent chef with me. Also, it turns out he is Botts-san's acquaintance.”

“Botts-san’s acquaintance?”

Misa pitched in when she heard Botts-san’s name.

“It seems that the two of them worked at the same restaurant at the capital a long time ago.”

The world was a small place, huh.

“If I remember correctly, Botts-san worked at a restaurant with a giant falcon stone statue in front of it.”

“That falcon statue is the restaurant’s symbol. I know this because it’s a famous restaurant in the capital; I went there once with my family.”

Misa and Noa then proceeded to explain that it was a high-class restaurant, where you had to make a reservation to eat there.

So, Zelef-san and Botts-san had worked at a famous restaurant, huh.

No wonder they were both able to cook so well.

Should I try going to this restaurant sometime? The head chef had a bad personality, but that wasn’t enough to stop me from tasting good food.

The only thing I worried about was if they would let me dine in a such high-class restaurant wearing a costume?

They might just send me away at the entrance. Yeah, maybe it would be better not to go there. No reason for me to get my feelings hurt over some food.

“So, what were you three up to while I was gone?”

“Nothing, really.”

Noa answered while the other two just nodded.

“With Botts-san getting injured and you going off to look for a chef, Father forbid us from going out by ourselves since it’s dangerous to do so. That’s why we had nothing

interesting to do and just stayed inside this room.”

“I’m sorry that you had to stay locked up inside.”

Yeah, it would indeed be dangerous for them to leave the mansion even though we weren’t sure if the person who attacked Botts-san really was from the Salbert family.

There was no way I could force the girls to stay in the room any longer, so...

“How about we all make some pudding, then?”

“Pudding?!”

“Pudding...”

“We’re going to make pudding?”

The girls all seemed to be excited.

Since I had prepared some for the king’s birthday party, there should be no problem if I brought it out for Gran-san’s party as well.

“I thought serving some at Gran-san’s party could be a good idea. What do you girls think?”

“Yes, let’s make it!”

“I want to try making it as well.”

“Me too!”

The girls happily followed me to the kitchen.

# Chapter 181

## Bear-san Makes Pudding With The Girls

The girls and I walked into the kitchen, where Zelef-san was in the middle of giving instructions to the maids while also doing some preparations himself. The boxes of ingredients I had taken out earlier were already all scattered around. Well, that most likely couldn't be helped, as they had to open them to see what was inside.

Botts-san was sitting on a chair very close to Zelef-san, watching him intently.

He seemed to be doing quite fine, not counting his injured hands.

He had seemed full of energy when he had been talking to Zelef-san earlier, even though his livelihood had just so recently been targeted.

"Please place that box into the refrigerated pantry. I will need that box today so bring it closer..."

Zelef-san was so focused on his preparations that I was unable to find a good time to ask if we could borrow some space in the kitchen.

As we stood there wondering how to approach him, Botts-san noticed us.

"Misana-sama? The Bear?"

When Botts-san called out to us, Zelef-san finally looked our way as well.

"Yuna-dono, is something the matter?"

"Zelef-san, would it be okay if we borrow a corner of the kitchen? We promise we won't get in your way."

"Out of the question." "Yes, no problem."

Botts-san and Zelef-san replied at the same time.

I had asked Zelef-san, but why did Botts-san butt in as well?

“Botts, it’s okay. Yuna-dono, what do you plan on making?”

“These girls are getting bored, so we decided to make some pudding together, and with your permission, we could also make some for the party tomorrow.”

“I can’t allow that!” “Oh, that sounds like a good idea.”

The two of them answered with differing opinions at the same time again.

“What are you saying, Zelef! This is a very important party for the Faren Gramm family. We can’t serve food made by a bear!”

“Botts, don’t worry. The pudding Yuna-dono makes was also served at His Majesty’s birthday party.”

“…You’ve got to be kidding me. This bear made food for a royal party?”

“Yes, and her cooking received much higher praises than my own. Everyone present went crazy over her pudding.”

“Zelef, you’re just making fun of me, right?”

“No, I’m not. It’s all true.”

Botts-san still didn’t seem convinced.

Well, I hadn’t attended the party, either, and had also found it unbelievable.

“Didn’t you tell me that the bear is an adventurer?”

“Yuna-dono is an excellent adventurer, an excellent merchant, and an excellent chef!”

Could he please not call me excellent over and over again. There were some girls here who would believe him wholeheartedly. Yeah, now the girls were looking at me with sparkling eyes.

I wasn’t an amazing person, you know.

I was just a normal, costume-wearing girl you could find anywhere.

Although I kept telling that to myself, I did realize that costume-wearing girls couldn't be found that easily.

No wonder Botts-san didn't believe Zelef-san...

In no ways did a girl in a Bear Suit look like a chef, an adventurer, or a merchant.

Whether it was Japan or another world, being a Bear wasn't really an occupation even though my guild card might say otherwise.

I silently swore not to share my 'Bear' occupation with anyone.

Still, it would be annoying to let Botts-san keep looking at me with such suspicion as we made pudding.

Maybe I could have him taste one?

"Botts-san, here, this is pudding."

I took out a pudding from the Bear Box and put it on the table next to him.

I had quite a large stock of it in my Bear Box, after all.

It was actually more than enough for the party on its own, but it would be more fun to make it with the girls.

"This is pudding?"

Botts-san looked like he was going to reach for it before realizing he couldn't.

I forgot that he couldn't eat it because his hands were hurt.

One of the maids noticed his struggle and came over.

"Head Chef Botts, want me to help you."

"I'm sorry, but please do."

Had she helped Botts-san eat since he had been injured?

The maid scooped up some pudding and brought it to Botts-san's mouth, who carefully ate it.

“What is this?!”

“Botts, it’s delicious, isn’t it? Both His Majesty and Her Highness enjoyed this dessert very much.”

Zelef-san commented while the maid brought another scoop to Botts-san’s mouth.

“It’s delicious indeed. Did that bear really make this?”

He now looked at me curiously rather than suspiciously. Wait, that didn’t make much of a difference for me, did it?

“Head Chef Botts, is it really that good?”

One of the other maids asked.

When someone said something was delicious, it always made others want to try it.

Making the maids share Botts-san’s leftover would be rude, so I gave them one cup each.

“Is it really okay for us to eat them?”

“Yup. Eat it and do your best helping Zelef-san, okay?”

“We will.”

The three maids responded and started to eat their puddings.

“Yuna-sama, it is very delicious.”

“Yes. This is the first time I’ve ever had something so tasty.”

I was glad to hear that they all liked it.

“Yuna-san is amazing! She can make many other delicious things, too, not just pudding!”

Noa proudly announced for some reason, with Fina and Misa nodding next to her.

I was happy to receive their praise, but I would have preferred it if they didn't raise the bar of expectations too high.

"What do you think? Even if you don't allow me to serve it at Gran-san's party, I will still make it for Misa's party."

I had no problems with simply not serving it at Gran-san's party. This idea was merely a way of killing time and lifting the girls' mood. All I wanted was for him to lend us a place where we could cook it.

"Alright, fine. If Zelef is okay with it, then I guess I don't mind it, either. You better not get in Zelef's way, though."

"We won't. Girls, we got permission, so let's start making some pudding right away."

""Okay!""

The three of them replied energetically.

We moved to a corner so that we wouldn't get in the way, and I took out around a hundred eggs from the Bear Box there. We could make as much pudding as we wanted since I could just keep the extra pudding in my Bear Box. Or, I could also distribute it to the people working in this mansion. There could never be too much pudding made.

"Okay, Fina, you crack the eggs while Noa and Misa will be the ones to whip them."

And I would do the remaining steps.

Fina started to crack the eggs without any problems...

"Hey, Zelef. They have a whole mountain of eggs."

"Of course they do. Yuna-dono is raising cluckers that lay about five hundred eggs a day altogether."

"Five hundred eggs?!"

If I wasn't wrong, Terumi-san had told me that, recently, the number was even higher. Yeah, Zelef-san's information was most likely outdated.

We used eggs in more and more new recipes, not just pudding and cake. The shop itself should be going through several hundred eggs a day now.

With such numbers, the egg price had gone down, and now, even a regular household could afford to buy them. Eggs had a nice nutritional value, so it was great to see that they were more easily accessible now.

Botts-san watched Fina cracking the eggs with an unbelievable look on his face.

"I can't believe that a commoner girl like her can handle eggs so easily..."

Botts-san still considered eggs to be a high-class ingredient, while at Crimonia, we could have as many eggs as we wanted. I still recalled the day I had first told Terumi-san that she could take as many eggs home as she felt like. Also, the children of the orphanage often ate eggs these days and were completely used to handling them. Oh, and the day when Fina had first tried to crack an egg. She had been so nervous that her hands wouldn't stopped trembling, so she had failed and apologized a lot. Just thinking about it made me smile. Now, she was able to crack them without a problem; she had grown so much.

"Big Sis Yuna, why are you smiling like that?"

"I was smiling?"

"You were. It reminded me of how Mother and Father often smile at me."

I understood how Terumi-san and Gentz-san felt now. The feeling I had just now was that of watching a daughter grow up.

"Yuna-san, I want to try cracking an egg as well!"

"M-me too."

"Okay. Fina, can you show them how it's done? Also, make sure to remove the shells if you mess up."

“Okay.”

Noa and Misa happily begin cracking the eggs.

There were a hundred eggs, so once they got a hang of it, they should be able to do it in no time.

“Zelef-san, if you would like to use some eggs, just let me know. I got a ton of them in my Item Bag.”

“That would be great. We have some at the castle, but I decided not to bring them along.”

“Okay then, I will put some in the refrigerated pantry, so feel free to use them whenever you want.”

I stuffed a bunch of eggs into the large refrigerated pantry.

“Hey, hey. Are you serious? These are expensive, you know.”

I ignored Botts-san’s remark.

We had a lot of them, so it was fine.

“Botts, if you keep bothering Yuna-dono like that, she won’t be able to get to her cooking. Also, chefs should never reject unknown dishes, or they will never improve.”

“Just who is this bear?”

“His Majesty has forbade anyone from asking about Yuna-dono, but if that doesn’t stop you, you are free to risk your life trying to find out. I won’t save you.”

“Wait, what do you mean by that?”

“If Yuna-dono reports that you were bothering her to His Majesty, you can say goodbye to your head.”

Zelef-san laughed and tapped his neck.

I wouldn’t do something like that. If he annoyed me, I would just Bear Punch him.

“.....”

“I’m just kidding, Botts. Although, Yuna-dono is indeed backed by His Majesty.”

Botts-san looked at me in disbelief.

“Me being here should prove it to you. Do you think a regular adventurer can just stroll in, speak with the king, and ask him to borrow the royal head chef without a moment’s notice? The only reason I’m here to help you is because Yuna-dono requested it.”

Botts-san gulped when Zelef-san explained that to him.

Wait a second, did I always have such an amazing position?

Well, the king did owe me a lot of small favors. After all, I subjugated the army of over ten thousand monsters, made food for his birthday party, and even drew a picture book for his daughter. Still, those things were all just small deeds.

Did he consider this to be a complete repayment for everything?

Well, as long as I could still visit Princess Flora, I didn’t mind. I would be sad if I couldn’t see her smile anymore, though.

“That’s why I’m warning you now. It would be best not to bother Yuna-dono.”

“I understand. I will stop bothering her since I don’t want to die yet.”

Botts-san sounded like he still wanted to question me but chose not to do so. Thank you, Your Majesty. Or maybe Zelef-san, in this case? Now I didn’t have to explain myself anymore and could focus on making the pudding.

We managed to finish without any additional interruptions and went to place it into the refrigerated pantry.

Hmm, it was completely full.

Since I had no other choice, I took out the Bear-shaped fridge from my Bear Box, and we put the pudding inside there.

“Yuna-san, are we done?”

“Yup, they’ll be ready by tomorrow morning.”

“I’m looking forward to it!”

“Remember, these ones are for Gran-san’s party.”

“I know.”

“Fina, we will eat them too, of course, even though we won’t go to his birthday party!”

“Okay!”

“Yuna-san, are you really not going to attend?”

“Nah. I only came here because you invited me to your party, Misa.”

“How about you, Fina?”

Fina shook her head when Noa asked her.

Fina had already had a hard time deciding whether to go to Misa’s party, so of course she wouldn’t want to go to a party with a bunch of nobles and rich people. Even if she attended, she wouldn’t have any fun as it would also stress her out so badly that she would get a stomachache.

Still, if Fina somehow ended up going, I would have to go with her. Therefore, I mustn’t let Fina attend.

Noa and Misa looked disappointed but decided not to push the matter.

That night, after everybody went to sleep, a Bear stealthily climbed up to the roof of the mansion.

It was me. I had to remove the Bear Transfer Gate.

# Chapter 182

## Cliff Attends the Party, Cliff's Perspective

Thanks to Yuna, we were able to secure a chef for the party.

Not to mention, she brought us the royal head chef himself. Just what was this bear thinking? I could understand if it was just a regular chef working at the castle, but bringing the most influential chef there? That would be impossible for any normal person.

She had departed three days ago, in the middle of the night. I didn't know how fast her summoned bears could go, but even she shouldn't have been able to waltz into the castle right after arriving to the capital, right? Even though Yuna said that Eleanora had helped her get an audience with the king, I couldn't imagine her being let in that easily.

She had been able to meet His Majesty without even a moment's notice and got permission to borrow his head chef on the spot. She had even gotten all the necessary ingredients from the castle. How effective could she be...?

Just what had she done to make His Majesty let her get away with something like that? This was all way too baffling.

I must ask Eleanora for the details later.

While the bear had brought some great news, she also brought along some trouble...

I should be thanking her, but with the trouble she brought, I couldn't do it genuinely.

If she had been planning on bringing such an amazing chef, she should have at least said something beforehand. Both Old Man Gran and I were completely perplexed.

Eleanora had gotten herself involved as well, and because of that, I would have to thank His Majesty in person. Of course, Old Man Gran planned to do the same.

The more I thought about the aftermath of Yuna bringing us the royal head chef, the more my head hurt. Still, Yuna had indeed brought over the best chef we could possibly get.

Right now, I should be thinking about how we could make the most out of this.

The outcome of this feud would be determined by how many people we could bring onto our side during this party.

Old Man Gran and Leonardo had tried to make some prior arrangements with several merchants, but that had not gone favourably. Just looking at the situation in the town, they had been able to deduce that we were on the losing side.

Still, during the last ten years, Old Man Gran had helped a lot of people. We had to bring those people in first and show them that we hadn't been beaten yet. We also needed to get as many people of neutral standing as we could.

On the day of the party, I headed to the assembly hall early and waited until it was time to let the guests in. Today, the spotlight would be on Old Man Gran, and I had to do my best for this party to succeed.

Once the guests started to enter, I moved to a spot from where I could see the entire hall.

The guests, who were mostly the town's nobles and merchant, slowly poured into the hall.

As I watched these influential people enter one by one, a man with a toad-like face caught my eye. It was Gerardo Salbert, the enemy of Old Man Gran.

Next to Gerardo was his son, Randall, who had picked a fight with the girls. Just hearing about what he had done to them made me want to hit him. It was just Gerardo and his son as his wife had passed away several years ago, or at least that was what I had heard.

Immediately after they entered, several people approached Gerardo. They were most likely the merchants who were siding with him. They bowed to him, trying to sell him their flattery.

Well, I wasn't afraid of idiots who openly showed that they were on the enemy side. The ones we had to be careful of were those who pretended to be on our side, only to backstab us later on.

They could leak the information to Gerardo, while also making us think we were stronger than we actually were.

Because of that, we had to be suspicious of everyone.

I prayed that we wouldn't get approached by anybody with plans like those.

As time went by, people approached Old Man Gran one by one to give him their wishes. This was just out of politeness for being invited to the party; the real fight would begin after this.

Eventually, Gerardo himself approached Old Man Gran.

"I wish you a Happy 50th Birthday."

Gerardo congratulated him with a wry smile.

I was amazed that Old Man Gran had not noticed he had been dealing with a person like that all this time. I couldn't tell if Old Man Gran was just too kind or simply had no danger sense.

"Thank you for coming all this way. We have plenty of good food prepared, so I hope you enjoy your time here."

"I look forward to the food. I heard it was made by an assistant head chef from a famous restaurant at the capital."

I saw Old Man Gran grasping his hands tightly when Gerardo mentioned that.

I understood his feelings, but he wasn't in any position to argue right now.

There was still no evidence that Gerardo had been responsible for the attack on Botts.

We hadn't been able to find any witnesses because it had been in an area where not many people passed by.

So, no matter how suspicious they were, we couldn't accuse them. We could only endure their abuse. Old Man Gran must be frustrated, though.

When it was about time for the party to officially begin, Old Man Gran and his son, Leonardo, started whispering to each other.

"Is something wrong?"

I got concerned, so I approached them and asked.

“There are several people who didn’t show up, all of whom were siding with me.”

“They promised to attend, didn’t they?”

“Is this Gerardo’s doing?”

“We’ve got no proof. We also don’t have time to investigate it.”

It was possible that they had been threatened or even bribed.

We had no evidence, though; we only knew that several people on Old Man Gran’s side didn’t show up.

Still, this was no time to speculate about what had happened to them. We had to get the party going, so Old Man Gran told Leonardo to announce that he would address the guests.

“I thank you for attending my birthday party from the bottom of my heart. I’m sure many of you are very busy, so I really appreciate it.”

That was rather short for a speech. Old Man Gran sat back down, leaving his son to give the final words.

“Food has been prepared for everybody, so please enjoy.”

As they finished their short greeting, food was brought out.

It was a standing party, so food was not served individually. The maids placed the food on the tables scattered all around the hall.

As expected of the royal head chef, all the food looked and smelled amazing.

One of the maids brought drinks around, so I got myself a cup while the party guests all happily began to eat and chat with each other. They mostly chatted amongst themselves and their acquaintances, while some others went to speak with Old Man Gran or Gerardo.

After some time, somebody came up to me.

“Why, if it isn’t Cliff-dono. How have you been?”

“I’m doing fine, thank you. The last time we saw each other was at His Majesty’s birthday party, wasn’t it?”

It was one of the nobles from this town. He didn’t stay to chat, though, but rather went on to greet other people.

I normally stayed neutral in events like this, so I just observed both the Faren Gramm family and Salbert family from the distance. If we could just win over the guests, we would be fine, but it seemed like it was going to be rather difficult. The Salbert family was trying to do the same thing. At least they couldn’t use bribes here out in the open, so they had to try and gain the trust of the guests the normal way.

I glanced at how Old Man Gran’s side was doing and saw that Leonardo was now going around with his wife to greet the guests one by one.

The couple appeared to be received favorably, but it could all be just a farce.

Old Man Gran and Leonardo’s negotiation skills would surely be put to the test later on.

My job was to back up the Faren Gramm family and make sure Old Man Gran’s negotiations went in his favor. I didn’t know how much I could influence the situation, but it was surely better than having no support at all.

After looking around the room for a while, my gaze landed on my daughter. She seemed to be having fun, eating all sorts of food together with Misana.

Noa had promised me that she would stay by Misana’s side for the entire party. Misana would surely feel better with Noa being there for her, although I didn’t know how much help Noa would be if the Salbert family’s stupid son tried to approach them.

Speaking of Gerardo’s son, he was strolling around with three other children and enjoying the food for now.

This made me calm down a bit, but I still worried about what might happen later.

Really, this was why I had wanted Yuna to be here with them, but she refused to attend the party.

Then again, if she had attended wearing her costume, she would most likely have gotten dragged into troubles of her own.

Now that I thought about it, had she ever taken off her bear suit?

I honestly couldn't even imagine what she would look like without it since I had only seen her wearing it so far.

While the idiot son was behaving at the moment, his father Gerardo was talking to quite a lot of people; more than I had expected he would be. At this rate, even those who were neutral might side with the Salbert family.

I had been afraid of this happening, so I had told Old Man Gran to not let anyone from the Salbert family attend his party, but he had already sent out the invitations.

I had really hoped that he would have at least given it some thought before sending them out...

"He's a lord of this town; there's no way I can not invite him."

Had been what he had told me. All he had to do was make up some reason not to invite him, though.

There were many ways to do that, like saying that the party was for close friends and relatives only.

"I had to invite you and all the town's nobles, so that means I couldn't use that reason not to invite the Salbert family."

I understood his reasoning, but it still didn't convince me that there wasn't another way not to invite them.

If this party failed, the balance of power would crumble completely.

The neutral side would see which side was more beneficial to them throughout this party.

With the party well underway, there was no point in contemplating who Old Man Gran had invited.

We should just look for people who would be willing to side with the Faren Gramm family.

As the party carried on, another selection of food was brought out.

“I can’t tolerate this any longer! Just what is wrong with these dishes!?”

Gerardo raised his voice angrily.

“How dare the Faren Gramm family serve such disgusting food at a party!”

Gerardo was so loud that the entire hall went silent.

Considering how happily he had eaten it earlier, this was obviously a fake outburst.

Still, things would obviously move in a bad direction if we let him continue yelling out like that.

“Is there something wrong with the food I provided for you?”

Old Man Gran went to speak with Gerardo.

“That’s right. It doesn’t taste good at all. I’m very disappointed, considering I heard that the food was made by the assistant head chef of a really famous restaurant at the capital. Or, did another chef make these?”

Gerardo responded with an evil grin.

Based on his attitude, it was obvious he knew that Botts had been injured and unable to cook. Although there was still no evidence, I was now sure that Gerardo had indeed gotten somebody to attack Botts.

“That’s true, my chef was injured, so we got another chef to make the food. However, our new chef doesn’t lose to Botts in terms of cooking.”

“Oh, a different chef, you say? No wonder the food tastes so bad.”

Gerardo took a sip of his soup and made a disgusted expression.

“I agree, this does taste pretty bad.”

“Yes, this must have been made by some second or even third-rate chef based on how it’s seasoned.”

Some other people began complaining about the food as well, following Gerardo’s lead.

All of them had been happily eating the food just a moment ago! I wanted to shout at them, but I didn’t want things to go the way Yuna had imagined it, so I kept my anger in check.

Yes, this was just how Yuna had predicted it before the party.

Either Gerardo or some his people would put trash or bugs into the food or simply claim it was disgusting. Either way, she had known they would have complained about it.

I had never heard of such pettiness happening at a noble’s party.

I had never seen this sort of thing happen. Calling perfectly good food disgusting... That would just get the one who complained odd looks.

I could understand Gerardo finding some other thing wrong with the party, but this food was prepared by the royal head chef. I had been certain that even Gerardo wouldn’t dare criticize such good food...

Still, just in case, I had kept an eye on them to make sure they didn’t try to put trash or bugs into the food. If they had tried doing that, I could have gotten some good evidence. Well, if there was only one piece of garbage, it would be difficult to prove that they had put in there on purpose.

I figured that they wouldn’t take that route anyway since there was no way a noble like Gerardo would be willing to carry around trash or bugs with them while their guards and servants couldn’t attend the party. When I had explained that to Yuna, she had said: “They will try to insult the food itself, then.”

I had asked her where on earth had she learned about such things, and she had told me she had read about them in stories.

Just what kind of books had she been reading?

Still, I was amazed that Gerardo had managed to say such delicious cooking was disgusting.

Everybody should normally look at Gerardo strangely, but with several others following suit, and the fact that a different chef had made this food being exposed, the whole situation was now making Old Man Gran look bad.

Gerardo was most likely trying to get Old Man Gran to stop the party.

If he stopped it now, he would be seen as a noble who couldn't even hold a party, which would put a big dent on his image.

He would fail as a lord, being unable to provide good service at a party.

That was most likely why Gerardo had chosen to sabotage us using food, after all.

There were many influential people present, so Old Man Gran would have no way to deny he had been forced to shut it down.

Yet, this was exactly what Yuna had expected, and we had a countermeasure in place.

Yuna had told us that if we just had Zelef-san show up, this sabotage would end up as a failure.

We couldn't just have him appear normally, though. We had to put up an act.

Once we had explained this plan to Zelef-san, he had said, "How interesting," and had agreed to it immediately.

Yuna had then given him some pointers on how to act dramatically. Just where on earth had she learned those things from? She was such a mysterious bear.

"I can't believe you had such a terrible chef cook food for a party. Has the Faren Gramm family really fallen this low?"

When Gerardo said that, quite a few people laughed while others just watched from

afar, not knowing how to react.

Only after Gerardo said that did Zelef-san enter the hall.

I was it just me or was he in a good mood?

# Chapter 183

## Zelef-san Gets Mad, Zelef's Perspective

One day, while I was in the middle of doing my regular kitchen duties, His Majesty and Yuna-dono entered the kitchen.

What an unusual pairing, I thought. Well, them coming to the kitchen was even weirder.

Anyway, they were here to request me to make food for the birthday party of Sheelin's feudal lord.

Normally, I wouldn't make food for other nobles, but this time it was on Yuna-dono's request, so we would depart for Sheelin with His Majesty's permission.

I was sure we would go by carriage, but since there wasn't much time left before the party, Yona-dono told me that we would ride her summoned beasts.

Summoned beasts? Oh, she was talking about her adorable bears she could summon. The ones Princess Flora often played with. I had watched them play together just the other day.

I had never seen the bears in their adult forms, but from what I heard, they were big enough for people to easily ride them. Knowing I would have to ride them was kind of scary, but I also looked forward to it at the same time.

We quickly packed up all the necessary ingredients and departed immediately.

Once outside of the capital, Yuna-dono summoned her bears from her bear-shaped gloves.

Wow, they were quite big. Big enough for people to ride on them, indeed. They had the same gentle expressions as when they played with Princess Flora, so I knew there was nothing to be afraid of.

Yuna-dono asked which one I wanted to ride first, and I decided on the white one.

If I remembered correctly, the black bear was Swaying Bear-dono, and the white bear was Hugging Bear-dono.

I approached Hugging Bear-dono, which cried softly, and lowered its back for me to get on.

What a smart bear.

Even though I was on the heavier side, Hugging Bear-dono stood up without a problem once I was on it. Yuna-dono's bears were simply amazing.

We headed off, and I immediately noticed how quick the bears were.

They were even increasing their speed as we went, but, holding onto Hugging Bear-dono, I somehow knew that I couldn't fall off.

This was the power of summoned beasts, huh.

After we traveled for a while, we took a break and switched bears.

I asked Yuna-dono why we had to switch, and she explained that Hugging Bear-dono would start to sulk if she only rode Swaying Bear-dono all the way.

Of course they would prefer having their master ride them rather than an old man like myself.

Not arguing with her explanation, I rode the next part of the journey on top of Swaying Bear-dono.

We set camp in the evening and arrived at Sheelin at noon of the next day.

That was way too quick, considering we had departed just shy of noon the previous day.

As expected of Yuna-dono's summoned beasts...

We met with the star of the party, Gran-dono, and quickly asked to borrow the kitchen as I had to begin the food preparations immediately since the party was right around the corner.

I was in the middle of setting up in the kitchen, when the residence's chef made a commotion in front of the door. He sounded angry about something; I had heard that he was injured, but he seemed to be doing quite fine.

I opened the door to speak with him and immediately recognized the person in front of me.

It was Botts, a chef who had worked at the same restaurant as me before I had become the royal head chef.

Even though I hadn't seen him in a long time, I would never have guessed that Botts was the working as a chef here.

We didn't really have time to reminiscence about the past, however, so I quickly explained him why I was here.

Botts then briefly summarized how he ended up here himself.

Luckily, His Majesty had given me permission to take some time off from my duties, so we should be able to have long chat after the party was behind us, but right now, I had to get back to my food preparations.

Just as I was about midway done for the day, Yuna-dono entered the kitchen and told me she wanted to make some pudding, and I naturally allowed her to do so.

Botts, however, got mad at her. Well, he didn't know Yuna-dono, so I couldn't blame him.

The first time I had heard of Yuna-dono had been when I had been told that I hadn't needed to cook for Princess Flora because Yuna-dono had already prepared food for her. I had gotten quite mad that time myself. What a nostalgic memory.

When I finished all the basic preparations, I decided to report back to Gran-dono. Yuna-dono had also just finished making the pudding, so we went to see Gran-dono together.

We entered his study and found him and Cliff-dono in the middle of discussing the party.

"Zelef-dono, thank you very much for your hard work. Because of you, I can now hold my party at ease."

"Oh no, you should thank Yuna-dono for that. I only came here because Yuna-dono requested it."

"Eh? You don't have to thank me. So, did you already decide on a plan for tomorrow?"

"Yes, we've been debating on who should we approach first..."

“Not that. I meant a countermeasure against the Salbert family. Aren’t they going to try and do something at the party?”

“We won’t be able to stop them from getting people on their side. Many people are already siding with the Salbert family, so we will have to give up on those.”

“That still isn’t what I meant...”

“Do you think they’ll try to do something else? They already attacked our chef. What more can they do?”

“Like, won’t they try putting bugs into the food? Maybe even some trash. Or, perhaps they’ll simply try to complain about it?”

“There’s no way they’ll do something like that!”

“Normally, when you are harassing someone, isn’t this exactly what you would do?”

Yuna-dono said something outrageous.

Putting trash into the food or simply complaining about it was very poor and cruel behaviour towards the chef.

Even though the families were in the middle of a feud, I didn’t think they would go that far.

“If they are aware that the chef has changed, then won’t they say that the food tastes bad? Based on what Gran-san said, didn’t all the chefs you asked turn you down?”

“Yes, but will they say stuff like that even after eating Zelef-dono’s cooking? He is the royal head chef, after all.”

“They don’t know that the new chef is Zelef-san, though.”

“Yes, but...”

Yuna-dono continued to explain that for the people who did harass someone, this was something very basic, but I had never heard of someone putting garbage or bugs into food.

Still, Gran-dono and Cliff-dono both agreed that it was indeed possible after Yuna-dono explained it in detail.

If someone did something like that to my cooking, I would never be able to forgive them.

“If they decide to just say that the food tastes bad then we will have you do some acting for us, Zelef-san.”

Yuna-dono then proceeded to explain her plan.

Her plan sounded nice and all, but I couldn't quarrel with a noble.

Yes, I had my position as royal head chef, but I wasn't a noble myself. I also didn't want to boast about the fact I had the backing of the royal family.

I was a chef, not a noble. I explained that to Yuna-dono, but she surprised me with another crazy response.

“You have to get mad when somebody makes fun of your cooking. It's insulting to the people who enjoy your food. If your food tasted bad, then we couldn't do anything about their complains, but you have your position because your skills were recognized, right? I don't really get how this works, but wouldn't it be really rude towards the king, the queen, and Princess Flora, who enjoy your food on a daily basis, if you let someone make fun of your cooking? “

Yuna-dono lectured me. She was right... Making fun of my cooking, which the king himself had praised, was the same as making fun of the king's tastes.

The previous head chef and my subordinates all also acknowledged my cooking. Letting the Salbert family insult my cooking would be disrespectful to everyone who liked the food I made.

Yes, Yuna-dono was right. Things were different now.

However, did nobles who would put bugs into food or claim that delicious food was disgusting really exist?

I had made food for other nobles before, but I had never had anything like that happen.

I should keep it in mind in case it did ever happen.

Yuna-dono then proceeded to explain how to counter such tactics.

She really knew a lot of weird things.

We took her warnings into account and were prepared when the party began, with me making sure to prepare plenty of food.

I received no messages from inside the hall yet. As soon as complaints against the food occurred, I had to be ready to rush in there immediately.

It seemed like Yuna-dono had worried needlessly, so I continued giving instructions to those who aided me in the kitchen. Things were proceeding slower than in the royal kitchen, but we were having no problems so far.

As the party slowly moved towards its peak, somebody rushed into the kitchen.

“Zelef-sama, Gerardo-sama is... severely criticizing your cooking.”

He had a hard time telling me.

I really didn't think that what Yuna-dono had predicted would come to happen. If we hadn't prepared for this situation beforehand, I would most likely be panicking right now.

“I see. Got it.”

I said no more, stopped what I was doing, and headed straight for the hall.

I peeked into the hall through the crack in the door and could see Gran-dono disputing with another man. That man must be Gerardo-dono from the Salbert family.

I heard some other people closeby say that the food tasted bad and that it must have been made by a second or even a third-rate chef.

I knew that they were lying, but hearing it still put me off.

I now completely understood what Yuna-dono had been trying to tell me. As the royal head chef, I had to get mad for the sake of the people who acknowledged my cooking.

“Please excuse me. My name is Zelef, and I have been given the opportunity to be in charge of cooking for the party. Is my cooking really that unsatisfactory?”

Yuna-dono had told me to act like I was mad while asking that, but I didn't really have to act as my anger was pouring out on its own already.

"You're the one who made these?!"

"That's correct."

"You have some nerve, serving such disgusting food."

Gerardo-dono pointed at my food while complaining.

It was the soup I had carefully prepared. Managing to keep my anger in check, I looked at Gerardo-dono without even flinching.

"Please explain to me what you didn't like about the dish, so I can forward it to the master I serve as a reference for future meals."

Yuna-dono had told me that because my cooking was good, I must never apologize.

If Yuna-dono hadn't warned me, I would have most likely apologized immediately.

"All of it is bad! Your master doesn't know any better. How can your master be satisfied with this cooking? The Faren Gramm family has hit rock bottom, for them to leave their cooking to a chef like you!"

"I see. I will relay that message to my master, His Majesty."

"...His Majesty?"

Gerardo-dono was shocked by my words, and everybody around us started panicking.

"No wonder he looked so familiar. He is the royal head chef..."

It seemed like some people here had recognized me.

Well, I often came out of the kitchen to greet the guests after the meal, so they might recognise me from one of the king's banquets.

"The royal head chef..."

“Yes. My name is Zelef, and I cook for the royal family. Now, could you please tell me what you found bad about my cooking? I must not serve bad food to His Majesty, who always tells me that my food is delicious.”

I didn't feel comfortable using the king's authority like this, but if I backed down now, I would be insulting the tastes of entire royal family.

“That's...”

“So? What part of it did you think was third-rate? It will be very helpful if you told me.”

I asked the men surrounding Gerardo-dono.

“Oh, no...”

“Weren't you gentlemen surprised, exclaiming that the food tasted bad? If you could explain in more detail, that would be great. I must not serve low-grade dishes to His Majesty.”

I was mad that they made fun of my cooking, but knowing that they also insulted His Majesty made my anger swelled up even more.

They decided to lie just to trick us.

I got even angrier knowing that they might have done this to other chefs as well. If the food truly was bad, then that would be okay, but saying that good food tasted bad could ruin the chef's future. They would start to doubt themselves, and then move onto a different path in life. I didn't know how many more terrible things they might have done.

These people were the enemies of us chefs.

I glared at the people who called my food disgusting.

“No, you see...”

“Please tell me, so I can reference it for future dishes.”

I glared at them even harder.

“Cough, cough, Zelef-dono, I truly apologize.”

One of the men coughed and bowed.

“Actually, I caught a cold recently, so perhaps my taste buds are a little bit off because of it.”

“Oh, is that so?”

“Yes, Gran-sama wanted me to attend because there are some important things we must discuss, so I attended even though I caught this terrible cold. Isn’t that right, Gran-sama?”

The man looked at Gran-dono, wanting him to save him.

“That’s right, we had some important things to discuss, so I requested him to attend.”

“Gran-sama, since I’m not feeling too well, is it okay if we have our discussion earlier?”

“Of course.”

The man bowed to me and went to Gran-dono’s side.

“Please take care of yourself.”

I responded in a way Yuna-dono had told me to.

Yuna-dono had said that when I questioned them in this manner, they would do one of three things. Either they would shut up, run to Gran-dono, or put the blame on Gerardo-dono.

If they ran to Gran-dono, I shouldn’t chase them, she had lectured me.

I knew they were lying, but I decided to follow Yuna-dono’s instructions. I wanted to question them more, but they were forced to lie by Gerardo-dono.

Seeing the man go to Gran-dono’s side, everybody else followed suit.

“Zelef-dono, you see, I haven’t been feeling well either, so my taste buds are all messed up. I also came to discuss some things with Gran-sama. Is it okay if I speak to Gran-sama before I feel any worse?”

“Of course, please take care of yourself.”

“I will, thank you.”

One more, then two more left.

I never really noticed it, but the title of the royal head chef had quite the influential power behind it.

People had acknowledged my cooking since I had been young, which was how I had gotten where I was today. I never thought about the power my position carried. I just wanted to make good food.

By no means I thought I had greater influence than nobles.

Still, I just could not forgive those who disrespected the people who supported me.

The royal family and others who ate my cooking all enjoyed it.

Yuna-dono, who was an exceptional chef herself, believed in me.

That was why I would never forgive those who lied about my cooking.

I took a step towards Gerardo-dono, while the others quietly disappeared, leaving only him standing in front of me.

“Now then, you also said that my cooking is no good. Please explain, so I can reference it for future meals.”

“W-why is Zelef-dono, the royal head chef, cooking at a place like this? Does His Majesty know about this?”

“Of course His Majesty knows that I am here. I did come for a personal reason, though. You see, the injured chef is an old friend of mine.”

Technically speaking, I hadn’t come here under the orders of His Majesty; we were treating it as a request from Eleanora-sama.

“Old friend of yours?”

“Yes. I used to work together with Gran-dono’s chef, Botts, at a restaurant in the capital called the Falcon’s Claw.”

“.....”

“Also, Cliff-dono’s wife, Eleanora-sama, requested for me to come here. Because of that, His Majesty granted me some time off, so that I could come here to cook for this party.”

“You came running here right after their chef got injured? That’s impossible, timewise...”

“Please excuse my rudeness, but were you aware that the chef Botts was injured, Gerardo-dono?”

“No, I didn’t know. I only learned about it when Gran-dono told us earlier.”

“I see. If you know anything about it, or if you might know of any witnesses, please let us know.”

“I’m sorry that I can’t be of any help to you.”

“Oh no, he was attacked in a deserted alley, so finding a witness would be a miracle.”

People in the hall started to make a clamor hearing that the chef had been attacked.

Without a doubt, the one responsible for the attack on Botts was Gerardo-dono.

He had injured the chef’s most important asset, his hands. Botts would recover eventually, but he wouldn’t be able to hold a knife for a while.

“Zelef-dono, please don’t misunderstand. It’s not that the food didn’t taste good. It was very delicious.”

“Is that so? I heard you exclaiming that the food tasted bad, however. Everyone else heard you say it as well, right? Of course, I have no intentions of complaining if you thought so, but as a chef and the person in charge of the food for this party, I have to apologize if you really thought that the food was bad. I would also like to know what you did not like about it.”

I looked straight into Gerardo-dono’s eyes.

He tried to find a response, but to no avail.

“Zelef-dono, I must apologize. It seems that I am also feeling unwell.”

He backed away slightly, and looked at Gran-dono.

“Gran-dono, I am feeling unwell today, so I would like to head home early. Is that alright with you?”

“Of course. I’m sorry that I made you come all the way here, not realizing you were unwell. You are one of the lords of this town, so please take care of yourself.”

“Well then, Zelef-dono, please excuse me.”

Gerardo-dono told me in a calm voice, but I could see that he was biting his lips harshly.

“Please try my cooking again once you feel better and let me know what you think of it.”

Gerardo-dono called for his son.

His son did not try to hide his irritation and glared at everyone in the hall as he left with his father.

“Everybody, I’m sorry for disturbing your meal. This is a bit ahead of the schedule, but I would like you to try this dessert called pudding, which was also served at His Majesty’s birthday party. I will prepare some more food meanwhile, so please enjoy it.”

Yuna-dono allowed me to decide on when to serve her pudding.

I had wanted to serve the pudding a little bit later, but I felt that now was a good timing.

I bowed to everybody in the hall and received a round of applause as I exited the room.

# Chapter 184

## Gerardo's Scheme, Gerardo's Perspective

I received an invitation to Gran's party.

Huhu, he still hadn't given up even now.

I had already bent the Commerce Guild and several influential people to my will.

It was too late for him now, even with the party.

Still, I should be careful.

I had heard a rumor that his chef was the assistant head chef of a famous restaurant in the capital.

That just wouldn't do. Should I get rid of the chef?

I laughed just imagining Gran panicking because he wouldn't be able to serve food at his party.

I immediately called for Blood and instructed him to, if an opportunity presented itself, make it so that Gran's chef could no longer cook.

"Shall I kill him instead?"

"If you did, Gran would use that as an excuse to stop the party. Just hurt the chef's hands or something, so he won't be able to cook anymore. Also, do it right before the party. That way, Gran won't have enough time to get a new chef."

"Understood."

Blood responded and stepped back into the shadows.

He was a C rank adventurer I had found fighting with a fellow adventurer at the capital.

Even though his opponent had kept apologizing and begging for forgiveness, Blood had kept hitting him.

When I had looked into it, I had found out that Blood was quite the troublemaker.

He was rather calm normally but lost it when he saw his own blood. He went into a fit of rage, and nobody could stop him. Even though he was strong, nobody wanted to party with him because of that.

I wanted his skills, so I had invited Blood to work for me. He had agreed immediately.

When I had asked him why he had accepted without taking any time to think, he had told me he was sick of being an adventurer and was willing to work for me only until he was bored of it.

Blood was very useful and followed all my instructions perfectly.

His personality was a bit of problem, but his skills were invaluable to me.

Just recently, I had asked him to attack some merchants who didn't listen to me, and he had done it without anybody noticing him.

If I asked him to capture someone for me, he would do so without complaint.

I was lucky to be able to get such an excellent pawn. When I had no further use for him, I could just get rid of him. Even though he was better than most people, there were still plenty of ways for me to kill him.

Well, he was very useful to me at the moment, so I wouldn't need to do that anytime soon.

Three days before the party, Blood came back to report to me. He managed to hurt the chef's hands, so the chef could no longer cook for the party.

The party would be ruined without him; I just couldn't stop laughing, imagining how Gran would be apologizing to everyone.

Well, he still had three days, so it was possible that he would try asking another chef, but with the time left, he would not be able to ask someone from another town. His only choice was to find someone in our town.

Before he could even start looking, I threatened and bought out all the good chefs.

I didn't need to do that for all the chefs, of course. If he ended up with a second or a third-rate chef, there would be plenty of ways to ruin his party.

I soon received information that Gran had indeed tried to find someone in the town, but everyone had refused him. Now his only choice was to ask a second or a third-rate

chef.

On the day of the party, we set out to Gran's mansion early.

His place was about the same size as mine, and I often thought that this town only needed one lord and one big residence.

When my father had been on his deathbed, he had told me to get along with the other lord, but I found no reason to do that.

Letting two families govern the same town was stupid. I would push Gran out and make this my town.

I had already given lot of money to the Bornard company and had even changed out the Commerce Guild Master.

I had bought some merchandise from the merchants belonging to the Bornard company as collateral for a promise not to sell their goods in the areas governed by Gran.

It had gone so well that all goods had completely vanished from Gran's areas while the sales in my territory had increased considerably. As long as this continued, it was only a matter of time before the entire town would be mine.

When I entered the party hall, there were already quite a few people gathered around.

Some merchants who I had bribed approached me the moment they saw me.

These merchants only knew how to sell flattery and were my precious pawns.

I took some time to greet a few other people before making my way to Gran.

This would be the last time he would hold a party in this mansion; might as well give him one last greeting.

I almost broke out laughing when I saw how peaceful he looked.

What a foolish, soft-hearted person.

Well, my father had been the same, though.

They trusted everyone and believed anything you told them, so they were easily taken advantage of.

After I greeted Gran, I returned back to the other side of the hall and watched him from afar.

I wanted to see the people who approached him.

The most problematic person here was probably the owner of Crimonia, the head of the Foschuroze family.

Recently, due to their connection to the sea, they had begun gaining a lot of power.

I had ordered the Commerce Guild to get me information on Crimonia's merchants, and all the information I received was strange.

Like a bear digging out a tunnel, a bear opening a shop, a bear selling pudding, a bear being dangerous to go against.

I should probably consider doing a proper research on Crimonia after I took over this town.

Right now, I should be more concerned about the merchants from Crimonia coming here, rather than some weird bear.

Everything was going so well, after all, so I shouldn't let that weird little thing bother me.

Gran then made a short speech, and food was brought into the hall.

I wondered what kind of garbage food was going to be served, but the food that was brought in all looked and smelled rather delicious.

Had I missed a chef from this town who could make such good food? No, I should have gotten everyone.

I tried the food and found it delicious.

Really, where on earth had he found a chef that could make such delicious food?

I should have brought some trash with me...

I had been sure that the food he would be serving would be bad, so I had thought that just insulting the food would be enough. Yet, the food actually tasted great, and I found no problems with it.

I really needed something to throw in, so that I could complain about it.

Was it possible that the chef's hands had already healed?

No, that would be impossible. I had even made an underling go check on his condition. The chef should still be injured and unable to make food.

Had the report been wrong, then? I didn't see how, but could he still make food?

For now, I should just observe.

I ate some more food and spoke with a few more people.

Many approached to talk with me. Well, the smart ones knew which side was more advantageous to be on. Anyone joining Gran's side at this point was stupid.

Discussions could wait, so I finished them up quickly. I casually glanced towards the door, and noticed a man standing there, his hands wrapped in bandages.

Based on the reports, Gran's chef was a red-haired man, so the injured man standing there was him without a doubt, and a different chef must have made all this food.

I didn't know who it was, but to be able to make these delicious dishes, he must be an excellent chef.

It bothered me that someone like that would help Gran, but I just had to recruit this person to be my personal chef.

They would regret helping Gran out today.

Now that I confirmed the chef was indeed different, it was time for me to ruin this party. I sent a signal to those gathered around me.

"I have had enough! Just what is with this disgusting food!"

Once I yelled that out, the hall went silent. Then, the merchants I had been speaking with earlier began to agree with me one by one, gradually making others whisper as well.

Gran approached me, but I knew that as soon as I pointed out the problem, this party was over.

When I complained about the food to him and asked if he had changed chefs, Gran easily admitted that a different chef had made the food. Heh, it would have been better

if he had just lied or kept quiet about it.

Shouldn't he at least try to strategize against me? What would he do if I told him to bring the chef out? Such a boring, simple man.

As we continued our complaints, a man wearing a chef's outfit entered the hall.

Hmm? I had a feeling I had seen this man before. I couldn't recall when, though.

Maybe I had seen him at some restaurant.

"Please excuse me. My name is Zelef, and I have been given the opportunity to be in charge of cooking for the party. Is my cooking really that unsatisfactory?"

So, this man made it? I almost felt bad I had to crush him.

I carried on with the plan.

I figured that he would apologize if I continued to complain, but instead, he kept asking what I didn't like about the food.

Usually, if a noble said that the food was unappetizing, then even good food becomes unpleasant for others.

It seemed like this man didn't understand the situation he was in.

A mere chef had little power compared to a noble.

"All of it is bad! Your master doesn't know any better. How can your master be satisfied with this cooking? The Faren Gramm family has hit rock bottom, for them to leave their cooking to a chef like you!"

"I see. I will relay that message to my master, His Majesty."

"...His Majesty?"

What did he just say? The king himself was his master?

The hall started getting noisy again. Then, somebody else spoke.

"No wonder he looked so familiar. He is the royal head chef..."

“The royal head chef...”

As I murmured to myself, the man re-introduced himself.

“Yes. My name is Zelef, and I cook for the royal family. Now, could you please tell me what you found bad about my cooking? I must not serve bad food to His Majesty, who always tells me that my food is delicious.”

Why was the royal head chef here?

It was strange, no, impossible.

Since I couldn't give him an answer, the chef began asking the other people who had been insulting his food. He didn't look angry, but he had an expression that told me he would not let them off with a simple answer.

“Weren't you gentlemen surprised, exclaiming that the food tasted bad? If you could explain in more detail, that would be great. I must not serve low-grade dishes to His Majesty.”

The other guests didn't know how to respond and looked at me for help.

I didn't know what to do, either, and wanted to ask them that question myself!

After I ignored their glances for a while, one of them started to cough.

He then proceeded to claim to have a cold and ran to Gran.

He betrayed me, but I couldn't say anything at this point.

Once one of them ran, the other guests also followed with the same excuse.

Shit, why was this happening!?

“W-why is Zelef-dono, the royal head chef, cooking at a place like this? Does His Majesty know about this?”

It would be bad if the king knew about this. How much could he possibly know of the situation in my town?

“Of course His Majesty knows that I am here. I did come for a personal reason, though. You see, the injured chef is an old friend of mine.”

Okay, maybe he was not here under the king’s orders, then. While that was a relief, it was still a fact that I had called the royal head chef’s cooking disgusting.

He continued his explanation, and it turned out that Eleanora from the Foschuroze family was involved. So, this was all Crimonia’s fault.

It was still strange that he was here, though. Sheelin was quite the distance from the capital.

There was no way he could have made it here in time, even if he had set off the moment he had received the report of Gran’s chef getting injured.

“You came running here right after their chef got injured? That’s impossible, timewise...”

“Please excuse my rudeness, but were you aware that the chef Botts was injured, Gerardo-dono?”

Zelef heard me murmuring to myself.

“No, I didn’t know. I only learned about it when Gran-dono told us earlier.”

Shit, this wasn’t good. They suspected me for sure.

“I see. If you know anything about it, or if you might know of any witnesses, please let us know.”

“I’m sorry that I can’t be of any help to you.”

“Oh no, he was attacked in a deserted alley, so finding a witness would be a miracle.”

The hall got even noisier when Zelef said that.

Since I had revealed that I knew about the chef attack earlier, some guests must be suspecting me, too.

Shit, everything was falling apart because the royal head chef decided to show up.

This entire situation was so vexing. My plan had been ruined by a single chef.

“Zelef-dono, please don’t misunderstand. It’s not that the food didn’t taste good. It was very delicious.”

“Is that so? I heard you exclaiming that the food tasted bad, however. Everyone else heard you say it as well, right? Of course, I have no intentions of complaining if you thought so, but as a chef and the person in charge of the food for this party, I have to apologize if you really thought that the food was bad. I would also like to know what you did not like about it.”

Shit, even saying it was delicious couldn’t get me out anymore.

He even cornered me loud enough that everybody heard him. I should have investigated more beforehand...

How had he come here so quickly all the way from the capital? No matter how I looked at it, it seemed impossible!

I couldn’t think of any other excuse to cover this up.

I couldn’t tell him that it was delicious, and I couldn’t tell him that it was bad. I would be insulting the food the king and his family ate if I dared to call it disgusting.

So, the only thing I could do was act the same way as those men who ran to Gran.

“Zelef-dono, I must apologize. It seems that I am also feeling unwell.”

It was regrettable, but I had to pull back.

I apologized to Gran, grabbed my son, and started to leave.

Nobody followed us.

I bit my lips so hard that my mouth began to bleed.

“Father.”

My son looked at me, but I was too preoccupied to pay attention to him.

“We’re going home.”

“Father!”

“Silence.”

I made my son shut up.

Why had the royal head chef come here? Why?!

Once I returned home, I went straight to my study and began shouting all the things I couldn’t say earlier.

“Don’t mess with me! The royal head chef?! How did someone like him end up being here?! Also, those merchants! They were all over me earlier; how could they just run to Gran like that?!”

I got angry just thinking about it and had to sip some sweet juice to calm myself down.

No matter how I looked at it, this must be the fault of that Cliff from the Foschuroze family. He had managed to get in my way. If he hadn’t been there, I would have ruined the Faren Gramm family for good. Just thinking about that blond guy’s expression made me angry again.

Once I was done with disposing of Gran, he was next.

“Father!”

“Randall, you’re still here?”

“That’s not the point. Why did you back down? He’s just a chef.”

“He is not just a chef; he’s the royal head chef. If he tells the king what happened here, His Majesty’s impression of our family will be ruined.”

“It was so unlike you not to say anything back like that, though.”

“Randall. You should think about your position a bit more.”

Perhaps because nobody scolded my son, he believed that everything would go smoothly no matter what.

I was the one who taught him that nobles were superior people, of course, but I didn't realize he was stupid enough to think that the royal head chef was just a regular chef.

He could not tell the difference between his foes and friends. He was fourteen already, so I wished that he could understand at least that much.

“Are you just going to leave it at that, then?”

“I will see how the situation plays out for now. The tide has changed with what has happened today. It's possible that many people will side with Gran now.”

“If that's the case, just threaten them some more, or bribe them with more money.”

“I can't do anything until Zelef leaves...”

I shouldn't try to stir trouble right now. It would be a problem if His Majesty caught wind of this.

If he ended up doing an inspection here, it would cause us some problems.

I told my son not to cause any trouble for a while then kicked him out from my study.

# Chapter 185

## Bear-san Wastes Some Time Away

The party was well underway now.

All the maids and other employees were very busy due to the amount of guests that had arrived.

As much as we would like to help, both Fina and I knew nothing about noble parties.

We just hid ourselves in our room to stay out of the way.

If I walked around the mansion in my suit, I would only draw attention to myself, which would only end up causing a commotion.

“Fina, what should we do?”

“Hmm, how about some dismantling?”

She said after thinking about it for a bit.

She came all the way here, so she should stop thinking about dismantling and just take a break.

“You don’t have to do that right now.”

“Okay, how about cleaning?”

“You don’t have to do that either.”

“Uuu, Big Sis Yuna. I can’t calm down. I’m in a Noble-sama’s mansion; I just can’t stay still knowing that.”

Fina couldn’t stay calm even though this was her third day here already, huh.

I had to help her feel comfortable staying at mansions, somehow.

Noa and Misa were her friends, so they were bound to call her over to play at their

homes, after all.

“Should we play a game, then?”

“A game?”

I climbed onto the bed and gestured Fina to join me.

The table was a bit too wide for us to play a game where we had to face each other.

I told Fina to sit on the opposite side of the bed and took out a checkerboard and two small boxes from the Bear Box.

“What are these?”

“It’s a game called Reversi.”

I passed one of the small boxes to Fina and opened mine, prompting Fina to open hers as well.

“Uwahh. It’s a black bear on one side and a white bear on the other!”

Fina said while turning one of the flat, round pieces in her hand happily.

“How do you play this game?”

“You play by placing the pieces down on the board. Fina, do you want to be the black bear or white bear?”

“I can’t chose. The black bear is Swaying Bear, right? And the white bear should be Hugging Bear. I just can’t pick between them.”

I honestly couldn’t choose, either, even though the drawings on the pieces weren’t Hugging Bear and Swaying Bear but rather just basic deformed bears. Even so, we both felt bad having to choose a side. I had planned on having Fina choose, but since she couldn’t do it, either...

“Okay, then we’ll switch sides every round.”

“Okay.”

We would do what we always did with my Bears: just switch every so often to keep things fair.

“Okay, I’ll explain the rules now. First, you place two of your pieces in the middle of the board like this.”

I placed two black pieces in the middle.

“Fina, put two of your white pieces on the two open spots in the middle.”

Fina did as I told her to.

I then placed another black piece down, and flipped one of Fina’s white piece that was trapped between mine, changing it into a black bear.

“Okay Fina, now try placing a white piece in the same way to capture a black piece of mine.”

“Can I put it anywhere?”

“Yes, as long as you place it next to one of my pieces.”

Fina placed her white piece next to one of mine. She then flipped my piece as it was in between two of her pieces.

“We keep placing our pieces back and forth like this. Whoever has more pieces of their color in the end wins.”

“I think I get it.”

It didn’t take long for us to enter an all out reversi war, successfully killing time while waiting for the party to end.

Honestly, I had wanted to make some playing cards, but I couldn’t decide on what to draw for the Kings, Queens, and Jacks. I had ended up just overthinking those trivial things, so I had decided to make reversi instead.

Also, drawing fifty-two cards plus the Jokers would be just too much of a pain.

I was planning on asking Mylene-san if printing artwork was possible in this world first, before committing to it.

I figured I would be using His Majesty for the Kings, and Her Highness for the Queens, but I couldn't think of anything good for the Jacks, so I was thinking of maybe just putting Princess Flora on them. Cliff, Eleanora-san, or Noa could also work. As for Misa, I didn't even consider her till now.

Drawing a bear for the Joker should be okay, and if it got too difficult to pick, I could also just draw bears on all the cards.

When I got back to Crimonia, maybe I should discuss this with Mylene-san. It would be nice to have more games to play when I was stuck in a room with other people like this.

As for when I was alone, I could just sleep, of course.

We played Reversi for a while, ate some of the pudding we made yesterday, and then also ate some pizza. We leisurely spent our time in the room.

As we lazed around on the bed after filling our bellies with pizza, Noa and Misa came into the room wearing beautiful dresses.

Noa's dress was red, matching her glistening blonde hair, and Misa was wearing a pale blue dress, which also matched her light brown hair really well.

Fina would be wearing a dress for Misa's party as well; I was really looking forward to that.

"Both of you are so cute."

"Thank you."

"Did the party go smoothly?"

Based on their smiles, it seemed like it had ended peacefully.

I figured that the opposing nobles would try to harass them, but maybe I was wrong?

"Yes, it went great. Zelef-san was really cool."

Noa and Misa then told us about the party.

It turned out that some nobles had indeed tried to complain about the food. Well, at least they hadn't put trash into it.

The more I heard about those nobles, the more they sounded like the typical stupid nobles I had read about in stories.

How dared they eat Zelef-san's food and then claim it tasted bad. Even though they didn't know who made the food, most people wouldn't just say something tasted bad when it tasted that good.

However, situations could change depending on the speaker.

Some people trusted another person's judgment over their own. If the other person claimed the food was third-rate, they would believe them.

It was the same whether you were in school or working. If you ate something and thought it was good, but your upperclassman or a superior said it was disgusting, and those around you also agreed with them, then you were sure to doubt your own tastes. You might even end up thinking it didn't taste good yourself.

Even if you still thought it tasted good, you couldn't go up against a group of people who agreed with your superior.

In this case, the nobles who had made the claims were quite influential, so going against their opinions would have been difficult.

To fight against them, we had needed somebody who had equal or greater influence than them.

Gran-san would have been of no help, and we didn't know how much influence Cliff had in this town. So, Zelef-san had been the best choice to go against the nobles.

"Thanks to Zelef-san, Randall and his father left the hall. I was so happy to see them leave!"

The two girls happily told us.

Randall... Oh, he was the shitty brat who had tried to fight us the other day.

With someone like him at the party, of course the girls wouldn't have been able to

enjoy themselves.

Hearing about what his father had done, his spoiled attitude now made more sense.

I looked at the girls. I must make sure they grow up to be fine people.

“Still, Randall glared at us on his way out. It was kind of scary.”

“He looked so frustrated, though.”

Maybe we should watch out for a bit.

The next time we ran into him, he might try to pick a fight with us again.

Misa and Noa happily talked about what had happened at the party after the Salbert family had left.

“Afterwards, everybody ate the pudding we made. They all said it was delicious.”

“But, everybody thought Zelef-san made it...”

“...even though we were the ones who did.”

The two of them looked a bit disappointed.

“That can’t be helped. At least everybody liked it.”

“Yes! Everybody couldn’t stop saying how good it was with each and every bite.”

I was glad that the pudding had been so well-received.

It seemed like Zelef-san’s cooking had also been received well.

Even though I really hadn’t wanted to attend the party, I still wanted to taste Zelef-san’s cooking when I got the chance.

Would he be willing to cook something for me if I asked?

“I wish Yuna-san and Fina were there.”

Both Fina and I showed a bitter smile when Noa said that.

We definitely didn't want to go to a party full of nobles and influential people. Everybody would stare at us, and we would most likely end up not eating anything because of that.

Also, we didn't know anything about proper etiquette of noble parties, and I surely wouldn't be allowed to attend the party wearing my Bear Suit, right?

As we continued chatting, I realized something.

I hadn't heard of what Zelef-san planned to do now.

Would he be returning to the capital straight away?

It would be a bit of a problem if he left before Misa's birthday party. Should I ask him to stay?

I went to the kitchen to look for him, but I only found some maids in the middle of cleaning. He was nowhere to be seen.

I decided to ask the maids, and they told me that he had apparently been summoned by Gran-san.

Why did Gran-san want to see him?

Hmm, what should I do...?

Should I go to Gran-san's study to check if Zelef-san is there?

"Yuna-san, what are you doing here?"

"Meshun-san?"

I turned around and was met by Meshun-san carrying the plates that had been used at the party.

"I have something I want to ask Zelef-san. I heard Gran-san asked to speak with him?"

"Once the party was over, Gran-sama requested to speak with Zelef-sama. I think they're in Gran-sama's study."

Since I now knew where Zelef-san was, I headed straight over to Gran-san's study.

I knocked on the door and entered after receiving permission to do so.

"Young Bear Lady, what's the matter?"

Zelef-san and Gran-san were inside the room while Cliff was nowhere to be seen.

"I wanted to ask Zelef-san about what he plans to do now that the party is over."

"What I plan to do?"

"Yup, I had to know if you were planning on leaving immediately. If possible, I want you to wait until Misa's birthday party is over."

"Is Misana-dono also having a party?"

"It's in three days. Would it be too much to ask you to delay returning to the capital until then?"

"Hmm? I guess that should be fine. I received permission from His Majesty to come here, after all. I also want to have a long talk with Botts, so we can catch up."

"Thank you."

"If that's the case, shall I make the food for Misana-dono's party as well?"

"Could you?"

It wasn't me, but Gran-san who popped the question.

"Yes, of course. Botts can't make food for a while, right? Please think of it as my present to her."

"Thank you very much."

Gran-san thanked him with a bow.

Oh, now I could eat Zelef-san's food.

That made me a bit happy.

“I heard this from Noa and Misa earlier, but you played a big role in today’s party, didn’t you?”

“I did no such thing. I just responded to the criticism my food was getting by asking what the problem was. I acted based on what you told me, Yuna-dono.”

“Acted based on what I told you?”

“If I accepted that my food was bad, it would be rude to the people who recognize and like my food, right?”

Oh, I had told him that.

“When I thought of it that way, His Majesty and my subordinates came to my mind. I got a little bit mad, realizing that those nobles were tarnishing the tastes of those who find my cooking delicious.”

Zelef-san was expressing his thanks to me, but hadn’t he just done the obvious thing?

Still, by stating that the king liked his food, he had surely put himself out there.

If Zelef-san were to fail and served something of poor taste, it would be the same as betraying the trust of those who believed in his cooking. Also, it was possible that if the head chef’s cooking was found to be bad, his subordinates’ cooking might be labeled as bad, too.

He had put himself under a lot of pressure.

Well, Zelef-san would never serve his failures to his guests, so this was all just a needless worry.

Since I now figured out what Zelef-san wanted to do, I returned to my room. The girls were playing Reversi, which I had left out for them.

Noa and Misa should have at least changed out of their dresses before playing, though.

## Chapter 186

# Bear-san Is Shocked When She Finds Out About Udon

The next day, Gran-san and Cliff came to thank me while we were in the middle of breakfast.

Noa and Gran-san explained how Zelef-san had helped save the party yesterday.

Many merchants and influential people had agreed to listen to Gran-san, but they were mainly talking about Zelef-san.

It made sense that if the royal head chef appeared, the people doing shady deals in the background would take notice and would have to pull back, knowing that the king might hear about what they were up to. After all, nobody was stupid enough to go against the king.

The other people that stayed wanted to learn more about Zelef-san, of course.

The reason given for Zelef-san coming was that it was because he was acquainted with Botts-san, and because the Foschuroze family's Eleanora-san had requested him to go.

Now nobody would know that I had actually been the one who asked Zelef-san to come.

In the first place, most people would question us if they found out that a Bear had brought him here.

I always hated dealing with troublesome things, so I was happy with that explanation.

Many people had enjoyed and talked about the pudding as well. Some of them even knew about my shop in Crimonia.

One of them had asked Gran-san, [Do you happen to be acquainted with the bear?]

To that, Gran-san had whispered back, [Yes, she is my granddaughter's friend.]

The person who had asked him had seemed surprised, so Gran-san had asked him why.

Wait, why had he whispered it?

Well, it was better than loudly exclaiming it so that everybody could hear.

“Okay, Yuna. I have to help out Old Man Gran for a while, so can I ask you to take care of Noa? If she starts acting selfish, I don’t mind if you shut her in her room.”

“I’m not going to be selfish.”

“Okay, that means you can hold back if you see anything bear-related, right?”

“That’s...”

Noa hesitated.

Wait, what did they mean by that?

“Okay, it’s a promise.”

“Father, you’re so mean.”

Noa showed a sour expression.

Gran-san then asked me to take care of Misa as well.

He told me that it was fine if I just played with them.

So, that was why we returned to our room after breakfast to play some more Reversi.

“The one who loses switches out with Fina.”

“Okay. I’m not going to lose, though.”

How were Misa and Noa not tired of playing this game yet?

I was already completely tired of it.

At first, it had been fun because I hadn’t played for a while, but it wasn’t a game that would normally be played for several hours straight.

If we at least had playing cards, we could play many different games. I should seriously consider making the cards once I got back to Crimonia.

“Do the three of you want to continue playing in the room? I’m thinking of going outside.”

“Big Sis Yuna, can I go with you?”

“Yeah, sure.”

Fina jumped off the bed, leaving the other two to continue playing Reversi on their own.

Noa and Misa gave a quick look at each other, and then...

“I’ll go too!”

“Me too.”

Noa and Misa exclaimed.

“I just want to take a walk outside.”

“We would love that as well.”

Thus, we all ended up going outside for a walk.

We had run into trouble the last time we went out, so I was hoping that we could stroll in peace today.

Honestly, I wanted to go by myself so that I could go take a look at the Adventurer’s Guild, but it seemed like I would have to postpone that.

I wasn’t planning on taking any requests; I just wanted to see what requests they had.

If I found any interesting requests, I could come back and take them later.

Still, I shouldn’t bring young girls to the Adventurer’s Guild.

My Bear Suit was bound to attract trouble there.

“Is there any place you girls want to go?”

If I couldn't go to the Adventurer's Guild, then I wanted to at least see what kind of specialties were sold around here. I hoped to find some interesting ingredients. I might even be able to find something that didn't exist in my former world.

From time to time, I saw some spicy dishes or sweet fruits that I had never seen before.

I wanted to try something that couldn't be found in Crimonia.

Fina would be fine with that, but I didn't think Noa and Misa would have fun searching for specialties.

That left me with no place to take them, though.

I was the type who had fun exploring new places. I had enjoyed exploring new maps each time they were released in the game.

The three girls looked at each other.

"I'm okay with going anywhere."

"Me too."

"I want to visit the food stalls again..."

Misa said with a bit of difficulty.

"The food we bought from the food stalls was really good. I mostly only eat the meals prepared by our chef, so..."

"I see."

Could a noble's daughter not go outside without permission?

"Are you two okay with that?"

"Yes."

"I'm okay, too."

Since we now had a destination, we headed straight for the food stalls.

“Noa, do you eat at the food stalls often?”

“I do. I often go with mother.”

True, her mother looked like the type who ate at the food stalls.

“Even now, I sometimes go there by myself. Still, lately I always find myself going to your shop, Yuna-san.”

Oh right, I often ran into her when she came to the shop to eat by herself.

I had always worried at the beginning, wondering if a noble’s daughter was allowed to wander around town by herself. However, I soon realized that the maids or butlers who came after her weren’t angry because she ran out on her own, but because she was skipping out on her studies.

There sure were many types of nobles in this world.

“Big Sister Noa, that’s not fair. I want to go to Big Sis Yuna’s shop as well!”

“Next time you come to Crimonia, I will take you there.”

“Okay, that’s a promise.”

We reached the plaza where the stalls were lined up and looked around for something that Misa would like to eat.

As we walked past the stands, all of their owners stared at me.

I got it, okay. This was the same treatment as the last time we came here.

I ignored the stares and ordered some snacks.

As we continued moving around the plaza, we found an udon place.

Wow, it existed in this world. Well, all you had to do was roll out wheat flour as thin as you could and cut it into noodles.

I was quite happy with this find. Yet, Fina said something unbelievable when she noticed me staring at it.

“Big Sis Yuna, you can eat those at Anzu-san’s shop, you know.”

“…Fina-san, could repeat that?”

“You can eat those at Big Sis Anzu’s shop.”

“…You’re kidding me.”

“The soup is different, but she serves it at her shop. Didn’t you know?”

“No, I didn’t!”

“Well, that’s because you always order rice dishes at Big Sis Anzu’s shop.”

She was right, I never looked at Anzu’s menu when I went there. I just always ordered a rice dish. That was what I got for leaving the menu-making to Anzu and Terumi-san, huh.

I had looked it over once at the beginning, but I didn’t recall seeing udon on the menu.

Maybe I had just missed it?

“Anyway, it’s still a rare dish. I’ve never seen it in Crimonia.”

“It’s mostly sold at shops, not food stalls.”

So, based on what Fina just told me, I should be able to eat udon if I just went to a different shop.

When I had first arrived at Crimonia in this Bear Suit of mine, I had eaten my first meal at Elena-san’s inn. Her food was delicious, while the snacks I could procure from the food stalls were great as well. I really didn’t go to restaurants often.

When Morin-san had opened her shop, I had started to more or less always eat there.

Then, once Anzu had opened hers, I started going there as well, but I had never seen a udon dish before.

Maybe it was because I always ordered takeout or simply ate in a private room.

So, it had been a while since I had last tried a noodle dish.

Hmm, this udon was quite good, but the broth was a little lacking.

Anzu most likely used soup made with seafood as stock, so hers should be better. Ah, I wanted to go home soon.

After we finished the udon, we were quite full, so we took a break on a bench. Then, two familiar-looking people showed up.

“They’re really here.”

“They are indeed.”

Ehh, if I remembered correctly, they were Gran-san’s bodyguards. Marina and the magician with the huge boobs whose name I couldn’t recall.

They had introduced themselves to me just once, and I had never seen them again after that, so it was a miracle that I even recalled Marina’s name.

Yeah, it wasn’t my fault for not paying attention when they had told me their names.

“Marina, Elle.”

Misa greeted them.

Oh right. Her name was Elle. I silently thanked Misa for greeting them as such.

“Misana-sama, it’s been a while.”

The two of them returned the greeting.

“You two knew that I came to this town?”

“Yeah. When we were at the Adventurer’s Guild, we heard that there was a girl dressed as a bear in town.”

“Yep, everybody said your outfit is cute.”

“Although some people did also make fun of it.”

Elle tried to make it sound good, but Marina shot it down to the ground.

“Well, that’s how we knew it was you, Yuna. By the way, why are you together with Misana-sama?”

“I was invited to Misa’s birthday party.”

“Misa’s birthday party?”

Marina looked at Misa.

“Yes, I’m turning 10 in three days.”

“My, congratulations.”

“Are you going to be attending too?”

“No, please allow us to decline. Violent adventurers like us aren’t suited for noble birthday parties.”

When they put it that way, where did that leave me and the commoner Fina?

“I wouldn’t mind you two coming, though.”

“Please don’t mind us. Still, if something bad happens, just call for us and we will run over to help.”

Misa smiled when Marina made that promise.

“Marina, where are you headed?”

“Let’s see, I was thinking of going to a field just outside of the town.”

Marina answered Misa’s question.

An adventurer going to a field?

“It appears that some moles are causing problems over there. “

Moles? Like, the moles that dug underground, right?

Marina further explained that the moles ate the crops, so she was going to exterminate them.

Did moles always eat crops?

“They do.”

“Of course, there are moles that don’t eat it as well. It depends on the species.”

“There are moles this big, too.”

Marina said and spread her arms wide.

That was way too big. I didn’t think that could be considered a mole anymore.

Well, maybe it could, in this world?

Leaving that aside, the fact still remained that an adventurer was going to exterminate some moles. Well, of course there were odd jobs out there that weren’t just monster subjugation or escorting.

Still, how were they going to exterminate moles if they were underground? Hmm, maybe earth magic would work?

I kind of wanted to see how moles were exterminated. I couldn’t go with them though, since I had the three girls with me.

I glanced at the three girls, and two of them were looking at me with extreme curiosity. They were Noa and Misa, of course. Fina looked at me normally.

Perhaps it was the difference between nobles and commoners?

“Yuna-san!”

Noa tugged on my suit.

Could she not look at me with those eyes...

“Is the field far from here?”

“You can see it as soon as you turn right at the first crossroad after exiting the town.”

“Is it dangerous?”

“Not at all. There are no monsters nearby, and it’s far from the forest, so there shouldn’t be any animals either. But, for some reason, moles appeared and started damaging the crops.”

“Food is important for every town, so adventurers are sent to exterminate the pests when necessary.”

There were no dangers, and the location was close by.

“Okay, do you all want to go?”

“Yes.”

“I want to go!”

Noa and Misa happily replied while Fina just stood there with a smile on her face.

Out of the three of them, Fina was the calmest, and sort of acted as a big sister to the other two.

“Oi, Yuna. Are you really planning on bringing Misana-sama and the other two girls?!”

“Yep. You said it wasn’t dangerous, right?”

“Yea, it isn’t dangerous, but it’s also not interesting at all. Elle will use magic to drive the moles out of the ground, and I will dispose of them.”

“Yeah, extremely boring.”

Elle agreed with Marina.

Yet, Misa and Noa said that it was okay, even if it wasn’t interesting.

“Misana-sama, I’m telling you, it’s really not interesting at all.”

“Yup, I got it.”

Did she really get it, though?

She was smiling suspiciously...

Well, it didn't really matter since I wasn't the one who took the job. If it ended up being too boring, we would could just leave, and it wouldn't matter even if they noticed us leaving.

Marina sighed and began leading the way.

# Chapter 187

## Bear-san Exterminates Some Moles

As Marina started to lead the way, Misa happily darted to her side.

She must really trust Marina, huh.

Well, I did find her party to be quite trustworthy as well. When they had been attacked by the orcs, they stood and fought without trying to run.

I noticed Marina was looking at Misa with a warm expression, too.

“Marina, where is the rest of your party?”

I asked her as we approached the gate.

When her party had been escorting Gran-san, there had been four of them. I couldn't recall their names at all, though.

“Oh, Masurika and Euri are off doing something else. Bringing Elle here with me is more than enough for this request.”

Ah, without her, she wouldn't be able to get the moles out from underground.

The fields came into sight a short while after we passed through the gate.

How vast. I could see several people working on them.

When we got close enough, Marina called out to one of the workers.

“Excuse me. We are here because there was a request for mole extermination at the Adventurer's Guild.”

“Oh, you came for that? That's great...”

The man turned around to look at Marina, but his gaze soon fixated on me instead.

“A bear?”

“Oh, you don’t have to mind her.”

Marina took a glance at me before telling him to not worry.

I wanted to thank her, but wasn’t that a bit cold?

Yet, the man got even more interested in me and kept staring at me for a while longer.

“Alright, what about these children with you?”

The man turned to look at the girls.

“They came here just to watch, so you don’t have to mind them either. Anyway, where did the moles appear?”

“Oh right. It’s right over there. They have already ruined a lot of crops, so please take care of them quickly.”

The man finally stopped staring at us and pointed to where the moles were popping up.

Marina thanked the man, and we started to walk in that direction.

I used detection magic just to confirm that there were no monsters nearby, and it turned out that Marina was right. It was just unfortunate that it couldn’t detect any moles, either.

Detection magic could only pinpoint monsters and humans. Since moles weren’t considered monsters, my detection magic didn’t work on them.

I was only able to detect the people working the fields.

I took another look at my map and realized there were quite a few people around.

I didn’t recall passing anybody, but there was a dot behind us as well.

I turned around to check, but couldn’t see anyone.

The dot was idling near a big nearby tree, so maybe they were resting or skipping

work there?

Farming must be hard work.

“It must be somewhere around here. Elle, I’m counting on you. Also, please step back everyone.”

Marina gave her orders when we arrived at the spot.

“I will check the state of the area, then.”

Elle began walking around the field.

“There sure are a lot of holes here.”

I took another closer look as well and noticed that there were indeed many hole-like shapes.

“How are you going to find the moles?”

Misa asked curiously.

“Maybe I could use water magic to draw them out. Well, the easiest way would be to dig them out using earth magic, but I’m kind of bad with that. Okay, here we go.”

Elle put her hand near one of the holes and began using her magic.

Water started to pour from her hand and into the hole. More and more water flowed into the hole, and just as I wondered what would happen next, the water started to come back up.

Was she taking the water out?

The three girls watched her in complete amazement.

“Just letting you know, Elle is using some difficult magic.”

Marina boasted to the three girls, who looked at her with serious expressions.

“Really?”

“Summoning water is easy, but manipulating that water is rather difficult.”

Marina kindly explained to Misa.

True, I could bring out water without a problem, but creating a golem out of it was much harder.

Hmm, maybe it depended on the imagination of the process?

“Marina, would you mind cutting your conversation short? They’re about to come out.”

Marina turned around and readied her sword when Elle told her that.

“Everyone, it’s dangerous, so please step back a bit further.”

We took a couple of steps back and continued watching from a distance. As Elle sucked out the water, a black thing flew out from the hole.

“S-something came out!”

It was a mole, but it was larger than the ones I had seen on TV.

Marina thrust her sword into the mole that was sucked out from the ground, killing it instantly.

Two more moles flew out, which Marina dealt with just as swiftly as the first one.

“Only three, huh.”

“That’s good enough. Let’s go to the next hole.”

Elle walked over to another hole.

“Misana-sama, it’s really not interesting at all, right?”

Misa tilted her head.

“Elle’s magic is amazing, though.”

“Thank you for your compliment, Misana-sama. It’s not really that great at all.”

“But, Marina said that your magic is amazing.”

“It’s hard to use, but it’s still only considered middle-level magic. If I don’t touch the water directly, I can’t control it at all. More advanced magic users can move the water without having to touch it.”

Hm? Didn’t that mean that I was doing some amazing stuff, considering I could make water golems move from afar?

“Could you please think of me as a slightly amazing magician instead?”

Elle smiled at Misa.

She had to bend forward slightly to meet Misa’s eyes, and that emphasized her huge breasts.

They were really big. One day, mine will be that size as well.

In the end, I also helped with exterminating the moles.

Well, all I did was look for holes. The extermination was Marina and Elle’s job, so I didn’t help with killing them directly.

“Marina, there’s another hole here.”

Misa called out to Marina from a spot quite far away.

“Okay. We’ll go over there once we finish up here. Elle, let’s go.”

Elle used her magic and repeated her, by now, well-practiced process.

Since there were several people looking for the holes, we progressed pretty quickly.

Still, when we ran into the holes that were too close to each other, we sometimes ended up with some empty ones.

The extermination was going smoothly otherwise.

“How long will we do this for?”

They already took out a lot of moles, but it was probably impossible to take them all out.

“There’s no way of knowing when we will be done, so it depends on the time and Elle’s magic. If Elle’s magic runs out or it gets dark, we will have to stop. Still, thanks to your help, we already reached our quota, so we just have to report back to the guild. If the damage gets worse again, they will put up another request.”

Nobody knew how many moles existed down there anyway. We could only wait and see what would happen after we exterminated lots of them.

“Elle, are you still okay?”

“I’m fine.”

“In that case, should we keep going for a while longer? Also, what do you girls want to do?”

“We’ll follow along.”

Misa answered. She must be enjoying her first mole subjugation.

Noa wanted to stay, too, so Fina agreed as well.

“Still, there’s a lot more than I thought.”

“True. We haven’t even cleared half of the holes, and we have already gotten rid of quite a few.”

Marina and Elle discussed between themselves, but it seemed like they couldn’t come to a conclusion as to why there were so many.

It wasn't like anyone in our group knew how many moles were there normally, so I wasn't able to judge whether we had removed too many or too few.

The three girls were thinking the same.

"Are there more than usual?"

"Yes, there are. Usually you don't find and subjugate this many in such a short amount of time."

"Maybe... there's a Big Mole around here..."

"A Big Mole?"

Like, a large mole?

"Yeah, that would be possible. Let's stop hunting these moles for now and look for a hole that might have a Big Mole in it."

"Marina, what's a Big Mole?"

Misa asked the question I had on my mind.

Nice, Misa. If it had turned out to be exactly what the name suggested, I would be terribly embarrassed from asking.

"A Big Mole is basically the mom of the moles. We have to subjugate it before it gives birth to a bunch of baby moles, or they will finish off all the crops here."

"Still, if that's the case, we should get other people to help us. Things will end up badly if we subjugate it too late."

"It should be fine if we look for the hole first. Besides, we should be able to take it down ourselves."

"Okay, then let's go look for it."

Following Elle's instructions, we began to look for a big hole.

The hole should be about the size that a child could fit through. Just how big could these holes get?

Just as we started looking around, a man came running up to us.

“Excuse me!”

The man was completely out of breath by the time he got to us.

“Did something happen?”

The man took some time to catch his breath before replying.

“There’s a big hole over there, and all our crops have been destroyed in that area.”

“A big hole?”

“A Big Mole?!”

“Yes, it might be so. I thought that it would be better to let you know. It will be a problem if this continues. Please do something about it.”

The man bowed.

It seemed like the hole with a Big Mole inside had appeared.

The man then guided us to the hole so that Marina could investigate it.

When we got there, I noticed that the hole was indeed big; big enough for a child to fit through.

“It is quite big, yes.”

Elle circled the hole and confirmed its surroundings.

Most of the crops around the hole had been eaten.

“It might indeed be a Big Mole’s hole.”

I still hadn’t figured out what a Big Mole was. It wasn’t a monster from my understanding.

I used my detection magic but still detected no monsters.

The only thing that it reacted to here were humans.

Oh, the guy who skipped out on work was still under the tree.

“Do the honors, Elle.”

Elle chanted the same magic as before and poured water into the hole. When she reversed the flow, however, nothing came out.

“Is it not inside?”

“I don’t know, maybe not.”

Elle looked around the barren field.

“It should still be around.”

“Maybe it’s so big that my magic isn’t strong enough to pull it out.”

Elle had sucked all the water out, but we didn’t sense any moles coming out.

I hadn’t planned on helping out, but it would become a problem if any more crops got ruined.

“Want me to do it?”

“You want to do it, Yuna?”

“If you can, could you? I don’t think my magic is enough.”

“I know you’re really good at earth magic, but you can use water magic as well?”

“Yeah, I can.”

I used water magic just like Elle had, making water pour out of my Bear Hands’ mouths into the big hole.

“That’s a lot of water.”

“That’s more than double the amount of mine.”

Through the water magic, I could tell what was going on underneath. I could feel that the water was touching something.

“There’s something big down there.”

“You can tell?”

“Somewhat, yeah.”

I started to suck up the water, just like how Elle had.

Yup, I could definitely feel something huge about to come out.

“Marina, take care of whatever comes out.”

“Yeah, leave it to me.”

Marina readied her sword.

It would come out any time now.

The thing that came out was... a mole?!

“A Big Mole!”

Marina yelled out.

It wasn’t that big, though.

It was about the size of a wolf, but well, that was definitely not the size of a regular mole.

“Marina! Don’t let it get away!”

“Got it!”

Marina thrust her sword into the Big Mole once it came out. Her sword went right through its body, executing it with a single hit. The Big Mole’s body then fell lifelessly

to the ground.

“It’s big.”

“I didn’t know there were moles this big.”

I could understand Fina being fine looking at the dead mole, but it was weird to me that Misa and Noa seemed to be unfazed as well.

When I had first come to this world, I had been disturbed by the sight of a wolf’s corpse.

The children of this world sure were strong.

“Yuna, thank you for helping us.”

“Yes, thank you so much. My magic just wasn’t strong enough for it.”

The two of them thanked me.

“The farmers would be troubled if the moles kept eating their crops, right?”

The crops they raised with love.

I couldn’t leave the farmers to fend on their own, knowing that they were suffering.

Back in my world, I would hear news about crops the farmers put a lot of effort into growing, only for them to get destroyed by a typhoon or some other natural disaster.

I might even eat food made from the crops here one day, so it was something I had to protect.

# Chapter 188

## Bear-san Returns To The Mansion After Subjugating The Moles

We managed to exterminate the Big Mole without anyone getting injured.

“Now we don’t have to worry about this place anymore.”

According to Marina, there shouldn’t be any more Big Moles appearing.

Big Moles went to places with lots of food and gave birth there.

They gave birth to many moles at once, so the damage got worse the longer people took to subjugate them.

As expected of another world’s biology. The moles here were nothing like the moles from my former world.

We just had to finish off the leftover moles now, but it was about time we called it a day.

The people waiting for us at the mansion might get concerned if we stayed out too late, so we decided to head back.

“Marina, Elle, thank you for letting us tag along today.”

“No problem. I’m happy that I got to spend time with Misana-sama today.”

“Misana-sama, please call for us if anything happens, okay?”

The two of them decided to stay until Elle’s magic ran out, so the three girls and I headed back on our own.

We passed by the big tree where someone was taking a nap. I tried to catch a glimpse of them, but didn’t see anyone. They had still been there when we were exterminating

the Big Mole, though... They must have left because we were making such a big commotion about it.

Halfway to the mansion, I took a look at the three girls. Their clothes and faces were all dirty, which was normal after walking around a field. Their skirts were especially bad.

I was pretty sure that people would get mad at me if I brought them home like this. Yeah, it would be awkward to go back without cleaning ourselves first.

We couldn't do anything about the clothing, but we should at least wash our faces.

"Okay, stay still everyone."

I soaked a towel with water magic and wiped their faces.

Their faces were clean now, but their clothes were still dirty... The maids would get mad about that, right?

I thought up some excuses as we continued our way back to the mansion. When we got to the gate, we were met by someone unexpected, who was also about to enter.

"Mother!"

Noa called out and ran to her mother, who turned around in surprise.

"Noa?!"

Eleanora-san smiled when she recognized her daughter.

"How have you been doing?"

"I'm doing well, but why are you here, Mother?"

"I'm here to see my beloved daughter, of course."

Eleanora-san was about to reach out and hug Noa but stopped.

“Noa, you’re a bit dirty.”

Noa took a look at herself.

Her pretty clothing was indeed covered in dirt.

Since we had no excuses for this, Eleanora-san should get mad at me, as I was the one in charge of the girls.

“Eleanora-san, I’m sorry. I took the girls to a field.”

“It’s not your fault. It’s because I said I wanted to go.”

Misa tried to take the blame.

“Big Sis Yuna did nothing wrong.”

“Huhu, I’m not mad. When I was a child, I got my clothes even dirtier than this.”

Elearnora-san laughed and hugged Noa, not minding her dirty clothes at all.

“Mother, you’ll get dirty too.”

“There is no mother in the world who won’t hug her own daughter even if she gets dirty in the process.”

“M-Mother!”

Noa sounded concerned, but her smile told a different story.

“Okay, but why are you really here, Eleanora-san?”

“Hmm... It’s true I came here to see my daughter. I guess it’s 10 percent work, 10 percent Cliff, and 80 percent Noa.”

I didn’t even know how could I begin to retort to that.

Shouldn’t she split it equally between Cliff and Noa?

Also, wasn’t the work most important here?

“I also wanted to talk to you, Yuna-chan. I just have to greet Gran-san first, so let’s head inside.”

It didn’t take long for Meshun-san to approach us once we entered the mansion. As soon as she got a closer look, however...

“Why is everyone so dirty?!”

Meshun-san cried out, seeing the three girls covered in dirt. She looked quite angry.

“Meshun, I’m sorry. It’s my fault.”

Misa apologized and told her about going to the fields with Marina.

“I said I wanted to go, too, so it’s not just your fault, Misa.”

“Me too, I said I wanted to go, too.”

Noa and Fina stuck up for Misa.

Seeing them support each other like that, Meshun-san’s expression softened.

“I’m not really that mad.”

“You’re not?”

Misa was happy to hear that.

“That’s right; I’m not angry, so could the three of you please head into the bath and clean yourselves? I cannot let you eat looking like that.”

The three girls did as they were told and headed to the bath as Meshun-san saw them off with a smile.

“It’s been a while since I’ve seen Misana-sama this happy. Yuna-san, please join them,

too.”

“I’ll go later. I need to talk to Eleanora-san first.”

“...Eleanora-sama?!”

Meshun-san seemed to have only noticed how dirty the girls were and was shocked to realize Eleanora-san was there the entire time.

“It’s been a while, Meshun.”

“I’m terribly sorry, I did not notice you at all.”

Meshun-san apologized with a bow.

“It’s okay, you don’t have to worry about it. I showed up unannounced, so I’m partly to blame. I want to see Gran-san if that is okay?”

“Yes, I think it should be fine right now. He has no more guests for the day.”

Based on their conversation this morning, Gran-san had been speaking with a lot of people.

“Yuna-chan, I’m going to talk to Gran-san first, so you can head into the bath, too.”

“Okay, thank you. I would just create more work for the maids if I kept walking around like this...”

Meshun-san looked at me.

“Yuna-sama, you also went to the fields, right?”

“Yeah, I did.”

“You’re not as dirty as the girls. I can’t tell from your black foot, but your white foot is still clean.”

I lifted up my foot and looked at the sole.

“This suit is made of some special material, so it doesn’t get dirty.”

My Bear Suit required no cleaning. It remained clean even after I had worn it for a year, with no stain or odour.

Even if muddy water splashed onto me, the Bear Suit still wouldn’t get dirty.

“How mysterious.”

Meshun-san tilted her head as she observed the Bear Suit.

“Yuna-chan, take your time in the bath. I’m sure you’re tired from having to look after the girls all day long.”

I didn’t think I could relax if I took a bath with them, though.

Well, maybe it would be fine since Noa and Misa were well-educated nobles, and they wouldn’t play around in the bath (the Bear Bath was a different story).

Also, Fina was a good girl and knew how to behave herself.

I headed towards the bath after promising Eleanora-san I would meet her later.

Once I entered the changing room, the three girls were already undressed.

“Yuna-san, you’re so slow.”

“I had to talk to Meshun-san and Eleanora-san.”

“Let’s go inside!”

“I’ll come after I undress, so you three should go in first.”

The three of them did as I told them to while I took my time to take off my Bear Suit before following them.

Gran-san owned a spectacular bath, being a feudal lord and all. It was so big that all four of us could get in with plenty of space to spare.

When I entered, Noa was already washing Misa’s body.

“Fina, come over here. I’ll wash yours.”

“I’m okay, I can wash myself.”

“Let me do it for you anyway.”

I got Fina to sit down in front of me and washed her back and hair then proceeded to wash myself as well. The girls tried to help, but I politely refused their help and told them to get in the bathtub ahead of me.

Noa complained, but I ignored her.

After we all spent some quality time soaking in the tub, we got out together and used my hair dryer to dry our hair.

I didn’t want to have them catching a cold, after all.

We headed to the bedroom, where the girls resumed their game of Reversi, and I just watched them from the side, taking a long earned rest.

After a while, Eleanora-san entered the room.

“Mother?”

“Wow, you’re all nice and clean now. Maybe I’ll borrow the bath as well.”

Eleanora-san patted her daughter’s head before speaking to me.

“Yuna-chan, I want to thank you.”

“...?”

“Cliff and Gran-san told me what happened. Things would have turned out badly if you hadn’t brought Zelef-san here.”

“True, I did bring him here, but Zelef-san was the one who did his best to make the party succeed.”

“I know, they told me how he got mad at Gerardo for criticizing his food. I wish I could have been here to witness that.”

She said in a disappointed tone.

Speaking of which, I would have loved to see that stupid noble brat's disappointment as he left the party as well.

"Oh right, about Zelef, I'll be taking him back to the capital with me, so you don't have to worry about taking him back yourself."

"You will?"

"Yes, but in exchange, please take care of Cliff and Noa, okay?"

I was glad that I didn't have to take a detour to the capital before going home. It would have been a pain.

"Great, but did you come here by yourself, Eleanora-san?"

"I have a few subordinates accompanying me, but they are staying at an inn until we leave."

That made sense. As amazing as Eleanora-san was, there was no way she would come all the way here by herself.

"Honestly, I would have come here by myself, but His Majesty was being nosy and kept telling me to bring others with me, so I had no choice."

She was a noble, after all. Nobles had to have escorts with traveling.

"Mother, will you stay with us?"

"I can stay for a bit, but I still have my job to take care of."

"Your job?"

"That's right, it's an order from our mean king. I would love to ditch this job and stay with you, though."

Eleanora-san apologized.

Oh right, she had mentioned that she had come here for work, even though it was just 10 percent.

“Will you be able to finish it quickly?”

“Hmm, I think it will take the most of the day, but I should have time to spend with you in the evening. Yuna-chan, please take care of Noa during the afternoon, okay.”

“By the way, what is this job of yours? If you can’t tell me, I won’t pry any further, of course.”

I didn’t want to get involved in anything messy, after all.

Still, if the girls were to somehow get involved instead, maybe it wouldn’t be bad to hear her out.

“It’s just an inspection of this town. His Majesty planned to send a civil officer over, but I snatched the chance to, I mean, I asked to go instead.”

She just said she had ‘snatched’ it, didn’t she?

“I’m surprised His Majesty allowed that.”

“I had to beg him, more or less. I told him that I wanted to see my daughter and my husband. Let me see my daughter, my daughter, oh and my husband. I just kept chanting that to His Majesty until he agreed.”

Your Majesty, she must have been really annoying, huh.

“So, what exactly are you inspecting?”

“Not much. I will just go around town and collect information. I will hear what Gran-san and Cliff have to say before I decide on where to go, of course. Oh, and I also plan to attend Misana’s party since I’m here.”

That was a lot of freedom for an inspection...

“I guess I won’t start a full-scale inspection until after the party. I’ll have to look around

town, and make sure to visit the Adventurer's Guild and the Commerce Guild. I also need to see the Salbert family.”

Then, Eleanora-san noticed the Reversi board and joined in until Meshun-san called us for dinner.

# Chapter 189

## Bear-san Wears a Dress!

The day of the party came. I was cornered, with no way to escape.

Never in my wildest dreams did I think it would come to this.

I had been betrayed by the ones I trusted most. No longer would I be able to believe in anyone.

With my mind reeling from the shock of the betrayal, I was unable to find a way out.

The traitors closed in on me. There was no time to think.

“Okay, Yuna-san. We’ve prepared a dress for you, so let’s get you all dressed up.”

If it had been Mylene-san or Eleanora-san, I would have ran off even if I had to shake them, but it was Misa’s tenth birthday today, and the one approaching me with a beautiful dress in her hands was a ten-year-old girl.

“Noa, let’s talk first. We just have to talk this out.”

“The Bear-san outfit matches you greatly, but since it’s Misa’s party today, you should wear a dress.”

Noa took another step toward me, with a black and white dress in her hands.

Apparently, Fina and Noa picked out the dress together. They said they picked it because the colors matched *Swaying Bear* and *Hugging Bear*.

It certainly was a beautiful dress, I couldn’t deny that.

If I was back in my former world, and I had to choose between wearing a Bear Suit and a beautiful dress, I would, without a doubt, choose the dress. I was a girl, after all. Although just slightly, I wanted to try wearing that beautiful dress.

Though, I wasn’t sure if I had the courage to take off my Bear Suit at this point...

A normal girl would be happy to wear such a pretty dress. If only I was normal...

“Fina, why didn’t you say anything?”

Well, even if she had warned me in advance, I wouldn’t have known how to respond.

It would have given me some time to think about it at least, though.

“Because you had left me and had gone home by yourself, Big Sis Yuna.”

She was talking about the time I had ditched her at Noa’s place when Noa had dragged her off to make her try on dresses.

“Also, Noa-sama had told me to keep it a secret since she wanted to surprise you on the day of the party. She was sure it would make you happy.”

It was true, any normal girl would be happy to receive such a surprise.

They didn’t know how many times they would get the chance to wear a dress in their life, and I was sure they would be happy to hear that they got the opportunity to wear such a pretty dress.

However, I was so used to wearing my Bear Suit at this point that I would be embarrassed if I were to suddenly wear a pretty dress.

“Yuna-san, won’t you wear it for our sakes?”

“Try it on at least to see if it will even fit you.”

I wore my Bear Suit all the time, so they shouldn’t know what my sizes were, right?

I kept my three sizes top secret. Nobody knew them.

“Don’t worry, Lala-san judged your height, and I confirmed your sizes when we were in the bath together.”

The bath? When?

I had gone to the bath with Noa only recently.

Ah, she was talking about the time during the king's birthday party!

That being said, there was no way she could have known my sizes just from seeing me out of my Bear Suit that one time.

How many months ago was that? People normally forgot such things after several months had passed.

I was sure that I grew during that time, and my weight... must not have changed at all! Well, maybe my breasts grew a bit, but...

"I also confirmed it during our bath yesterday, and it didn't seem like your body changed much, so it should be fine."

Noa proudly said and smiled.

A child's innocent declaration could hurt a lot, you know.

I just received some real emotional damage.

If things continued like this, I was most likely going to faint before the party even began.

"Why are you so against it? It will surely make Misa happy."

"Ugh."

"Also, you're very pretty, so a dress like this will match your looks perfectly."

"..."

"Fina, you also want to see her wear a dress, right?"

"Yes!"

Fina looked at me with eyes that were telling me, "I will be wearing a dress, so please wear one, too."

Escaping this room would be easy but doing so would make it difficult for me to attend the party.

I had to go to Misa's party because I didn't want to be rude to her as she went through the trouble of sending me an invitation, so running away was not really an option. Ugh, there was no escape!

"O-okay, fine. I only have one condition, though."

As my last resort, I gave Noa my terms, who reluctantly accepted them.

Thus, we all changed into our dresses.

Just like the other day, I again thought how cute Noa and Misa looked in their dresses, but when I looked at Fina, I realized she didn't lose to them in terms of cuteness.

Noa wore a red dress, Misa wore blue, and Fina wore light green.

While Noa and Misa were used to wearing dresses and walked around confidently, Fina was trying to make herself look smaller due to embarrassment.

"Uuu, this is embarrassing."

I was the one who should be embarrassed.

I was wearing a black and white dress, the sizes of which matched me perfectly. How could they have figured out my sizes just by looking at me? Not to mention, it fitting perfectly meant that I hadn't grown at all.

"Yuna-san, it matches you so well! You look very pretty!"

Noa complimented me, but I still felt awkward.

Even in my former world, I had never worn a dress. How many girls my age had worn a party dress anyway? I was pretty sure there probably weren't any.

I looked at the mirror and got even more embarrassed.

Maybe it was because I saw myself wearing something I wasn't used to. I honestly didn't think that the dress fit me at all.

“Yuna-san, your long, black hair is pretty, so it really goes well with the white and black dress.”

Noa’s golden hair seemed much more beautiful to me, though.

Honestly, even though Noa complimented me, I wondered what other people would think of me?

It was difficult to judge myself.

“Uuu, Big Sis Yuna is pretty, but I don’t think such a pretty dress suits me.”

Fina was even harsher on herself than I. Well, I thought that Fina was more suited for wearing dresses, so I decided to try to make Fina feel better about herself.

“Fina, unlike me, you’re cute, so it suits you just fine.”

“No, you’re the cute one, Big Sis Yuna.”

Now both of us were even more embarrassed.

We should just stop trying to compliment each other for now.

“Both of you look good, so don’t worry. I bet Mother and Father will be surprised, too.”

Right, other people would see me wearing this, as well. Sorry, Misa, but I really wanted to go home right now, and Fina looked like she was thinking the same thing.

I gave up, returned to where I left my Bear Suit, and put on the Bear Shoes and the Bear Gloves.

“Yuna-san, you’re really putting those on?”

That was the condition I had made for wearing the dress.

I had agreed to put on the dress as long as I could wear my Bear Shoes and Bear Gloves.

And, this was how I ended up wearing a black and white dress, accompanied by my Bear Shoes and Bear Gloves.

I was too afraid to look myself in the mirror now. I knew, without even looking, that I must look weird.

Ever since I had come to this world, I had worn my Bear Suit twenty-four-seven. I depended on it too much, which was why I was reluctant to completely part from it.

Even with only the gloves and shoes on, I still couldn't stay calm.

This was how some players played the game. They wielded a really strong weapon while wearing paper-thin armor. Those players always got demolished while doing quests.

I completely felt like one of them right now. I still couldn't understand why those players liked to use that kind of build, even though they just died from taking one hit... Must be the difference between games and reality.

I gently patted my strongest piece of equipment (the Bear Costume) before transferring it into the Bear Box.

Once everyone was ready, we headed to the party hall.

It was a different hall from the one where Gran-san's party had been held.

That was because there were less attendants since the party was for friends and family only.

It was mainly just Misa's family, the Foschuroze family, and the people who worked for Gran-san.

By the time we entered the hall, quite a few people had already gathered inside, including Cliff and Eleanora-san.

"Oh my, Yuna-chan. You're wearing a really cute outfit today."

Yes, and it was all thanks to her daughter.

"Still, umm, what's with your hands and feet?"

Cliff was shocked when he noticed I was also wearing my Bear Gloves and Bear Shoes.

I knew it looked weird; he didn't have to point it out...

“Father, you feel the same way, huh. Yuna-san said that she would only wear the dress if she is allowed to keep her Bear-san hands and feet. She is so pretty in the dress, too; it’s such a waste.”

They could say whatever they wanted, but I wasn’t taking them off.

I couldn’t use magic if I didn’t have the Bear Gloves equipped, and I couldn’t jump around quickly without the Bear Shoes on my feet.

The Bear Suit would protect me from any surprise attacks, but, as long as that didn’t happen, the Bear Shoes and Bear Gloves were enough to deal with pretty much everything, and that was why I couldn’t bear part from them.

On the side note, I couldn’t run at all without the Bear Shoes. I had never ran since elementary school, so I was pretty sure that if I didn’t wear the Bear Shoes, the girls would completely leave me behind in a race.

I thought that the children at the orphanage were amazing, being able to chase the cluckers all day long.

“Anyway, it feels really odd not seeing you in your bear suit.”

I felt the same way; I just couldn’t stay calm without it.

“Still, the dress suits you very well. I’m sure that once the boys get a look at you, marriage proposals will come flying your way.”

No, they wouldn’t. Also, I didn’t want to receive them, either.

“Forget about me. You should compliment your daughter instead.”

“Of course, Noa and Fina-chan are cute, but seeing you wear a dress is more shocking.”

I sighed and looked for a place to sit, but I wasn’t sure where I could go.

I had never been to a noble’s party, so I didn’t know if there were any seating arrangements. As I was in the middle of worrying about it, Meshun-san approached me.

“Yuna-sama and Fina-sama, please take your seats over there.”

Okay, so there was a seating arrangement. Oh, now that I looked more closely, it was arranged so the families were sitting together.

First came the Foschuroze family, then there was the Faren Gramm family, and next to them were Fina and I. Then, just a little further away, came all the people who worked at the mansion.

Fina and I took our seats and waited for the party to officially begin.

Hmm, dresses felt quite chilly to wear. My Bear Suit was able to adjust my body temperature, so I never had to worry about it. Not to mention, this dress was short, so it made sense for my legs to feel a bit chilly.

I missed my Bear Suit already, even though I had just taken it off.

After some time had passed, Gran-san, Misa’s parents, and Misa herself entered the room.

Gran-san took a look around the room, and his gaze stopped on me.

“Oh, it’s Yuna. I almost didn’t recognize you.”

He should have recognized me sooner.

I wasn’t even covering myself with my Bear Hoodie.

“Big Sis Yuna, you’re so pretty.”

“Thanks.”

I thanked Misa for her genuine compliment; children’s honest opinions always made me happy.

Now that everybody was seated, the party began.



# Chapter 190

## Bear-san Brings Out the Birthday Cake

When the party began, Zelef-san's cooking was brought out.

Wow, so this was the food made by the royal head chef. I had eaten some of his regular dishes before, but I had never had the chance to try his party food.

All sorts of delicious-looking foods were lined up on the table.

The food was arranged beautifully. It was colorful and pleasing to both the eyes and nose. It was definitely not just a regular lunch set.

Once all the food was set down, we were told to help ourselves, so everybody engrossed themselves with eating.

I didn't know what the proper etiquette was, but I assumed I could just eat normally.

When I looked at Fina beside me, I saw that she also looked troubled and was looking at me. She shouldn't look at me, I had no idea how to properly eat at a noble's party, either.

All we could do was watch how other people ate and mimic them.

"Should we just eat like Noa?"

I offered an option.

We were both sitting diagonally across from Noa, who was enjoying her food using a fork and a spoon.

Looking at her eat, it became obvious to me that nobody should complain as long as we didn't eat like total slobs. Also, they would most likely tell us what we were doing wrong, and we could just fix it then.

Good manners or not, I wanted to taste Zelef-san's cooking now that I finally had the chance to, so I should eat carefully anyway.

To start with, I drank some of the delicious-looking soup.

It was different from the soup made by Anzu, but it was just as delicious.

I should ask Zelef-san to teach me how to make party food sometime. Maybe I should also ask Anzu to show me how to make some of her dishes as well. Then I could eat it whenever I wanted.

As time passed, my arms, legs, and neck got more and more chilly, so I couldn't sit still. The Bear Suit really was the best, since it adjusted my body temperature. All I had to do was ignore its appearance. I really missed its fluffiness.

Also, I had to be careful to not dirty this dress, since I was just borrowing it. I had to be extra careful as food would most likely leave a permanent mark.

I had no idea how much a dress like this cost, but I was pretty sure it was expensive. Well, it wasn't like I couldn't pay for it.

Noa most likely wouldn't tell me to pay even if I got the dress dirty, so I probably didn't have to worry about that anyway.

Still, I noticed Fina was also afraid of dirtying her dress, as she was only taking small bites of her food and was barely able to eat anything.

"So, Misa, you've finally turned 10 years old today..."

Misa's mother said, turning to her daughter.

"Yes, I'm now the same age as Big Sister Noa."

"Yes, but in a couple of months, I will turn 11, so I'm still your older sister."

Noa declared that she was still the older sister, even though they were of the same age now.

True, being born first made her the older one, so it didn't matter if they were the same age now.

"If only I was born a year earlier. Then I would have been your older sister instead."

Misa said, a bit dejectedly.

That reminded me, Fina was also 10 years old. When was her birthday?

Thinking about the environment Fina grew up in, she probably never got to celebrate her birthday. Maybe I should discuss throwing a surprise party for her with Terumisan.

When I first came into this world, Fina had been the one who had helped me the most.

Yeah, that seemed like a good idea, I really should keep it in mind.

Zelef-san and Botts-san were also attending the party. The maids who had brought out the food sat down nearby and joined in on the feast, while Botts-san held a critique session with Zelef-san.

They were discussing things like the seasoning, whether the taste was strong or light, if other ingredients could be substituted into this dish, and so on.

Botts-san's hands had healed enough that he could now somewhat use a spoon and fork again.

However, everytime he raised one to his mouth, he lightly flinched in pain. Even so, he seemed to be having fun discussing the food with Zelef-san.

It didn't seem like he could hold and use a kitchen knife yet, though. Cooking demanded a lot of precise movements, after all.

Noa was having fun talking with Eleanora-san, who she hadn't seen in a while, and Cliff, who had been busy lately as well.

I heard Noa ask about Shia, who was at the capital, and the conversation quickly turned from what Shia had been doing lately, to what I had been like when I acted as her guard. Why had the conversation turned to me?

Normally, wouldn't they talk about themselves, since they hadn't met for a long time?

After some more time passed, Noa handed Misa her present. As I began to wonder what it was, Misa unveiled a ribbon.

That was a cute present for a 10-year-old. I was glad her present was appropriate for

her age. The way I looked at the two noble girls would have probably changed if she had received something expensive, like gemstones or dresses.

I had thought that it was likely to happen since they were nobles, but seeing Noa's present made me realize my worry had been for nothing.

As I started planning the timing to give Noa my present, I noticed Fina looking at me, like she wanted to ask me if something was wrong.

Our presents to her were the cake and two plushies.

We were now at the midpoint of the party, with most of the food already gone.

Maybe it was time to bring out the cake soon?

"Misa, can I have a minute?"

"Yes, what is it?"

"Fina and I have a present for you, too."

"A present?"

"It's a dessert, and we would be happy if you ate it."

From the Bear Box, I took out the two-layer cake Fina and I had made, and placed it right in front of Misa.

Misa seemed very curious as she had never seen cake before.

The cake was beautifully lined with strawberries, and Fina had even written [Happy Birthday] with strawberry cream in the middle.

"What a beautiful dessert."

Misa's mother commented on the cake.

"Yes, it almost seems like a waste to eat this. Wait, how do we even eat it?"

It's a large two-layered cake, meaning it would be hard for one person to eat the entire thing, so I told Misa to split it up and share it with everyone.

“We are cutting it?!”

“You can’t eat it unless you cut it and split it up.”

“Uuu, but that will ruin the words you wrote on top.”

Fina got embarrassed when Misa said that.

“We will be happy as long as you don’t forget the writing and taste the cake.”

“Okay, I’ll remember it!”

Misa nodded and gave the words written on the cake a long stare, then gave us permission to cut it.

As I put the knife into the cake, however, Misa quietly cried out “Ahh...” in a sad voice.

We had to cut the cake, so I really hoped this wasn’t too hard on her.

“Yuna-san, Fina, did the two of you make it yourself?”

Noa asked us while I was still in the middle of cutting the cake.

“Fina didn’t know what to get you for your birthday, so I suggested we should make a cake together. Cakes are tasty, so we thought you would be happy to receive one.”

“Uuu, that’s not fair. I wanted to make a cake with you as well.”

Noa pouted.

“Okay, do you want to make it with us next time?”

“Really? It’s a promise, okay!?”

“I... I want to join in as well.”

“Okay, how about we all make a cake together, like when we made the pudding?”

“Would that really be okay?”

“Yes, of course. In exchange, I will have the two of you keep the recipe a secret.”

“Okay!”

Just as we made that promise, I finished cutting the two-layered cake into eight slices, perfectly splitting the writing as well.

The slices went to Misa, Misa’s parents, Gran-san, Eleanora-san, Cliff, Noa, and Fina.

I didn’t want any, so I didn’t cut a slice for myself. Fina looked at me like she wanted to ask if I was really okay with that, so...

“I have the cake Elena-san and the children working at the shop made for me, so you don’t have to worry about me.”

I took Elena-san’s cake out of the Bear Box and passed it around to the others.

It wasn’t a two-layered cake like Misa’s, but they both followed the same recipe, so the taste should be more or less the same.

Once the cake was successfully passed along to everyone, we all started to eat it together.

“It’s delicious.”

“Yes, it really is.”

“I’ve eaten one before, but this one is better.”

“I really wish you two would have let me join when you made it.”

Gran-san and Misa, who had never eaten cake before, complimented it first, followed by Noa and Cliff, who had already eaten it once.

“Yuna, if you can make such delicious food, why don’t you become a chef instead of being an adventurer?”

Gran-san asked, probably because he didn’t know much about me.

“Old Man Gran, she already owns two shops of her own, and does other types of businesses as well.”

“Really?”

“Her shops are so popular that even my own daughter is a regular.”

“Of course, the food at Yuna-san’s shop is really good.”

“Big Sister Noire, that’s not fair!”

I didn’t know about that. Either way, excitement was brewing over me even though it was Misa’s birthday party.

Noa proudly boasted about how delicious the food at my shop was while Misa enviously listened to her stories.

She kept saying, “That’s not fair,” but continued listening anyway.

I looked over to Zelef-san and saw Botts-san and Meshun-san were in shock after tasting the cake.

“This is delicious. I already thought about this after tasting her pudding, but just who is this young lady? “

“She is an adventurer, but also a chef I respect very much.”

Zelef-san answered Botts-san’s question.

I wished he would stop telling people how much he respected me...

If the fact that the royal head chef respected me spread, it would surely be troublesome for me.

Also, I wasn’t a chef.

“I just don’t understand how something like this can be made...”

Botts-san said as he scooped up some cream with his spoon and ate it.

“I learned how to make it from Yuna-dono, but I can’t teach you.”

I felt like Zelef-san was giving off a sense of superiority there.

Botts-san looked a bit upset by Zelef-san's attitude and turned to me instead, but I ignored him.

I couldn't teach him how to make it, after all.

I had only started selling it recently, and I was planning to serve it at the shop in the capital that was opening soon. If the method of making whipped cream spread in this town before I started selling it at the capital, that could be a problem for the sales there.

I turned back to Misa, who had just finished listening to Noa boast about me. I also noticed her plate was already empty.

She looked like she still wanted more, but there was other food remaining, and a slice from a two-layered cake was double the size of a normal one, so she would get a stomachache if she ate more.

Yeah, it would be problematic if people got stomach aches, so I decided against taking out more cake.

If anybody wanted to eat more, I could always bring some out tomorrow. Zelef-san had made so much food for us, and it shouldn't be wasted.

"It was really good. Thank you, Big Sis Yuna, Fina-chan."

"We put a lot of effort into it, so hearing you say that makes me happy."

Fina also looked quite happy when she heard Misa's compliment.

Now, we just had to give her the bear plushies.

# Chapter 191

## Bear-san Presents the Bear Plushies

Since everybody had finished their cakes, it was time to hand over the plushies.

Still, unlike the cake, there was a possibility that Misa wouldn't like them.

Even if she did, she might act all grown-up and say something like, [A plushie? I'm too old for things like that.]

It was a bit late to consider this now, but 10 was a delicate age.

Although there were people who liked plushies even after becoming adults, there were also some children who didn't like them even while young.

"Misa, can I ask you something? Do you like plushies?"

"Plushies...? Yes, I like them. I take good care of the dog plushie my mother bought for me."

As soon as she said she liked them, Fina and I felt a sense of relief.

"Okay, there's one more present we would like to give you."

"You have more?!"

I took out the plushies from the Bear Box and handed the Swaying Bear plushie to Fina while holding onto the Hugging Bear plushie myself. This way, it would look like we were both giving Misa a plushie.

As soon as I took out the plushies, however, somebody else chimed in.

"Wha-what-what are those!? Those plushies!?"

Noa cried out.

“They’re plushies of Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear.”

Noa jumped out of her seat and approached us, her gaze locked onto the Hugging Bear plushie in my arms.

“They’re so cute. They look just like the real thing. Yuna-san, please give them to me!”

“I can’t do that. They’re Misa’s presents.”

“Oh, no... Can’t I have one of them at least?”

Noa looked back and forth between the plushies.

“No. It’s not right to split them up, and they are both meant for Misa.”

I would feel bad for separating Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear even if it was only their plushies we were talking about here.

“Why is it not *my* birthday today?!”

How could I even respond to something like that? If she wanted to complain, she should go to her parents.

Noa fell to her knees, looking depressed.

“Uuu, I really want the Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear plushies.”

Noa looked really sad.

“Um, do you want them that badly?”

“Yes, I really, really want them...”

She lifted up her face and appealed to me.

“Okay, how about I make another set for you later?”

“R-really?!”

Noa got energetic again.

“Yes, so please hold yourself back for today.”

Well, I wasn't the one making them, Sherry was. Besides, I already knew Noa would want them, so I had already asked Sherry to make a set for her.

Hmm, how many sets would she have ready by the time we returned to Crimonia?

Well, I knew Noa would want them, but I hadn't thought she would react to them so strongly.

“Okay. I'm sorry for being selfish. However, it's a promise, right?”

Noa apologized obediently while also reinforcing our promise.

Fina and I then finally approached Misa, with Noa watching us jealously. I had promised her that I would give her a set of her own, so could she stop looking at us like that?

“You can go first.”

I said and gestured Fina to give her plushie first.

“Misa-sama, happy birthday. Even though it was just a little bit, I helped make these.”

Fina presented the Swaying Bear plushie, and Misa happily took it in her arms.

“Thank you very much. They're so cute. Can I really have them?”

“Of course, they're your birthday present, after all. I'm glad you like them.”

“I'm glad that you accepted them without getting embarrassed. I was worried that you were going to say that you only liked plushies when you were younger.”

“We wouldn't have given them to you if that was the case.”

“I could have gotten them, then...”

Noa pitched in disappointedly.

“Well then, please accept the Hugging Bear plushie as well. I would feel bad if we were to split them up, so I would be happy if you took care of both of them well.”

I said and presented her with the Hugging Bear plushie.

As I already said, it would be unfair to the real Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear if one was picked over the other.

Even with her small body, Misa managed to hug both plushies tightly while Noa continued to stare at her jealously.

She couldn't hold it back even for this one day, huh.

“I will take care of them well. Thank you very much!”

Misa said and gave off the brightest smile I had seen from her all day long.

“Misa, you received such cute plushies. How nice!”

“Yes, they're really nice.”

Misa's mother smiled at her daughter.

“Oh, but now that I got these Bear-san plushies, I can't ask you for the favor I wanted you to do for me.”

Misa suddenly said, her hands still occupied with holding the plushies.

“What did you want to ask me to do?”

“You see, I wanted to see Swaying Bear-chan and Hugging Bear-chan again. I was going to ask you to bring them out.”

“You were just going to ask me that?”

“Yes...”

“Why didn’t you say so earlier?”

I summoned Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear in their cub form.

“W-what is this?! Swaying Bear-chan and Hugging Bear-chan are small like the plushies!”

“We made the plushies match their size.”

Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear approached Misa, who scooped them up into a hug while still holding onto the plushies, so she was embracing four bears at once.

“Misa, that’s unfair!”

Noa couldn’t hold back any longer and joined the hugging circle, meaning that the Bears were now all sandwiched between Misa and Noa.

Soon after, the two of them began playing with the Bears together.

Misa’s mother looked at them with a smile then turned to Fina and me.

“Yuna-san, Fina-san, thank you very much for all you did today. It’s been a while since I saw my daughter this happy. Misa has been looking forward to seeing you two again ever since she sent out your invitations.”

I was glad that we came to the party, too.

I just hadn’t expected to be stuck in a dress.

“Please stay good friends with my daughter.”

“We will.”

We replied.

“Yuna-chan, I’m happy you’re making the plushies for my daughter as well, but are

there none being made for Princess Flora?"

Eleanora-san asked me while watching Noa play with the Bears.

"They aren't done yet but are in the making."

"Huhu, that's good. If Princess Flora saw them and found out she wasn't getting any of her own, who knows what might have happened."

To begin with, I only made these plushies because I was giving them to Princess Flora. So, of course she was getting her own set.

It was just that the order of who I gave them to first got kind of mixed up.

"I'm glad that you've given Misa something so nice. Perhaps I should have invited you to my party as well, Yuna. Maybe I would have gotten something nice, too."

"Gran-san, you also want to get plushies?"

"No, no. I just wanted a surprise of some sort, wouldn't mind if it was just food. I was curious what kind of present you would give me."

A present for Gran-san?

I couldn't think of anything that would make someone his age happy.

Maybe some shoulder-massage tickets? No, no, I wasn't his grandchild.

What about some antiques, or a rare weapon? His Majesty liked those.

Well, I guessed that nobles liked gemstones, but I, unfortunately, didn't have any.

I couldn't think of anything a noble such as Gran-san would like.

Wait... I might have this one thing he would like.

"Gran-san, would you be okay with receiving a decoration?"

"A decoration?"

"Yeah, something cool you can put out by the entrance or at some other place that stands out."

“Hoho. You are going to give me a present like that?”

“Well, I can. I don’t need it, so let me know if you want to keep it or not before I head home.”

I walked to an open spot and took out an Iron Golem from my Bear Box.

Yup, I picked a tough-looking one.

“Kya!!”

“What is that?!”

“It’s a golem!”

“Yuna, what do you think you’re doing?!”

When I took out the golem, everybody freaked out.

Some people knocked over their chairs and tried to run away while the others screamed in fright. Some of them even fell on their backs.

Why was everyone freaking out like this?

“Gran-san, don’t you think it would be cool to decorate your place with this?”

I said and knocked on the Iron Golem, but it made no sound as I had my Bear Hands on.

“Yuna, isn’t it dangerous?”

Gran-san asked cautiously.

“What is?”

“Well, that’s an Iron Golem, right?”

“Yeah...?”

Wasn’t it obvious just by looking at it? Maybe it was his first time seeing one; it had

been my first time seeing them when I had done the subjugation request, too.

Still, I felt like we weren't on the same page.

As I tilted my head thinking what the problem was, Fina came over and explained why everybody was so scared.

"Big Sis Yuna, everybody thinks that the golem will move."

Ah, I got it now. That was why everybody was so shocked when I had brought it out.

Because Fina explained it to me, I now knew what to say.

"This golem won't move, so you don't have to worry about it attacking you."

"Really?"

Everybody was suspicious, so I knocked on it a few more times to prove it.

"Yuna-chan, could this golem be from back then?"

"Mother, what do you mean by back then?"

Eleanora-san clearly meant the time I had gone to the mine for the golem subjugation.

"So, you subjugated this Iron Golem, huh. It's my first time seeing one in such pristine condition, though."

Gran-san said and approached the Iron Golem.

What had Gazar-san told me again? When subjugating it, it sometimes ended up motionless after receiving a lot of damage. In my case, I had just destroyed the magic stone inside using Lightning Magic, which rendered it immobile.

"So, how about putting it at the entrance, Gran-san? It would look amazing, right?"

Gran-san and I began discussing where to put it.

“It would indeed stand out. What a fright it would give to the guests who see it! Heh.”

“You don’t want it, then?”

I really thought it would make a good present, though.

“I will take it if you don’t want it, but are you sure? I think that such an Iron Golem would fetch a good price. Even just the metal is worth quite a lot.”

“I’m good. I’ve got lots of them.”

There were still a couple more Iron Golems from my Bear Box. I didn’t have much of a use for them right now.

Cliff clutched his head in his hands while Gran-san and Eleanora-san began laughing in shock.

Misa and Noa, seeing the golems for the first time, came over to take a closer look.

The two of them were still holding onto Swaying Bear, Hugging Bear, and their plushie counterparts.

Everybody else, including Zelef-san and Botts-san, just watched from a distance.

Well, it made sense for people to be afraid of Iron Golems.

When I had shown the Iron Golems to the two blacksmiths, they didn’t freak out this badly and didn’t really seem to be that afraid at all. Hmm, maybe I should be more careful when I bring them out next time.

“I knew you lacked some common sense, but I didn’t think it was this bad.”

“I knew it already.”

“Me, too.”

Gran-san acknowledged my lack of common sense while Cliff and Eleanora-san agreed with him. Even Zelef-san nodded.

Wait, wasn’t this a bit strange?

Aside from the Bear Suit, I was a pretty normal girl. I looked at the three girls, hoping

they would back me up, yet none of them argued against what Gran-san said.

How could this be?!

# Chapter 192

## Bear-san And The Chefs Visit Town

There were many people opposed to placing the Iron Golem at the entrance as Gran-san was thinking about doing.

“Father, please don’t put it at the entrance. People who see it will be scared.”

“Isn’t that fine?”

“No, it is not. If you’ll insist on putting it at the entrance, I will tell Yuna-san to take it home with her.”

As more and more people objected, Gran-san had to reluctantly give up on putting it at the entrance.

After talking it out for a bit longer, they decided to place the Iron Golem in the middle of the hall on the second floor.

It was not a place guests visited often, but if Gran-san ever wanted to show it off, he just needed to bring them there.

Everybody agreed that this was the best solution, and for some reason, I ended up being the one who had to set it up there.

“We can’t move such a heavy object that easily.”

They told me. Since I didn’t have any other choice, I put all the golems back into the Bear Box and went upstairs to the hall, where I set the tough-looking one up at a place they pointed out to me.

Yeah, it did look good up here in the hall.

It was made of good quality iron, so unlike the Earth Golem, it looked elegant, and not too brittle.

It made me want to line up a Silver Golem and Gold Golem next to it.

There was also the Fake Mithril Golem I had, so maybe I could put it next to them as well.

Oh, but if we were only decorating, maybe just coating the surface of iron golems would be enough, too.

Now that the party was over, and the golem had securely been set up, I returned to my room, where I quickly took off the dress and put my Bear Suit back on.

I definitely couldn't stay calm without my Bear Suit on. Knowing that I now thought this way made me a bit concerned, especially since I used to be so embarrassed to walk around in it.

Perhaps the Bear Suit was cursed after all, seeing how I missed wearing it so much.

Well, usually cursed equipment couldn't be removed. Instead, the Bear Suit spoiled me and made me completely dependent on it.

Now that I had changed back into the Bear Suit, I went to find Noa to ask her what I should do with the dress.

I wanted to wash it first before returning it, but I didn't know how to wash dresses. I didn't think they had laundromats in this world, but I honestly wouldn't know of one even if they did since I never had to wash my Bear Suit.

When I told Noa I was returning the dress to her, she replied in an unexpected way.

"Yuna-san, you can keep the dress."

There was no way I could accept an expensive dress just like that.

"I can't take it."

"No, it's a trade. I will trade you that dress for the Bear-san plushies. I want the full set, okay?"

Oh, she intended for it to be a trade.

Since she already did her side of the trade, that meant I had no other choice but to really bring her a set of the Bear plushies.

I didn't mind giving them to her, but how many chances would I get to wear this dress

again?

“I will let Fina keep her dress as well, so I hope I can get my hands on those plushies soon.”

Fina tried her best to refuse, but Noa wouldn't budge at all.

“Even if I take the dress, I won't have any opportunities to wear it again.”

“Fina, you went to Misa's party, but you aren't planning on coming to mine?”

“Well, that's...”

“You will come, right? Then, please wear the dress to my party. If it won't fit you anymore, just let me know, and I will get it fixed.”

Fina lost all chances of getting out of it, so she accepted the dress reluctantly.

Did that mean I had to attend Noa's party as well?

The next day, Cliff and Eleanora-san came to our room early in the morning.

To put it simply, they wanted to talk about the plans going forward.

Cliff planned on staying for three more days and told us to do what we want till then.

Eleanora-san also planned to wrap up her task quickly, so she could accompany us.

“If Noa is leaving in three days, then I guess I should also finish things up by then.”

Eleanora-san, could you please do your job properly...

In the end, it was decided that we would all be leaving in three days time.

“Well then, I'm heading out now.”

“Stay safe.”

The girls saw me as I headed out alone.

Today, I would be doing my own thing without the girls tagging along.

Misa had promised to show Fina and Noa her garden flower bed. She had invited me to come and see it too, but I had declined so that I could go and check out the specialities of this town.

At the mansion entrance, I ran into Zelef-san and Botts-san.

“Yuna-dono, are you heading out?”

“Yes, I am. And you two?”

“We are going out as well. Botts is going to show me around town.”

“Are you going out alone today, Young Bear Lady?”

“Misa is showing the other two girls her garden flower bed, so I decided to go out and look around town on my own.”

“Why don’t we walk together then, Yuna-dono?”

“Oi, Zelef. You plan on walking around with a young girl dressed like a bear?!”

I was aware that I was a bear, but... He didn’t have to point it out.

It had been a while since somebody reacted to me like that.

“Still, why are you always dressed like this? Your outfit yesterday made you look more normal even though I can’t really say the same for your personality.”

“I think you should be able to tell seeing what I could do yesterday. My Bear Suit comes with many useful gadgets, like the Bear Gloves, which are an item bag and a home to my Bears.”

I gave him a vague explanation.

“True, you did bring out a massive Iron Golem yesterday. You were also able to store all of the ingredients needed for the party by yourself.”

“Botts, didn’t you want to do something to thank Yuna-dono? Why don’t you show her around as well?”

Do something to thank me? Was there something I did that Botts-san was supposed to be thankful for?

“Fine, I get it. Where does the Young Bear Lady want to go?”

“Oh, I want to taste the town’s specialties, and if there’s time, I also want to check out your Adventurer’s Guild.”

“Now that you mention it, are you really an adventurer? Zelef told me you are, but I still find it hard to believe. You being a chef makes more sense to me...”

Well, with my Bear Suit, I hardly looked like an adventurer.

“Eh, whatever. It doesn’t really matter. After checking out the specialties, I will also take you to the Adventurer’s Guild.”

There was no reason for him to refuse, especially since the Adventurer’s Guild was close to the market area. If they didn’t feel like accompanying me there, we could just split up at the marketplace.

Zelef-san, Botts-san, and I. This very unusual group headed out towards the town center.

“Young Bear Lady, I want to thank you for bringing Zelef here in our time of need. Thanks to you, the Salbert family had no other choice but to flee.”

Botts-san thanked me again. So, that was what Zelef-san was talking about when he mentioned that Botts-san wanted to thank me...

I hadn’t been there to see what happened at the party in person, but based on what everybody had told me, the Salbert family had been quite unbelievable.

“By the way, Yuna-dono, where did you learn to cook? Zelef told me that you know how to make many delicious dishes that can compare to pudding and whipped cream.”

“Botts, you promised me not to ask Yuna-dono about that.”

“I did, but as a chef, I’m still very curious about it.”

“I understand how you feel, but a promise is a promise.”

“Zelef, she showed you some of those recipes, didn’t she?”

“Yes, Yuna-dono taught me many delicious recipes.”

For some reason, Zelef-san almost sounded like he was boasting.

If Botts-san had asked me why I had taught him, I would tell him it was all for Princess Flora’s sake. I wanted her to be able to eat whatever she wanted, whenever she wanted, so I had taught Zelef-san how to make some of the things she liked.

However, Botts-san didn’t seem to know about it and was quite upset with this treatment.

As we walked towards the town center, he continued to ask me about the pudding and cake I had made.

“You’re opening a shop in the capital?”

“Yes. Not many people there know about Yuna-dono’s cooking, so we will be opening a shop that will serve her recipes at the capital. The shop will be supervised by me since everybody working there will be taught her precious recipes. Now that I think about it, Botts, why don’t you come work at the shop as well?”

“I’m sorry, but I still owe a lot to Gran-sama. I can’t leave until I have repaid his favor.”

Despite what he looked like, Botts-san was actually quite a level-headed fellow.

“Do you want me to teach you?”

“You would?!”

“I don’t really mind, but you must promise me something.”

“Promise what?”

“You cannot reveal the recipes to anybody. I wouldn’t mind if you wanted to open up a shop yourself, but please wait a while before doing that.”

“Wait a while? How long would that be...?”

“Maybe until everything calms down with the capital’s shop opening? I would have to

discuss it with Zelef-san first.”

“That would make Botts your second branch, huh?”

“I don’t have the money to open up a shop anyway, so you don’t have to worry about me opening one for my own gain. I promise I will keep the recipes a secret, too. I will even sign a contract if I have to.”

“I don’t need you to sign a contract, but there is one very important thing I want you to make sure to keep in mind.”

“There’s something even more important than keeping the recipes a secret?”

Don’t spread the recipes, and don’t make your own store. There was something even more important than those two things.

“Ah, I know what it is. It is indeed very important, considering that you are cooking for Gran-dono’s family.”

Zelef-san realized what the most important thing was, it seemed.

“Zelef, you know what it is?”

“Yes. I also had to make a similar promise when she taught me.”

“There’s something that important...”

“Yeah, there is. I want you to promise me this: Even if Misa wants to eat it, do not make it for her every day. Especially, in the case of things like cake, which has a lot of sugar. She can only have one per week, two at most.”

That was one promise he must not break.

We couldn’t let a cute girl like her get fat. Not to mention that eating too many sweets would be bad for her health.

“That’s such a trivial matter...”

“No, it’s not. It’s a very important thing for girls. If Misa can’t get married because she’s fat, it will be your fault, Botts-san.”

“Ugh, I guess it is quite important when you put it that way...”

“Botts-san, I don’t know how long you plan on working for Gran-san, but please keep an eye on everybody’s eating habits. Even if Misa wants to eat something every day, make sure she eats other foods as well.”

“I also promised not to cook the same thing for Princess Flora all the time.”

“I understand. I promise that even if Misana-sama asks me to make something for her, I will make sure not to cook it for her every day.”

Zelef-san then told me he could teach Botts-san the recipes in my stead as he would be staying here for a while longer.

Just as we were finished with our conversation, we reached an area that looked like a marketplace and proceeded to take a look around.

“We were getting stared at while coming here, but even more people are staring at us now that we’re in a crowded area.”

True, there were many shoppers and shop owners staring at us.

I even heard a few of them whisper “Bear”.

Well, as usual, I just ignored it as long as nobody approached me or tried to touch my suit, of course.

Anyway, since Botts-san would now get to learn the recipes, he didn’t try to complain about it anymore. Instead, he guided us to many different shops like he didn’t have a choice.

The shops here more or less just sold the same thing that could be found in Crimonia. Hmm, Sheelin wasn’t far from Crimonia, so maybe I would have to head to a place with a different climate to get different ingredients.

From time to time, I saw things that didn’t exist in my former world, so I asked the two ingredient experts about it.

“That fruit is sour and sweet. It can be used as a substitute for strawberries.”

“True, but it might be more suitable for adults.”

“Well, that one is just very sweet, so it would go very well with your cake.”

Mhm, I could learn a lot from this.

“Mister! Give me an entire box of that fruit!”

“Yuna-dono?”

“I don’t know if I can get them in Crimonia, and even if I could, this saves me the trouble of having to search for them there.”

“I understand that, but aren’t you buying a bit too much?”

“I’m going to give them to the children at the orphanage as souvenirs.”

“The orphanage?”

Oh, I had never told them about it before.

“I’m sort of a part of the orphanage’s management in Crimonia, so I thought I’d bring the children there some souvenirs.”

“You’re doing something like that, too?”

Botts-san said, surprised.

“Well, things just ended up that way.”

“Young lady, are you from some noble family?”

“No, I’m just a normal person.”

“Normal, you say...”

He said, looking at me suspiciously.

Back in my old world, I had been a normal person, so I wasn’t really lying.

The shop owner also wore a shocked expression as I paid for the fruit. I couldn’t blame him for being surprised since he most likely had never had anyone buy this much of it at once.

It was definitely not because of my outfit.

We then continued making our way around the marketplace and bought everything we wanted.

Since Botts-san wanted to learn the cake and pudding recipes as soon as he could, I suggested they headed back first, and Zelef-san agreed.

“What will you do now, Yuna-dono?”

“I’ll head back after dropping by the Adventurer’s Guild. Botts-san, Zelef-san, thank you for your time. I learned a lot today.”

“I’m glad to hear that. Next time you come to the capital, I will take you to a few shops that sell some less-known ingredients. They sell ingredients from many different places, so I’m sure you will find something interesting there.”

Really? That would be great.

After making the promise with Zelef-san, we parted ways, and I headed to the Adventurer’s Guild on my own.

Based on what Botts-san had told me, it should be pretty close.

As I looked around aimlessly, something suddenly started ringing.

“Kuun, kuun, kuun.”

It was coming from my White Bear Hand.

It took me a couple of seconds to realize that my Bear Phone was responsible for the noise then

I quickly took it out of the Bear Box to answer.

“Hello?”

[B-Big Sis Yuna... Misa-sama got...]

“Fina? Fina, what happened?! Respond to me!”

[.....]

She didn't respond.

I immediately turned around and ran back to Gran-san's mansion.

# Chapter 193

## Bear-san Gets Mad

As I ran back to the mansion, I kept calling Fina over the phone, but there was no response.

I was practically sprinting at this point and soon reached the mansion.

Where was Fina?!

I saw the guards posted by the gates like usual, and they were really surprised to see me appear so suddenly.

“Where’s Misa?!”

“Misana-sama?!”

The guards didn’t understand what I was asking them.

Had nothing happened here?

However, if that was the case, where were the girls?

They had gone to check Misa’s flower bed together.

I thought about questioning the guards further but realized it would be quicker to just look for the girls myself, so I ignored them and jumped up all the way onto the roof.

After looking around for a bit, I spotted the flower beds on the left side of the mansion.

“Fina!”

I jumped down from the roof and landed next to the flowerbeds, which held many beautiful, blooming flowers.

Only then did I notice that Fina and Noa were collapsed on the ground right next to one of the flowerbeds, and next to them, were the Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear plushies which we had given Misa at yesterday’s party.

“Fina! Noa!”

I rushed to Fina and held her up. She was still holding onto her Bear Phone.

“Uuu...”

It was clear that someone had hit Fina in the face.

Who would do that?!

I lightly touched her face and used healing magic to make the swelling go away then went over to Noa. Luckily, she hadn't gotten hit in the face and looked like she had only lost consciousness.

I sighed with relief before quickly realizing that Misa was nowhere to be seen. The plushies we had given her were left lying on the ground, so something really bad must have happened here!

“Misa!”

I called for her, but there was no reply.

I really couldn't see her anywhere.

Had she run away after getting attacked? Or, had she been kidnapped?

If Misa had managed to get away, others would have noticed the ruckus. Based on the guards' reaction from earlier, it seemed like nobody had noticed anything yet. Otherwise, there would be no way Fina and Noa would be left in this state.

So, in conclusion, Misa must have been captured.

“Yuna, what's wrong? The guards were surprised when they saw you jump onto the roof... Noa?!”

Cliff finally arrived to the scene and shouted out when he noticed Noa collapsed on the ground.

Following right behind him were the guards and Meshun-san.

“What happened here?!”

“I don’t know. Something bad I presume, as Fina got hit in the face.”

Cliff took Noa out of my arms, so I went back to Fina, who still hadn’t regained consciousness.

Just what on earth had happened here? Was Misa’s life in danger?

“Yuna-sama! What happened here?!”

“Somebody attacked them. Meshun-san, please report this to Gran-san and get people to start searching for Misa. She may still be within the mansion grounds.”

I knew it was most likely pointless, but I asked her to search anyway, since I had just a bit of hope that she still might be here.

Noticing that Gran-san was already on his way over due to all the commotion we were causing,

Meshun-san quickly ordered the guards to look for Misa before approaching him.

Just a moment later, Fina opened her eyes.

“Fina!”

“Big Sis Yuna...?”

“What happened here?!”

“Misa-sama... Misa-sama was...”

Fina kept saying Misa’s name as she tightly grasped onto my Bear Suit.

“Calm down. Take a deep breath and explain what happened slowly.”

“Misa-sama brought us here to show us her flower bed. Then, as we were admiring the flowers, a man in a black mask suddenly appeared. He grabbed Misa-sama and dashed away. We... We tried to stop him by grabbing onto the his clothes but to no avail...”

Fina said while rubbing her face. She must have gotten hit then...

“Big Sis Yuna, please save Misa-sama.”

“Meshun-san, take care of Fina for me.”

I gently patted Fina’s head and stood up slowly.

I was about to explode in anger.

I had already reached my boiling point just from seeing Fina’s injured face.

After hearing that Misa was taken away, I could stay still no longer. I couldn’t let this go unpunished.

“Yuna, what are you planning on doing?”

Cliff asked.

I picked up the plushies before answering him.

“What am I planning on doing? I’m going to rescue Misa, obviously. I don’t know who the culprit is, but he took Misa while also hitting Fina and Noa in the process. Do you really need to ask any further?”

Was he stupid? Why would he even ask me such a dumb question?

Crap, I was letting the blood get to my head.

It was all because of Cliff’s stupid question.

I then passed the plushies to Fina.

“You say you will save her, but do you even know where she is? “

Gran-san said while grabbing my shoulder tightly.

I quietly took his hand off and lifted up my arms.

“Swaying Bear! Hugging Bear!”

I summoned the two of them.

The people around me made a ruckus when I summoned them in their adult forms, but I didn't really care.

“Do you two know where Misa was taken to?”

The two of them sniffed the surrounding area, and cried out [Kuun] in response.

I jumped onto Swaying Bear.

“Yuna, wait!”

“What?! “

Gran-san called out to me even though time was of the essence.

“Please save Misa.”

I nodded, leapt over the fence, and rode off towards the town.

Soon, we reached a populated road, but I didn't care about the people freaking out when they saw us.

I didn't know who had done this, but they wouldn't escape my wrath.

In no time, the Bears brought me to a mansion about the same size as Gran-san's.

### **Idiot Son Randall's perspective:**

We came home early from the party. Thanks to the chef who had suddenly appeared, all of our plans had fallen apart.

I was pissed.

What had happened back there? Even Father had pulled back so easily.

That wasn't like him at all. He normally never gave up but rather tricked his opponent

into submitting. With a chef like that, he should have made him apologize instead.

Why hadn't he been his usual self?

When people refused to listen to his orders, he just had to force them to obey him.

Father had always done things that way.

Bribery, threats, and violence. There were plenty of ways to force someone to do your bidding.

Father even kidnapped some children and kept them in the basement. All so that their parents wouldn't attend that shitty gramps' party.

Yeah, since the parents hadn't refused the invitation just from being threatened, so Father had just resorted to abducting their children.

Then, I just had to do the same thing.

I called for Blood and ordered him to kidnap Misana.

"Are those your father's orders?"

"No, they're mine. You just have to do what I tell you to do."

"I don't mind, but I will be taking payment for it."

"Yeah, I get it. I'll pay you, don't worry. Make sure you capture her discreetly, though. We can't have them knowing that it was me, or it could get problematic."

In order to abduct Misana directly, Blood had to take some time.

Based on his report, Misana had gone to help out with a mole extermination, but since there had been adventurers around, he couldn't just capture her then. How carefree of her to go mole hunting. Well, she wouldn't get to enjoy herself for much longer, would she?

I told Blood to capture her the moment he got a good chance to, but a few more days passed with nothing happening. I didn't know if it was because he was incompetent, or if he simply had no opportunities to do it.

Also, how could Father not make a move himself when he had suffered so much humiliation?

All I saw him do was talk to merchants.

The parents from the children we were holding here came, but Father decided not to do anything until that chef left.

Then, all of a sudden, I received a report that Blood had successfully kidnapped Misana.

When I went to get him, he was indeed carrying Misana whose eyes and mouth were covered up.

Now the Faren Gramm family was finished!

I told Blood to leave her in the room next door so that she couldn't hear my voice.

"She's not aware that we are the ones responsible for her kidnapping, right?"

"I covered her eyes and mouth immediately, so it should be fine."

"Okay, good."

As I started to think about what I should do now, Father suddenly burst in, his expression that of deep anger.

"Randall! You brat, did you get Blood to kidnap Misana?! "

"Yeah, I'm just doing the same thing you usually do. With this, we just have to threaten that gramps and make him give up his lord status."

"You fool! It's not going to go that easily! Nobles are different than merchants. They don't mind sacrificing a young girl in order to protect their status. If it was me, I would just..."

I didn't hear the last part, but I understood what he meant.

If it happened to me, he would abandon me. I would do the same thing if Father got abducted, too. Even so, I didn't think that the naive Faren Gramm family would simply abandon one of their own.

It was right about then that we heard a loud noise coming from the entrance.

Yuna's perspective:

I got off Swaying Bear and slowly walked to the entrance, with Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear following closely behind me.

"Who the heck are you?!"

The guards saw the Bears and drew their swords.

"Where's Misa?"

I calmly asked them.

Wow, I didn't think that I could manage to bring out such a calm voice.

"What are you talking about?"

It seemed like they didn't know what was going on, either.

Since I was intruding anyway, I decided to just hit them with a Bear Punch each, making them collapse to the ground instantly, then stepped past them to the door.

Instead of bothering with knocking, I simply Bear Punched the door, which flew off its hinges with a loud bang. With the door out of the way, it was now easy for my Bears and me to enter.

Besides, this residence would get demolished soon anyway, so they wouldn't be needing that door.

"Swaying Bear, Hugging Bear."

The Bears immediately responded and began walking down the hallway; they were guiding me to where Misa was.

When I started to follow them, a man with a toadface stepped out of one of the rooms, along with that brat who had picked a fight with Misa.

So, this was their residence as I thought.

How dumb could this family be? Why would they abduct Misa only to hide her in their own home?

“What’s going on here?!”

“I came to take Misa back home.”

“Who the hell are you?! Also, what are these bears doing here?”

“Where’s Misa?”

“What are you talking about?”

They pretended not to know what I was talking about, so I hit the toad man with a weak Air Bullet.

The man grabbed his stomach and fell to his knees. How could he be writhing in pain over such weak magic?

From this point onward, he would be seeing hell.

“I don’t mind if you don’t tell me where you hid her. I’ll just go and find her myself. I don’t know what I will do to you guys once I do find her, though.”

If Misa was hurt, I would not let them off easily.

“W-what are you talking about?”

The toad man looked at me with a pained expression, but I ignored him and began to walk off.

Just as I passed my Bears, a shadow leapt down from the stairs and shot a fireball at them.

The bears dodged the fireball easily, however.

“Bears can dodge such an attack?”

The shadow turned out to be the man wearing the black mantle.

“Ignoring your outfit and those bears, just who are you? It appears that you’ve noticed I had been watching you.”

The man started to spout out nonsense.

What was he talking about?

“I would never have thought anyone could notice me from such a distance.”

Seriously, what was he talking about?

“Because of you, I just couldn’t find a good opportunity to do it. I was only able to abduct the girl when you left her alone with just two girls accompanying her. And now, you somehow managed to find this place this quickly. I know you were out in town, so there’s no way you could possibly be notified that quickly.”

“Blood! Don’t talk about unnecessary things!”

“Now that this weirdly dressed missy is here, it’s too late to hide it anyway.”

So, this black-clothed man was obviously the one who had kidnapped Misa.

That also meant the he was the one who had knocked Fina and Noa unconscious.

Good thing I found the culprit so easily. Also, he didn’t even have a shred of guilt for kidnapping a young girl. That meant I could punch him without holding back.

“What’s so funny?”

“I’m just happy I found the culprit so easily.”

“Blood, this all happened because you didn’t abduct her quietly without letting anybody realize. Take responsibility for your failure and dispose of this weird girl and her bears!”

The toad man’s son shouted at the black-clothed man.

“I guess it can’t be helped. Normally, that would be an extra charge, but since this was

my mistake, I will do it as a bonus.”

After the man said that, he dashed towards me and fired out another fireball without hesitation. I blocked it with the White Bear Hand and shot a fireball back in exchange, but he just jumped back and dodged it.

“You can block magic and then return fire. What an interesting bear you are. I will stop thinking of you as a child and no longer hold back.”

He looked as though he had just found his prey and licked his lips.

Gross. He made me feel sick.

“Blood, don’t use magic so easily! Are you trying to destroy this house?!”

“You say that, but this Bear Missy is also using magic.”

“I don’t care, just deal with this weird bear quickly! Don’t let anybody outside know what happened here. Don’t you lot dare run away, either!”

The toad man shouted past us.

I glanced at the entrance and saw a few guards standing there. Did they think they were really blocking the way by just standing around like that?

They were obviously scared of Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear. If the Bears approached them, I was sure the guards wouldn’t really pose much of a resistance.

“I wanted to fight in an open area, but it can’t be helped, I guess.”

The man took out a knife and threw it at me.

However, I was able to see the opponent’s movements thanks to my Bear Suit.

His arm movements. The knife’s trajectory. I could see it all.

I dodged the knife and launched a Bear Punch at his face, but he managed to dodge it.

No way!

He smiled at me. Since I was able to see my opponent’s movements, I could also see

their facial expressions well.

His smile only amplified my anger.

Now, I didn't feel like only hitting him once.

The man brandished another knife, but he was too slow.

I grabbed the knife with my White Bear Hand, making his expression turned to that of surprise. He then put more power into the knife, trying to push it through, but he couldn't even move it an inch.

It was time for me to strike back, so I put some power into my Black Bear Hand and threw a Bear Punch at him but only hit air.

He managed to dodge it again?!

The man had let go of his knife and put some distance between us. He also shot fire magic at me as a parting gift, but I used water magic to counter it. My magic won, of course. The water quickly ate up the flames, so I decided to send it after him.

Sadly, he only got wet and took no real damage.

"Just who are you? Not only could you stop my knife, but I also lost to you in terms of strength even though you're just a child. And now, you're telling me I'm losing in terms of magic as well?"

"I'm not really using my full power, though."

"Yeah, it's very narrow here; if we went all out, we would destroy the mansion. Still, I'm frustrated that I'm losing despite attacking first."

"Isn't it because you only fight those weaker than you? You're only fighting me now because you thought I was weak, didn't you?"

"Of course not. I had thought you had some plans of your own, which is why I had only acted when you hadn't been around."

Hearing that made me remember why I was so angry.

"Before I defeat you, let me ask you something. Why did you attack the two girls who were with Misa? For someone like you, there's no reason to attack two harmless girls."

“Ahh, those two girls. They were very brave. I was going to grab the girl and run, but those two suddenly grabbed onto my arm, so I had to get a bit rough with them as they clung onto me for their dear life.”

“It’s okay. I shouldn’t have asked.”

It really was stupid of me to ask him that. It just got me more pissed off.

Still, I could imagine how bravely Fina and Noa had acted. They had tried really hard to save their friend. I was glad they hadn’t just abandoned her. I didn’t want them to ever face danger like this again, though.

I would take down everybody here and bring Misa home. I would take Misa back to those two girls. It was the only thing I could do to repay them for their bravery.

I put some more power into the Black Bear Hand.

It would be easy to take them down from range with magic, but I wouldn’t be satisfied with just that. I would make sure to hit them in the face for Fina and Noa’s sake. I would return the favor a hundredfold.

I picked up the knife from earlier and threw it at the man while also kicking off the ground at the same time.

The knife flew very quickly, but the man dodged it without much of a problem. However, I was already at the spot he dodged to. He had reacted well, but I was simply one step ahead of him. I launched another powered up Black Bear Punch right at his face.

I even had to shake off my arm a bit after it.

The man hit the ground hard, and I followed up with a couple more Bear Punches while he was down.

He didn’t get up after I finished. His face was deformed and blood was pouring out of his nose and mouth. I had broken his nose and knocked out some teeth for sure.

The man just quivered on the ground; he most likely wouldn’t be getting up anytime soon.

“Blood!”

The toad man's son shouted at him. The toad man was so shocked the black-clothed man was defeated that he just stared at me.

"You lot, what are you just standing there for? Do something about that weird bear!"

He then shouted at the guards. Some of them drew their swords while some other began chanting spells.

It was to no avail, of course, as I just used wind magic to send them flying.

"Just who are you?!"

"I'm Misa's friend. I don't plan on interrupting a war between nobles, but laying a hand on a child like Misa is off limits."

"I didn't know anything about this. My son did it on his own."

Speaking of which, that son of his was missing. He must have ran off when I attacked the guards. I used detection magic to see if anybody looked like they were running. Instead, I noticed two dots approaching us. The idiot son came back, dragging Misa with him.

"Hey, Bear! If you resist, Misana will..."

Before he could even finish his sentence, I shot him in the face with an Air Bullet. Then, I closed the distance between us, took Misa away from him, and smashed his face in with a Bear Punch.

Just like the black-clothed man, he dropped to the ground, and blood started to spurt out of his nose and mouth.

I then turned to look at Misa, who I had just rescued. Her mouth and eyes were covered up with a cloth.

I quickly took off the cloth, only to notice that Misa had tears all over her face.

"You're safe now."

I reassured her with a gentle smile.

“Bi-Big Sis Yuna...”

Misa teared up again and began crying, so I held her against me to reassure her.

Only after some time, I noticed that the idiot son’s father was glaring at us.

“I didn’t know anything about this. My son did it on his own.”

“So you’re saying you didn’t do anything yourself?”

“That’s right. Also, do you think you can get away with doing something like this to a noble like myself? This is a crime, and I’m the victim!”

Ahh, I see. It only made sense that an idiot son would have some idiotic parents as well.

Nothing that came out of his mouth had even a sense of an apology.

Maybe I should just hit him too, so he shuts up.

Just as I lost my patience and decided to punch him...

“Yuna-chan, wait!”

Eleanora-san appeared by the entrance.

# Chapter 194

## Bear-san Explains Everything to Eleanora-san

As I swung my arm back to take my anger out on the toad man, Eleanora-san appeared at the entrance.

“Yuna-chan, wait!”

Just because she told me to wait didn’t mean I was going to stop.

“Ugh!”

I sunk a Bear Punch into the toad man’s stomach.

“I was too late.”

No, she made it in time. Because she had suddenly cried out to me, I only used half the usual strength.

As proof, the toad man didn’t fly off after getting hit. His internal organs didn’t burst out, either. Instead, he just passed out on the spot, foaming at the mouth.

“Eleanora-san? Why are you here?”

“I was on my way back from the Commerce Guild and saw you riding Swaying Bear with a crazed look on your face, so I decided to run after you. There was no way I could not follow you after seeing you in such a state.”

A crazed look? Had I really been making such a scary face?

I thought about it for a second. Yup, I probably had been.

The girls had just gotten attacked, so it would have been more strange for me not to look mad.

“Please don’t make the elderly run so much, okay?”

She wasn’t out of breath or anything, though.

Also, what did she mean by elderly? She looked like she was in her mid-twenties. At the very least, she didn’t look like she was 33 years old.

How mysterious.

Just about then, three more people came up to the entrance, completely out of breath.

Oh, I remembered seeing one of them before. It was Ranzel-san, the man who had helped us get rid of the thieves at the capital.

I had never seen the other two before, though. Maybe they were knights like Ranzel-san?

Still, these three knights were completely out of breath while Eleanora-san was fine.

Really, just who was Eleanora-san?

“Okay, Yuna-chan. Can you please explain the situation to me?”

Eleanora-san asked me while looking around.

The door had been blown off, a part of the wall had crumbled, and there were two people with faces covered in blood lying on the ground. There was also a toad man, foaming at the mouth. Oh, and all of his servants were just standing there, shaking in fear. It was a terrible scene no matter how we looked at it.

If I had to describe it, it looked like a wild bear had gone on a rampage.

Still, I had no regrets. In fact, I probably hadn’t rampaged enough.

I proceeded to explain to Eleanora-san that Misa had been kidnapped and that I had come here to get her back.

“Kidnapped?!”

Eleanora-san was completely taken aback by what I said and turned to Misa.

“That’s right, that person over there kidnapped me, and Big Sis Yuna came here to my rescue.”

Misa said and pointed at the black-clothed man who was collapsed on the ground.

I then began to explain the situation, starting from what had happened at Gran-san’s mansion.

I included what had happened to Fina and Noa, of course.

“Are the two of them okay?!”

“I think so. They both lost consciousness, but other than that, they were okay.”

Eleanora-san glared at the toad man, who was also on the floor.

I couldn’t blame her; any mother would have been mad to hear that their beloved daughter had been injured.

“So, Yuna-chan, you got mad and went on a rampage then.”

I suppose that would be true.

Eleanora-san was lost in thought for a bit then turned to the guards and servants.

“My name is Eleanora Foschuroze. Under His Majesty’s orders, I am putting Gerardo Salbert under arrest. We will be questioning all of you concerning this event. If you speak the truth, I promise you that your punishments will be reduced.”

The guards and servants looked at each other.

“Is that possible?”

“As long as none of you did any inhumane things, I will see to it.”

When she said that, half of the guards looked down while the other half seemed relieved.

The servants appeared to be conflicted as well.

“Also, running away will just make your crime worse. If you intend to follow our orders, take out your guild and citizenship cards.”

Eleanora-san ordered them to give her their identification cards.

Without their cards, they couldn't leave this town, so it was almost like they were stripped of their citizenships for the time being.

They could always get a new card reissued, of course, but not if they were marked as criminals.

The guards and servants all obediently handed over their identification cards to Ranzel-san.

Trying to resist Eleanora-san would be pointless now.

“Ranzel, Vorz, question every person in this residence, but do it gently. Also, even though I think it's unlikely, make sure that these three on the floor don't try to escape.”

“Understood.”

The two of them quickly ran up to the three unconscious people and tied them up.

“Michel, go to the Faren Gramm family and request for Cliff and Gran-san to come here. Make sure they bring their guards with them as well, of course.”

“Understood.”

The man named Michel quickly left the residence.

“Eleanora-san, is what I did considered a crime?”

I asked her just in case.

I had attacked a noble family after all.

I honestly didn't know what happened to people who attacked noble families in this

world.

“You don’t have to worry about it, Yuna-chan. You saved a noble’s daughter. I will explain what happened here to the king, and I’m sure he will understand.”

It seemed like I had nothing to worry about.

“Also, I should probably tell you that Misa wasn’t the only one abducted. A merchant came to me and told me that their children were also taken. It happened when I was at the Commerce Guild today. I actually spotted you just as I was in the middle of discussing the situation with them.”

“Where are those children then?”

“It’s possible that they are being held at a different place.”

Still, that was close.

If I had unleashed my wrath fully, I could have destroyed this place and buried the children with it.

Good thing Eleanora-san came here and stopped me from doing so.

I really wouldn’t want to hear about dead bodies of abducted children being found afterwards.

“Well, I was planning on asking Gerardo where he kept the children, but...”

The toad man was currently passed out on the floor and still foaming at his mouth. Yep, she couldn’t really interrogate him with the way he was.

Wait, wouldn’t toads wake up after getting splashed by water?

Well, we didn’t really need to wake him up though. I could just use detection magic or have my Bears sniff the children out. We could find them as long as they were in this building.

As I was about to decide on how to go about it, Ranzel-san came back after putting the three unconscious people in a nice pile and also making sure the servants were

gathered far enough away from them.

“Yuna-san, it’s been a while!”

“Yes, Ranzel-san, it has. I’m surprised to see you’ve accompanied Eleanora-san.”

“I was slightly rattled by it as well. As I was practicing at the castle’s training grounds, Eleanora-sama suddenly approached me and said we were leaving so I had to pack up my things. Before I knew it, we were on our way to Sheelin.”

He answered with a smile.

I could totally see that happening with Eleanora-san involved...

“Ranzel, does Gerardo look like he will wake up anytime soon?”

“No, he doesn’t. He is completely out cold while I could say that the other two are quite close to a critical condition.”

“It will be a problem if we let them die, so please give them some first aid treatment. We do need to talk to Gerardo, however, so we should wake him up.”

Water sprayed out from Eleanora-san’s hand and hit the toad man’s face. So, Eleanora-san could use magic, huh. Well, since her daughter Shia could use it, I had figured Eleanora-san would be able to use it as well.

“W-what?”

The toad man burst to consciousness.

Yup, using water against toads worked best.

“Why am I tied up?!”

He yelled when he noticed his predicament and started to struggle.

“Gerardo, it’s been a while.”

“You... You’re Eleanora. Why are you here?”

“I came to do an inspection of Sheelin on His Majesty’s orders. We’ve heard some dark rumors about this town recently. We had no idea they would lead to the lord’s granddaughter being kidnapped, however.”

“Well, I know nothing about that. My son kidnapped her on his own. So, I didn’t do anything.”

The toad man glanced at his son next to him while still claiming innocence.

“If you’re going to arrest someone, take him. Also, I’m cutting off all ties with him. He is my son no longer; he is just a stranger now!”

“A parent is responsible for the actions of their children. He kidnapped a noble’s daughter and even injured my own daughter in the process. Do you seriously think that you’re going to get away with that excuse?!”

Eleanora-san’s words were heavy with rage.

“You can say what you want, but I had nothing to do with this, so hurry up and untie me! You can’t treat a noble like this!”

How noisy. Maybe I should hit him again to silence him.

Still, Eleanora-san was holding back even though she must want to hit him as well, so I had to hold back, too.

“It’s embarrassing to see someone like you call himself a noble, so can you please stop it. If Yuna-chan thinks I’m just like you since we are both nobles, I would be so embarrassed that I wouldn’t be able to live anymore. Besides, even if your son was the one who kidnapped Misa, didn’t you kidnap a lot of merchants’ children as well?”

“What? I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

“If you’re going to play dumb, that’s fine. I honestly don’t care if you end up like the two next to you.”

Did that mean I could hit him now?

Or, was she saying she would hit him?

“Well, even if they are here, that means I’m just taking care of them. I’ve got their parents to sign a contract as well, so it isn’t like I kidnapped them.”

That was a crazy excuse.

“Didn’t you threaten the merchants to sign the contract *after* you kidnapped their children?”

“You’ve got no evidence to back that up. I’m taking care of the children with the proper approval of their parents. As proof, those children are not injured in any way.”

The tied up toad man responded with a smile.

I didn’t know what kind of contracts had been signed, but it looked like it had worked because Eleanora-san seemed to be troubled.

In my former world, I had heard of people who signed shady contracts and ended up being extorted into giving money to the other party.

“You’re right... However, the kidnapping of Misana Faren Gramm is still a big issue, and I will have to investigate this residence. Of course, that means I will have to go through your room as well. I can’t wait to see what I will find there.”

Eleanora-san said with an evil look on her face.

“Don’t mess with me! I won’t permit that!”

“Oh, but I have permission from His Majesty.”

“His Majesty...”

Eleanora-san took out a piece of parchment from her item bag and showed it to the toad man.

“As you can see, I have permission to come here and investigate your belongings in the case you’ve committed a crime, which you have.”

The toad man's expression changed once he saw what the parchment said.

"But, it's my son who..."

"It's the same thing. Your son kidnapped Misana Faren Gramm. Even you yourself admitted that. Therefore, we have all the reason to search through every corner of this residence."

"Stop messing with me!"

"If you haven't done anything His Majesty wouldn't approve of then you have no reason to worry, right?"

Yep, Eleanora-san was completely pissed off.

"No way in hell is this fair! Somebody help me! I will pay you!"

All the servants ignored the toad man and completely avoided making eye contact with him.

Yeah, in this sort of situation, nobody in their right mind would even consider helping out the toad man.

# Chapter 195

## Bear-san Saves the Other Children

When we asked the toad man where the other children were being held, he just told us to look for them ourselves.

Eleanora-san was mad that he refused to cooperate, but we had plenty of ways to look for them.

I could use detection magic or have Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear sniff them out. Just as I was about to tell that to Eleanora-san, a short-haired maid in her early twenties raised her hand.

“I know where the children are.”

“Ruufa!”

The toad man scowled at the maid, but Eleanora-san just doused him with some more water to make him shut up.

“You know where they are being held?”

“Yes, because I prepare their meals for them.”

“Ruufa, you know what will happen if you betray me, don’t you?”

“Please, stop making your crime worse. I will properly atone for mine.”

“Don’t you dare. Who do you think is paying off your parents’ debt after they ran off and left you with it?”

“You, Gerardo-sama...”

“What do you think you are doing, then?!”

As the toad man cried out, Eleanora-san summoned a big tide of water and completely soaked the toad man with it.

“Ranzel, would you mind covering up his mouth with something? His breath stinks, and I can’t stand it anymore.”

“Eleanora, you...!”

Ranzel-san covered up the toad man’s mouth with some cloth as instructed. The toad man groaned for a while but eventually went quiet.

“Emm, Ruufa, right? Just ignore what Gerardo said. You’re saying you can take us to where the children are?”

“Yes, I can.”

Eleanora-san took a quick glance around her before turning to Ranzel-san.

“Ranzel, ask the servants how many of them are missing and their names. Then, once Cliff arrives, leave this place to him and go search the residence for those remaining servants.”

Once Eleanora-san finished giving orders to Ranzel-san, she turned to me.

“Sorry, Yuna-chan, but could you come with me?”

I didn’t mind, so I nodded.

“Also, it would be really helpful if you could leave one of your bears behind to act as a guard.”

“Sure. Swaying Bear, please stay here and make sure they don’t try to escape.”

Swaying Bear cried softly in reply.

“What about you, Misa?”

“I will go with you, Big Sis Yuna.”

Misa said, grabbing onto me.

“That’s fine, I guess... but promise me that you won’t stray from Yuna-chan’s side, okay?”

Eleanora-san pushed Misa onto me, but it wasn’t like I really minded.

I lifted Misa up and put her onto Hugging Bear’s back.

“You’ll be safe here.”

Misa nodded and grabbed onto Hugging Bear tightly.

“What a gentle bear.”

Ruufa-san was surprised to see Hugging Bear letting Misa ride on it, but there was clearly some fright in her expression.

“It won’t do anything as long as you don’t try to harm it.”

“I wouldn’t do something scary like that.”

Still, it was okay to be less nervous about it.

Ruufa-san then started to lead us down a hallway.

Both Cliff’s and Gran-san’s mansions were quite big, and this one was no different. There was no way all of these rooms were being used.

“Eleanora-san, is the kidnapping of these children not going to be considered a crime?”

“The problem is that their parents have signed a contract that allowed Gerardo to keep their children.”

“So, he’ll be considered innocent?”

“Hmm, not quite. It’s a difficult situation. Of course, from my point of view, he committed a crime. However, if he really does have a contract in place, he might legally be in the clear. Sometimes, merchants do hand over their children as collateral when

they are loaned large sums of money. Still, in this case, it's obvious that they were threatened to do it."

"So, this should be considered as a crime, then."

That was all I needed to know.

"Yes, the possibility of it being considered a crime is quite high. We have yet to get a full statement from the parents. It's still possible that they indeed made an agreement with Gerardo and did pass their children to him willingly. I don't really mean this, but before you came along, it was better to side with the Salbert family rather than the Faren Gramm family. Even now, it all depends on the contents of that contract."

She was right. If they sided with the toad man rather than Gran-san, it was possible for them to earn a lot more money; more than enough to change their minds.

Still, what did she mean by 'before I came along'?

The way she put it, it sounded like I was responsible for the downfall of the toad man's noble family.

"Your expression is telling me that you don't quite understand why. If you didn't go to the capital and bring Zelef here, Gran-san's party would have failed. Then, they wouldn't have resorted to kidnapping Misa, and you wouldn't have raided the mansion, meaning we wouldn't be in this situation. Not to mention, if you didn't drop by the capital, I wouldn't be here right now. You're the cause of all of this."

When she put it that way, it really did seem like everything had happened because of me.

"If so, then it's all thanks to Misa for sending me an invitation to her party."

I praised Misa, who was comfortably riding on Hugging Bear.

If Misa hadn't sent me an invitation, I would never have come here.

Going out in the world and meeting people had quite the impact on things. I would have never experienced something like this in my former world where I would surely still be a hikikomori.

“Ruufa-san, why are you working here?”

Ruufa-san seemed like an upright person, so I found it weird that she would work for someone like the toad man.

“My father left me with a big debt, and I’m trying to work it off.”

“A big debt?”

“Yes. My father was a merchant and needed money to run his trade. Gerardo-sama lent him the money he needed, but the business ended up failing, making him lose all the money as a result. To prevent my father from running away, Gerardo-sama took away my citizenship card and made me his hostage. My father worked as hard as he could, but it was not an amount that could easily be repaid. Then, one day, my father went to buy some things from another town and never returned. So, I had to start working for Gerardo myself in order to pay off the debt my father had left me with.”

What she just told us was inexcusable.

“Eleanora-san, couldn’t she just have the card reissued?”

“Well, if this was a normal case of where the card was lost or stolen, she would just have to pay a fee and get it reissued. However, her card was taken by a lord of the town, so things aren’t that simple.”

Eleanora-san said with a slightly surprised expression.

“I think you should already know this, Yuna-chan, but you need a citizenship card or guild card to go in or out of a town. If you get your card taken away by the authorities, you will be unable to leave the town you’re in.”

“So, getting the card reissued is not an option for her because of her debt?”

“Yes. Gerardo most likely made it so that she cannot get it reissued to make her unable to flee the town without repaying it.”

“It couldn’t be helped. My father borrowed money he couldn’t return and then ran away, so there’s no way Gerardo-sama would just let me go.”

“Still, that’s not...”

“My father was just a terrible businessman.”

Ruufa-san answered bluntly, making everyone go quiet. All we could hear were the footsteps of Eleanora-san and Ruufa-san.

My Bear Shoes made no sound, of course.

Hmm, I couldn’t hear Hugging Bear’s footsteps, either. Were its feet as soft as mine?

We headed into what appeared to be a secret garden area where Ruufa-san took us to a building that looked like a small storage shed.

“From inside this shed, there are stairs that lead underground. The children are down there.”

Ruufa-san used a key to open the door and led us into a small room.

There were many tools inside the room, ranging from cleaning supplies to pots as well as random things I had never seen before.

Ruufa-san proceeded to pull a rug off the floor and revealed a hatch.

She then opened the hatch, revealing stairs that led underground.

“The room is underground to prevent sounds from leaking out.”

Since there was enough space for even Hugging Bear to pass through, we all went down together.

“Is this a dungeon?”

“Yes. I myself have been held down here when my father was still in town.”

There was a hallway at the bottom of the stairs, with about five doors on each side.

Ruufa-san finally stopped at one of the doors.

“This is the room.”

She unlocked the door and opened it wide so we could see inside.

There were three children: two boys and one girl. They all looked like they were in the early years of elementary school.

“Ruufa-san?”

The eldest of the group, the girl, spoke up.

“Everyone, someone is here to take you away, so you can come out now.”

“We can leave?”

“Yes.”

“Is nobody going to hit us when we try to leave?”

“Yes, you don’t have to worry about that anymore.”

Eleanora-san and I both flinched at what the children said.

That toad man had told us that the children hadn’t been harmed in any way.

“My name is Eleanora. Your father asked me to bring all of you back home. You don’t have to worry about getting hurt anymore.”

Eleanora-san kindly explained the situation to them.

However, the children weren’t looking at Eleanora-san but rather at me, who was standing behind her.

“Bear-san?”

The children approached me but noticed Hugging Bear behind me when they reached the door.

“...?!”

They fell on their butts in shock, but the girl didn't waste any time and stood in front to protect the boys.

Only then did they notice Misa on top of Hugging Bear.

"There's a girl on top of the bear..."

"It's not scary. Hugging Bear is really nice."

Misa tried to reassure the children and hugged Hugging Bear.

"This bear will not harm you so you can feel at ease around it."

Thanks to Misa and Ruufa-san, the three of them calmed down a bit.

"Okay, you three. Please join Misa on the Bear-san and we'll get you out of here."

I gently spoke to the children to get them to ride the Hugging Bear.

However, four children turned out to be a bit too much for the size of its back, so we had the girl walk instead.

The children were afraid at first but calmed down with the help of Misa. In no time, smiles appeared on their faces, and we embarked with Hugging Bear leading the way.

Following behind everyone, I overheard Ruufa-san whisper something to Eleanora-san.

"Please check the other rooms afterwards. I believe the keys should be in Gerardo-sama's room, so please search there first. However, please, please, don't bring the children with you as you search."

# Chapter 196

## Bear-san Returns to Gran-san's Mansion

"We need a horse carriage, so go and prepare one!"

When we brought the children back above ground and to the entrance of the mansion, we saw Cliff giving orders.

"You finally came back, huh."

Cliff came over once he noticed us. He looked a bit fatigued.

I helped the two boys off of Hugging Bear and asked Misa to watch over them.

"Cliff, you're here."

"Yes, I arrived not too long ago."

Cliff answered Eleanora-san then moved his gaze to Misa and eventually to me.

"Yuna, thank you for saving Misana. This will be a great relief to the Faren Gramm family."

"How is Noa doing?"

Fina had woken up before I ran off while Noa hadn't yet regained consciousness.

"She's fine. She woke up right after you took off."

Thank god, Noa was fine, too.

If she wasn't, I might have decided to rampage a bit more.

With this, I now had one less thing to worry about.

“That reminds me, did Gran-san not come along?”

Eleanora-san and I looked around but did not see Gran-san.

We figured that since his granddaughter had been kidnapped, he would have come running. I hoped he wasn't wandering around this mansion looking for us.

Cliff's answer was different from what we had expected.

“Because of you, Yuna, Old Man Gran got held up by the townspeople.”

“Because of me?”

I didn't understand what he meant by that. What had I done?

Also, why would Gran-san be held up by the townspeople because of something I had done?

“Yuna, it's because you ran through the town on top of your bear. You've startled everyone you passed by and ended up causing quite a commotion. When Old Man Gran showed up on the streets, the people all barraged him with the news of a bear appearing in town. Some even asked him to put out a request for the soldiers or adventurers to deal with it. So, that's why Old Man Gran was forced to stay behind and try to calm them down.”

“Yes, seeing Yuna-chan ride a bear with that crazed look on her face would surely scare people.”

Eleanora-san immediately understood the situation.

Had I really caused such a big commotion?

Did that mean I couldn't walk around town anymore?

I was in a pinch, then.

As I started to get depressed, Swaying Bear came over and tried to console me.

Actually, it felt like Swaying Bear was trying to apologize to me instead.

“It’s not really your fault.”

I said and gently patted its head.

“That’s right. Swaying Bear-chan and Hugging Bear-chan aren’t scary at all.”

Misa said and hugged Hugging Bear.

“Anyway, Old Man Gran won’t be joining us for a while.”

It wasn’t really our fault. It was the toad man’s family who had decided to kidnap Misa. If they hadn’t done that, I wouldn’t have had to run through town on top of Swaying Bear.

Yes, we weren’t at fault at all.

Still, with this I most likely wouldn’t be able to take a walk through Sheelin for a while.

“By the way, Cliff, how much have you learned by now?”

“I ran into Michel along the way and then heard about the whole situation from Ranzel. Well, mainly about how Yuna went on a rampage and safely rescued Misa. He also told me that you two went to find the merchant’s children.”

We threw a quick glance at Hugging Bear and the rescued children.

“Yes, we saved the children. Now we just have to contact the Commerce Guild to find out where they live, but... I’m not sure if speaking to him is the right idea.”

Rumors had it that the toad man and the Commerce Guild master were connected.

“Okay, then we should take them to Old Man Gran’s mansion for now and wait for some merchants to visit him. We should be able to get in contact with their family through them.”

“You’re right. We’ll take them to Gran-san’s mansion first.”

“I have already ordered for a horse carriage to be prepared for us; it should arrive

soon.”

It seemed like the carriage we would be using belonged to the toad man’s family.

Well, that was indeed quicker than returning to Gran-san’s mansion to prepare one.

“Smart.”

“I’ve prepared everything. I’ve got the guards on lookout, the surrounding area has already been checked, and the carriage should arrive any moment now. Oh, and Ranzel wanted to search for the other servants in the residence, so I gave him a couple of people to speed up the process.”

“Did you contact anyone at Gran-san’s mansion about Misa’s rescue?”

“When I ran into Michel earlier, he was already heading there to let them know. We wanted to inform them as quickly as possible.”

As expected of a lord like Cliff, he sure knew how to get things done quickly.

“Anyway, I think it’s best to send Misa and the other children back straight away with Gran-san being held up. There were a few things I wanted to ask him as well... It’s very unfortunate that he couldn’t come because people freaked out over some bears.”

Eleanora-san said, glancing at me for just a second.

Like I had already told her, it wasn’t my fault.

It had been an emergency. If they hadn’t kidnapped Misa, this bear scare wouldn’t have happened. It was all the toad family’s fault for kidnapping her.

“Okay. I did manage to take some of his guards with me, so we should just try to do what we can.”

“Yeah. Once we’ve gathered all the servants, we can question them one by one. We also have to investigate all the rooms. It will take us a while, so we should get to it.”

“You can leave the questioning to me.”

“Good. I will investigate the rooms, then.”

When Eleanora-san declared that she would be checking the rooms, the toad man began whining, and his face turned beet red.

It seemed like there were indeed some things he didn't want others to see.

Eleanora-san simply ignored him and turned to me.

“Yuna-chan, once the horse carriage arrives, please take the children back to Gran-san's mansion. I want to get Misa back to her parents as quickly as we can.”

I agreed since there was nothing here I could help with.

It didn't take long for the carriage to show up, and I made sure all the children were aboard it safely before climbing on myself.

I climbed on because Cliff asked me to.

“If people see your bears again, they will most likely freak out, so could you please put your bears away and ride the carriage as well?”

Was how he reasoned it.

He was right of course. If I kept riding the bears through the town, Gran-san would never be let go.

With my bears safely back in my gloves, we returned to Gran-san's mansion on a carriage. The moment we arrived, Misa's mother came out of the house, crying.

When Misa saw her mother crying, she began to cry as well and ran to her, while her father, Leonardo-san, just looked at the two of them for a while with a happy expression on his face before coming over to me.

“Yuna-san, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for rescuing our daughter. If it wasn't for you...”

“I'm glad I made it before anything bad happened to her.”

“I cannot thank you enough. I was a bit surprised when I saw you walk in wearing that bear suit of yours, but Father told me that if anyone, you should be able to bring Misa

back safe and sound.”

“Thank you so much for saving our daughter.”

Misa’s mother lowered her head while embracing Misa.

“It’s fine, really. Oh right, I have a message from Eleanora-san. She wants you to contact the parents of these children.”

“And these children are?”

“They were also kidnapped and are the children of some merchants who were blackmailed through them. I thought Gran-san or Leonardo-san would know who they were.”

“Okay, I think I understand. I will try to get in contact with their parents right away.”

Leonardo-san went over to the children and asked them their names.

Since I had successfully brought Misa and the children back, I entered the mansion and headed to the room I shared with Fina and Noa.

I opened the door gently in case they were asleep but immediately heard Noa’s voice from inside.

“I’m already better.”

“That won’t do. Please rest properly. Otherwise, Cliff-sama will scold me.”

“But, Yuna-san came back, didn’t she?”

“That’s right, but I’ve been told to make sure that the two of you rest. Noa-sama, please be like Fina-sama and rest obediently.”

Noa and Meshun-san were arguing by the bedside when I walked in.

“Noa, you seem to be doing well.”

“Yuna-san!”

“Big Sis Yuna!”

The two girls both jumped off the bed and ran to me.

“Noire-sama! Fina-sama!”

Meshun-san shouted at Noa and Fina from behind.

“Are you two okay? Don’t you need to rest?”

“We’re okay.”

“That’s right, we’re already better.”

They replied energetically.

“Setting that aside, Yuna-san, where’s Misa?”

“She’s fine. I saved her, and she isn’t hurt at all.”

I actually hadn’t checked her for any wounds, but I was sure she was fine, or she would have said something by now.

“You two don’t have to worry about her anymore.”

The two of them had most likely been very worried about Misa; they looked really relieved after I told them she was safe and sound.

With perfect timing, Misa then entered the room and showed them that she was completely fine herself.

“Big Sister Noa, Fina-chan, sorry for making you worry. Thank you for trying to save me.”

“Of course I would try to save you; I’m the elder sister, after all.”

“Misa-sama, you’re our friend, so of course we would do our best to help you.”

The girls chatted for a couple more minutes then Misa left the room; she decided to

stay with her mother today to make her feel better.

For dinner, Zelef-san cooked us some really delicious food.

Sadly, neither Cliff, Eleanora-san, nor Gran-san were back yet to taste it.

The following morning, we met Gran-san when we went to the dinning hall to have breakfast while Cliff and Eleanora-san were still nowhere to be seen,

Gran-san took the opportunity to quickly express his gratitude towards me for yesterday.

“I’m glad you’re all safe.”

Was all he said.

We were all glad that Misa was safe, so that was more than enough for me.

“Grandfather Gran, where are my father and mother?”

Noa asked.

We had stopped by Cliff’s room on our way to the dinning hall, but there was no reply when we knocked, so we thought they might be already in the middle of breakfast.

“They’re still working.”

So, the two of them hadn’t come back since yesterday...

Instead, they had sent back Gran-san since he was already old, despite his objections.

“I can stay up for a night or two, no problem.”

He had tried to reason with them, but Misa’s parents hadn’t budged.

“Oh, now that I have returned, there’s something I must ask of you, Yuna.”

“Ask of me?”

“Yuna, I’m sorry, but could you please not walk around town in your bear suit for a while?”

He said out of the blue.

## Chapter 197

# Bear-san And How It Has Been Decided That She Will Do A Performance with the Bears

“Yuna, I’m sorry, but could you please not walk around town in your bear suit for a while?”

He was basically telling me not to walk outside anymore; I wouldn’t feel safe going outside without my Bear Suit on.

“Nobody will know it’s you if you just wear a different outfit.”

That wasn’t the problem; my life would be in danger if I left my Bear Suit at home.

There was no guarantee that someone wouldn’t try to pick a fight with me on the streets.

I also wouldn’t be able to protect the girls without it. If something bad happened, I would just be a sitting duck.

I knew that there was no point in arguing, though, as Gran-san had no idea why I had to wear my Bear Suit all the time.

There was nothing I could do... I really didn’t want to trouble Gran-san more since he was busy dealing with the toad man’s family.

“Okay, I’ll just stay holed up in my room until it’s time to return to Crimonia, then.”

“Yuna-san, you plan on staying in your room until you leave?”

He shouldn’t underestimate a hikikomori.

I could stay holed in for days even if I didn’t have TV, computer, games, manga, or novels... At least I should be able to. Well, maybe that was impossible...

Wait, if there was no entertainment, I could just nap to pass the time. Yeah, I should be able to do that.

“There are only two days before we head back to Crimonia. I’ll be fine staying in for that long. Still, if any of you girls want to go out, make sure you bring guards with you.”

Some new idiot might show up, so we shouldn’t be too careless.

“I’ll stay in the room with Big Sis Yuna.”

Fina said happily. She was such a nice girl.

“Okay, we will be able to nap together, then.”

We should be able to waste two days napping, right?

I liked lazing around, so I was pretty good at rolling around on a bed doing nothing. Hikikomoris really shouldn’t be underestimated.

A whole week would have been tough, of course, but two days was quite manageable.

“You won’t be heading back in two days if you plan to wait for Cliff.”

Gran-san’s statement obliterated my napping plan. Well, it wasn’t like he did it intentionally.

Also, what did he mean by not heading back in two days?

“With how things are going with the Salbert family, there is no way we will be done in two days. Yesterday, we found out that they had done all sorts of illegal things. So much, in fact, that even us nobles can’t deal with all of them overnight.”

“Really?”

I thought things would go smoothly with Cliff and Eleanora-san here, but it seemed like that wasn’t the case.

“They sent a messenger to the capital to receive instructions from His Majesty. Until they come back, Eleanora-san and Cliff can’t return to Crimonia.”

“Which means...”

“You definitely won’t be able to head back in two days’ time.”

Well, they were still working even now... It made sense for them to run into problems when dealing with a kidnapping caused by a noble.

We could always head back on our own, but if I went home with how the situation was right now... Another uproar might happen when people see my Bears and me the next time I came to visit Misa. That would be really troublesome.

Well, if I was never planning on coming back here again, I could just ignore the issue and leave straight away.

As I pondered what I should do, Noa spoke up.

“Grandfather Gran, didn’t you explain what happened to the townspeople? Shouldn’t they calm down in two days time, then?”

“Of course I explained it to them. I told them that I know Yuna’s bears to be docile and that they don’t attack people, but I think my word won’t be enough in this case.”

“Gran-san, aren’t you the lord of this town? How could the word of their lord not convince the townspeople?”

“Think of it this way. If you saw a dragon rampaging around and then, all of the sudden, His Majesty came up and told you it was safe to go up to the dragon, would you believe him?”

Well, it made sense when he put it that way.

People would still remain wary of dangerous beings even when their leaders told them it was safe. I myself would definitely not let anything dangerous near me without my Bear Suit on.

Why did he use a dragon to set an example, though...?

In any case, this still meant that I didn’t know how long I would have to stay holed up for. Did I have no other choice but to stay in for more than two days?

Maybe I really should make those playing cards I had been considering before. That way, I could play with the girls. Unlike with a Reversi board, there were plenty of games we could play with cards, meaning we could waste time easily.

“Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear aren’t scary at all. I feel sorry for them. Grandfather Gran, is there anything we can do for them?”

Noa asked Gran-san with a sad expression on her face.

“Sorry, but I have no idea how we could resolve this situation. Bears are seen as fearsome beasts by common people, so you can’t blame them for being scared.”

“We just need to show them that Yuna-san’s Bear-sans aren’t scary, then.”

“And, how do you propose we do that?”

It did seem like a rather difficult task. Since I was banned from going outside, simply staying holed up in my room was honestly the easiest way to deal with this for now.

However, Noa didn’t give up and tried her best to think of a solution.

“...How about we walk the Bear-sans through town?”

“It will just end up the same as yesterday. The townspeople will just run away in fear while you might also get some adventurers running after you.”

“Old Man Gran, you just have to do something about that, then.”

“Well, I could let the Adventurer’s Guild know, but I don’t think that would work out all that great...”

Gran-san rejected the idea, so Noa returned to her brainstorming.

“Fina, do you have any good ideas? At this rate, we won’t be able to go out with Yuna-san anymore.”

Noa asked Fina, who hadn’t said anything yet.

Fina thought for a bit and then made a suggestion.

“How about we go out and play with Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear? If we play with them, they won’t look dangerous, right?”

“T-that’s it! We also get to play with Bear-sans that way. We would be killing two birds with one stone!”

Noa happily agreed with Fina’s suggestion.

“In that case, how about putting on some sort of a performance?”

Gran-san chipped in.

“A performance?”

“I’m sure you and your bears can pull it off. Oh, and you can use my birthday party as an excuse to do it. This way, you will be able to prove that your bears are fully tame, and the townspeople won’t see them as terrifying creatures anymore.”

Of course, a tamed bear would appear a lot less dangerous than a wild one. If people saw the Bears playing with children, it should reassure them quite a bit.

“Yuna-san, we should do a performance, then. I will help you.”

“Big Sis Yuna, I will help you, too.”

Hmm, I didn’t really want to do anything that would make me stand out. Well, it would be troublesome if the townspeople continued to be afraid of us... I wouldn’t be able to visit Misa or buy things from Sheelin.

I might even be reported to the authorities if I walked around with my Bears out... If Gran-san backed me up, they probably wouldn’t try to arrest us, but I still didn’t want people pointing their fingers at me.

I was already eye-catching enough to begin with. Anyway, I would rather have people look at me warmly rather than with terrified expressions on their faces.

“Hmm, should we do our best together, then?”

“Yes!”

Fina and Noa replied excitedly.

When we returned to our room, I summoned Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear to discuss the performance with them but was interrupted by Misa barging in.

“You are all being unfair. I heard about it all from Grandpa. I want in on this performance, too.”

If Misa joined in as well, we would have four people participating...

What could we even do with so many people?

The balance was already bad as it was with me being the only adult... Not like I could do anything about that, though.

We proceeded to discuss what each of us could do.

The only performances I knew of were circus acts, while Noa and Fina did a whole ton of brainstorming, stopping only to ask Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear if they were okay with their ideas.

“Then, we’ll have Swaying Bear-chan do that...”

“And, we’ll get Hugging Bear to...”

“Can you do this?”

“Kuuun.”

“Okay, how about doing this, then?”

“Kuuun.”

The girls and the Bears were talking to each other. It was rather surreal. Was this what it looked like to other people when I talked to my Bears?

A girl wearing a Bear Suit talking to some bears...

Still, looking at the girls talk to them, I couldn’t help but feel relaxed.

If people saw how well the Bears got along with these young girls, they would not be afraid of them anymore, right?

Or wait, did I only get this feeling because I knew that the Bears were docile?

If the girls were playing with some other scarier bears, I would most likely tell them to get away from them.

As I was lost in thought, Noa turned to me.

“Yuna-san, please give us some suggestions as well. We need to make sure everybody knows that Swaying Bear-chan and Hugging Bear-chan are harmless.”

I joined their circle and gave them my suggestions, keeping what circus acts were like in mind.

We discussed the performance all the way until dinner time when we were interrupted by Cliff, Eleanora-san, and Misa’s parents.

“You’re going to hold a performance?!”

Cliff said then bursted into laughter.

“Not me, the bears are.”

“You’re all bears, so it’s the same thing.”

What part of us was the same? We were completely different.

Eleanora-san agreed with him and laughed at me as well.

This married couple was weird.

“Father, Mother, I will be helping with the performance, too.”

Noa proudly informed them.

Wasn’t she embarrassed to say it?

Thanks to my Bear Suit, I had gotten used to being in the center of attention. I could

even walk throughout any town wearing it without getting embarrassed at all. Yeah, to me, embarrassment was now like... No wait, I still got embarrassed! I still hadn't gotten over the shame! It was my last shred of maidenhood, after all!

"Oh my, in that case, we will have to come and watch."

"Really?!"

Noa was happy to hear that while I would honestly prefer if they didn't show up.

They should be busy; something terrible had happened and they surely didn't have the time to do things like watching our show.

"Aren't you two busy?"

"We finished everything already. We just need to wait for the dispatch to come from the capital, so we can hand over Gerardo and the evidence to them."

"So, what did you discover about the toad man?"

"He did all sorts of evil acts; enough to ruin him for good. We just need to get him to the capital now. Obviously, we don't have the rights to judge a noble ourselves, so the king himself has to do it. All we can do is hand over the evidence we obtained and tell him about the kidnappings. Then, it's up to His Majesty to pass his judgment."

"Well, with all the evidence we have gathered, he will most likely be stripped of his status completely."

Based on the way they told me, it sounded like they had found evidence of more bad deeds than just the two kidnappings I was already aware of.

Well, there were many manga and novels where the villain did all lot of terrible things.

We had caused the downfall of the toad man's family, but what was going to happen to them now?

Were they demoting his family to commoner status, or would they go to jail? Well, as long as they didn't bear a grudge against Misa, it didn't really matter to me.

I would have to ask what the punishment would be once it was decided.

“By the way, when will this performance of yours take place?”

Now that they mentioned it, we hadn't decided the date or time yet.

We would most likely be performing at the town plaza, though.

“We should do it soon.”

“Then, how about two days from now? The townspeople should calm down a bit by then.”

“Misa, you will be performing too, right?”

Misa's mother asked her.

“Yes, I will do my best.”

“We'll go watch it as well, then.”

Misa's parents planned on coming too, huh.

This sort of felt like parents coming to watch a school play.

I glanced at Fina; her parents weren't here, so I felt bad for her.

“Umm, do you want me to call Terumi-san?”

“You don't have to. It's too embarrassing.”

It seemed like Fina was the only one who was really embarrassed by the prospect of her parents seeing her perform.

Both Noa and Misa were nobles, so they probably attended a lot of parties and were used to being in front of other people.

Fina, on the other hand, didn't have much experience with that.

In spite of the kidnapping incident that had happened just yesterday, everybody ate dinner happily and continued to chat about the performance.

# Chapter 198

## Bear-san Holds a “Play with Bear-san” Event

Today was the day we would hold the “Play with Bear-sans” event. It was named by Noa, of course, after she decided a name was absolutely necessary if we were to hold an event, and we just went with it since it didn’t sound too strange.

We would do it at the center of the town plaza. I had been a bit worried about hosting it at a public space, but thanks to Gran-san’s permission, we were allowed to use the central area.

I summoned the Bears at Gran-san’s mansion, and we headed out, Fina and I riding on Swaying Bear while Noa and Misa rode on Hugging Bear.

As for their costumes, the girls were wearing my shop’s bear-themed uniforms.

“Yuna-san, don’t you have any Bear-san uniforms?”

Noa asked me out of the blue the day prior.

“A uniform? Why do you ask?”

“If you do, let’s all dress up as Bear-sans.”

“Big Sis Noire, what’s a bear uniform?”

Misa didn’t know about my shop’s uniforms, so Noa, of course, proceeded to explain her everything about my shop in full details.

“Such a shop exists?! I want to go there too!”

Misa listened to Noa enviously.

Still, a bear uniform, huh. Sadly, I didn’t have any uniforms that would fit the girls.

“Fina, do you have yours with you?”

Fina occasionally helped out at the shop, so she had a uniform of her own.

“Yes, I do. I even brought three sets, just in case.”

Fina then proceeded to take the three sets of shop’s bear uniform out of her item bag.

She actually brought it with her? Not to mention, three sets... I had just asked her on the off chance of her having it, but why would she have three sets?!

“This is the Bear-san uniform?”

Misa held the bear uniform with her hands. Even though we called it a bear uniform, it was actually made from wolf pelts.

“Still, why do you have three sets with you?!”

“Normally, I would only have two sets, with one as a spare, but sometimes Shuri helps out, so I carry hers along as well. The sizes should be fine since we’re all roughly the same height, and Shuri’s was too big for her anyway.”

Yeah, the size should be fine. All three girls were of similar sizes with Misa being slightly shorter than the other two.

Thanks to Fina, all three of them were able to wear my shop’s bear uniform on the day of the event, and thus, with all four of us dressed as Bears, we made our way towards the town plaza on top of my Bears.

As we walked through town, people began to gather around Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear, making us stand out even more, which just attracted additional people to join the parade.

Just in case, Gran-san had sent out a public notice about the event happening, so maybe that was the reason for all this excitement.

“Everyone’s looking at us.”

Well, of course people would stare if two Bears walked through town. Not to mention, there were people wearing bear outfits riding on top of the said Bears.

I thought I was used to standing out by now, but apparently, being stared at still somehow bothered me. Yeah, being the center of attention was still a bit embarrassing.

On the other hand, Noa and Misa were gracefully waving at the crowd. As expected of nobles, they knew how to act in public, unlike a common girl like myself. Fina, who was sitting in front of me, was also slightly embarrassed by all the attention.

Now that was what I would call a normal reaction.

When we arrived at the center of the town plaza, we dismounted the Bears, and all the people who were following us began forming a circle around us to get ready to watch our performance.

Gran-san had sent some guards to control the crowd, and as it grew larger, they quickly put up some rope so the audience would leave us enough room.

The townspeople stood behind the rope, so I took some time to look around and noticed that there were several adventurers, including Marina's party, monitoring the area as well.

"This looks like it'll be interesting."

Marina-san said to me before returning to her duty.

Looking around some more, I noticed that the crowd had mixed expressions, ranging all the way from worry and fear to anticipation and excitement.

Once we were ready, Gran-san stood in front of the crowd to address them.

"These bears caused a big scene in the town a few days ago. They came here because I had invited them to my granddaughter's birthday party. The commotion that happened was all due to me sending them out on an urgent request. As you can see, they are tame and pose no danger to people. We will show you just how docile they really are with the help of these young ladies."

Gran-san bowed then stepped away, making room for us.

We had decided to start off with something simple, so it was just Fina and Swaying Bear taking the spotlight first.

“Hand.”

Fina held out her hand and Swaying Bear immediately placed its paw on top.

The crowd clamored just with that.

“Spin around.”

Swaying Bear did as she said.

The ruckus grew louder, and some people even began clapping.

If they were already this impressed, our show should work, right?

Yeah, the crowd’s reaction was heading in a good direction.

When Fina and Swaying Bear were done, I used earth magic and created some small obstacles, letting Noa and Hugging Bear take the stage. Hugging Bear dashed through the obstacles with Noa on top of it. Sadly, we weren’t able to prepare a net, so the classic net-crawling course had to be left out.

Yeah, this was a circus act, for sure.

Once Hugging Bear passed all the obstacles, ending with a huge leap over a lot of them, the audience gave another round of applause; this one even louder than the one Fina and Swaying Bear had received. I also noticed that the one who clapped the loudest and longest was Eleanora-san. Was she actually a doting mother? On her side, I saw that Cliff was also enjoying the performance. Noa’s parents were acting just like the parents who came to see their child’s school play.

Next, Misa did some tricks with Swaying Bear, and it was my turn after that. I didn’t have anything fancy planned though, so I would just play catch with the Bears.

I used earth magic to create a ball that was roughly the size of a soccer ball and tossed it to Swaying Bear, which caught it with its forelegs and passed it to Hugging Bear, which returned the ball to me.

Even something as simple as this was impressing the crowd. Still, this wasn’t all I had

planned. After some time of slowly passing the ball, I signaled the Bears, and they started to lob the ball higher and higher up the air to stir the crowd even further.

The fear had completely disappeared from the crowd at this point and was replaced by pure excitement.

The children sitting at the front were all smiling and clapping in joy.

Instead of preparing the circus rings of fire for the next act, I decided to create rings of water, using my water magic, of course. Fina and Noa climbed onto Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear respectively, and hopped through the rings one after the other.

I had placed the rings all over and even lifted some up quite high, but Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear continued to jump through them effortlessly. I looked to the side for just a second and noticed Misa was watching them enviously.

At first, Fina had planned on letting the other two do this act, but Noa refused, saying it wouldn't be fair to her, so they had agreed to decide it by lottery.

Normally, noble girls would just have ordered the commoner Fina to give up her position; the fact that they hadn't done that meant that they must truly think of Fina as their friend.

Fina and Noa held onto Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear tightly while the Bears leapt through the rings and showed off their dexterity by keeping their riders from getting wet even though I told them it was okay if they did.

The Bears ended the act by jumping through the highest ring and made a beautiful landing, inciting the loudest applause yet.

Misa and Swaying Bear returned to the stage to have a wrestling match. It ended with Swaying Bear letting Misa win.

We then performed a few more acts before finishing the official part of the show.

All the performances should have been more than enough to prove that Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear were safe to be around humans, but, just to make sure, I had decided to end the event on a high note.

“Is there anybody who would like to try riding the Bears?”

I asked the audience, glancing towards the children in the front. Two young boys immediately raised their hands.

“Would you two like to try?”

The boys glanced at each other before nodding at me.

The crowd grew a bit wary, but the boys approached the Bears without any fear. I let them pet the Bears a bit before helping them on.

Once Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear were sure that the boys were securely on their backs, they started completing the obstacles course and jumping through the rings of water again.

The fear disappeared from the audience once more, and they started to applaud them.

Actually, the two boys were the ones we had rescued from the toad man’s home the other day. We had asked them beforehand to volunteer. In other words, this was all staged, but thanks to it, the other children also started volunteering and approaching the Bears.

We then switched over to a simple playing event, so the bears wouldn’t feel overwhelmed by having to take care of so many children at once.

After giving the children enough time to play with the Bears, we finally announced the end of the event. Both the children playing with the Bears and the audience were disappointed while I was kind of happy that this was over with.

That reminded me, Noa had warned me about something yesterday...

“If we do that kind of event, there will be children who won’t want to leave the Bears. I’m sure of it!”

Her warning turned out to be on point as there were some children who didn’t want to leave.

As a countermeasure, I quickly distributed some pudding to those children. If even one child accepted it, I was sure that the other children would notice them enjoying it and would immediately want to have the pudding instead of continuing to play with Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear.

My plan worked flawlessly, and while some children ate the pudding by themselves, others even took it to eat it with their parents. Good food makes people happy no matter which world I was in.

Looking at the expressions the townspeople had now, this should be enough to forget about my recent rampage through the town, right?

I would still most likely hold off from bringing Swaying Bear and Hugging Bear around town for a walk for a while, though. I didn't want to cause an uproar everytime I went on a walk.

Anyway, the 'Play with Bear-san' event ended with a resounding success.

# Chapter 199

## Bear-san Returns To Crimonia

After a few leisurely days, the inspector finally arrived from the capital and released Cliff from his work. Eleanora-san and Gran-san now formally took over to resolve the issue, meaning today was the day we could finally head back to Crimonia.

“Noa, listen to Cliff properly, okay? I will be coming home as soon as I get my next vacation.”

A few people had gathered to send us off, with Eleanora-san in front, making sure to say goodbye to her daughter.

“Okay. Mother, please tell Big Sister Shia I said hi.”

Eleanora-san would be departing back to the capital tomorrow, and Gran-san intended to join her, too. They were going to take the toad man and his son along with them, of course, as well as the black-clothed man. At the capital, they would finally be officially judged by the king.

A few of the servants working for the toad man would also be brought along while the rest of them would be sentenced by the town instead.

Their sentences would surely vary depending on who would be making the judgment, but I was sure they would be able to distinguish between those more guilty than others.

The only one I was worried about was the maid who had been taking care of the abducted children. Eleanora-san had told me that she had cooperated and confessed everything, so I hoped she would only receive a light punishment. Either way, she seemed like a nice person to me, but sadly, I would get no say in her judgement.

Eleanora-san patted her daughter’s head, then turned to Fina and me.

“Please continue to take care of my daughter. She can be a little selfish sometimes, but

she's a good girl at heart."

We nodded in reply.

We knew that Noa was a good girl; she had become such good friends with a commoner like Fina, after all.

She did go a bit nuts over anything bear-related from time to time, but she was usually just a simple, kind child.

Looking to the side, I noticed that Noa looked embarrassed as if she wanted to tell her mother to stop.

With Eleanora-san's goodbye all done, Zelef-san decided to speak up next.

"Yuna-dono, I would like to thank you for all the valuable experiences I received on this trip."

"Sorry that it got a bit out of hand."

"Oh no, I'm really happy that I was able to meet up with an old friend. There is nothing you need to apologize for, Yuna-dono."

I was glad that he thought of it that way.

Zelef-san had really saved us this time around even though we had only ended up causing him a lot of trouble in return.

"It is unfortunate, however, that I will be unable to ride on Swaying Bear-dono and Hugging Bear-dono on the trip back. I would have loved to experience that again."

Zelef-san looked rather glum.

Zelef-san would be taking a carriage back together with Eleanora-san, which was why he was so disappointed.

Since Zelef-san had taken his time to help us out, I decided I would make sure to bring him a new recipe next time I visited the castle.

After Zelef-san said goodbye to everyone else, the Faren Gramm family approach me.

“Yuna, thank you for your help. If you weren’t here, my family would most likely end up in ruin.”

Gran-san said with a bow.

“It’s fine. You’ve already thanked me plenty of times.”

Gran-san and Misa’s parents had thanked me so many times in these past few days that I had completely lost count.

Since they wanted to show their gratitude, they kept asking me if there was anything they could do for me, but it felt wrong to receive something for simply doing what I wanted. I most certainly hadn’t rescued her because I wanted a reward, so I had no intention of receiving money from them.

If I accepted it, all the anger and feelings I had felt when saving Misa would just be a lie.

“Everybody’s going home...”

Misa looked sad, but we couldn’t really help it.

Crimonia was our home, after all.

Misa then looked at her father enviously.

“Uuu, Father, this is unfair. I want to go, too.”

Misa’s father, Leonardo-san, was coming to Crimonia with us because he wanted to apologize to Fina’s parents for what had happened here. Originally, the plan had been for Gran-san to go, but he was required at the capital, so it was decided for Leonardo-san to accompany us instead.

Fina had told them that it wasn’t necessary, and tried to stop them from going, but to no avail.

She had looked at me many times for support, but I didn’t really have any say in that matter, either. I had to apologize to Terumi-san and Gentz-san for putting Fina in danger as well, so I understood how Gran-san and Leonardo-san must feel. That was

why I had simply kept quiet.

Still, it was because of how things had turned out that Misa was now envious of her father, who got to accompany us to Crimonia.

“I’m going so that I can apologize to Fina-dono’s parents. I won’t be long, so be a good girl and stay at home, okay?”

Leonardo-san patted his daughter’s head to soothe her.

“Misa, you can come along next time, and I will even take you to my shop.”

On the side note, both Misa and Noa really wanted the shop’s bear uniforms, so we decided to let them keep the uniforms.

What would they use the uniforms for, though? I couldn’t think of any other use for them other than pajamas...

Anyway, when I got back to Crimonia, I would have to order two new Bear Uniforms for Fina. Luckily, I could just ask for them as I pick up the plushies.

“Okay. I’ll come for sure!”

Crimonia was not that far away from here. At the very least, it was a distance we could travel fairly quickly, so we could meet whenever we wanted. Thanks to the ‘Play with Bear-sans’ event, I could now safely come back to this town without having to worry about causing another Bear incident. Well, someone might still try to bother us, but that was just the usual reception I could receive at any town.

Once everyone finally said their goodbyes, we departed for Crimonia.

Because Leonardo-san and his guards were coming along, I decided not to use the Bear House this time around. Cliff was okay with it, but Noa seemed very disappointed. In order to cheer her up, I promised her that she would get to spend some extra time with the Bears and even snuggle to sleep with them.

Before long, we returned to Crimonia safely. I had felt a bit homesick by this point, so it seemed like I hadn’t been home in ages.

When we entered town, I took a look up at the sky; it would be getting dark in a couple of hours. I wanted to head straight home to take a bath and cuddle up in a bed, but I had to take Fina home first. Oh, and I also had a lot to report to Terumi-san.

We parted ways with Noa and Cliff then headed to Fina's home together with Leonardo-san.

He had planned to apologize to Fina's family the following morning, but I told him that they would most likely be busy then, so we decided to just take him there now.

I didn't really lie about them being busy, but it was mostly because having to go there first thing in the morning would be a pain for me, so it ended up being a good excuse.

I had to go with them as it would be best if I explained what had happened; I was responsible for Fina on this trip, after all.

Besides, regardless of when we would pay them a visit, I was sure they would be a bit freaked out having a noble show up at their door unannounced. I kind of felt bad for them, but I really wanted to get this over with, so that I could go home and relax.

"Is it really necessary to speak with my parents?"

Fina tried asking again, looking really dispirited.

She still hadn't given up even though Leonardo-san had already come all this way.

She really didn't like the idea of having a noble like Leonardo-san visit her home, huh.

Well, I kind of understood how she felt.

Back in my old world, I would have felt uncomfortable if the mayor had come all the way to my house to apologize for something. Heck, anybody would feel troubled if someone of a higher social status came to their house.

Not to mention that, there was a large, visible gap between the commoners and the nobles in this world.

Still, since Leonardo-san was already here, Fina might as well give up.

"I allowed Misa's beloved friend to be put in such a dangerous situation. If I don't properly apologize, Father will scold me."

"But, nothing really happened to me."

“You were put in a dangerous situation; not getting hurt doesn’t change that.”

Fina finally gave up when we reached her home.

“I’ll go call Mother.”

Fina said and entered the house. We could hear her call out “Mother! Mother!” to Terumi-san. Since Fina left the door open, we heard Terumi-san’s reply. “Fina, you’re home?” “Fina, you’re back!” Gentz-san pitched in as well. “Mother, can you come out? There’s somebody who wants to see you.”

Eventually, Fina dragged both Terumi-san and Gentz-san outside. Gentz-san must already be done with his job for the day since he was home, huh.

“Oh my, Yuna-chan. Welcome back. You’re back a little later than you’ve originally planned, though. Is that why you wanted to see me?”

“I’m glad you’re both back. We’ve been worried.”

They didn’t look concerned in the slightest, though.

“It’s not me who wanted to see you, it’s this person.”

Leonardo-san took a step forward.

“Yuna-chan, who is this?”

“He’s the son of the Sheelin’s feudal lord. He is Misa’s father.”

“Good evening. My name is Leonardo Faren Gramm.”

Leonardo-san greeted them with a bow.

“Feudal lord’s son?! As in, a noble?! Why is he here?!”

Terumi-san and Gentz-san panicked a bit, which was a normal reaction since it was unusual for nobles to visit commoners’ homes.

“Could it be that our daughter did something rude?”

Terumi-san asked with dread in her voice. Yeah, it made sense for most people to think of that first if they had a noble come to their home.

“No, on the contrary, I have come today to apologize for the trouble we brought upon your daughter.”

Terumi-san looked at me like she was begging me to explain what was going on.

Just as I was about to do so, Leonardo-san explained everything himself with me simply chipping in some details from time to time.

“When my daughter was being kidnapped, your daughter tried to save her.”

Terumi-san looked at Fina.

“I see, that’s why you came all the way from Sheelin. We apologize for the trouble.”

Terumi-san and Gentz-san were quite troubled, as they didn’t know how to deal with this situation.

They seemed conflicted on whether to invite us into the house and try to do something for the sake of hospitality, or simply stand here.

They even looked at me a couple of times, but I didn’t know what they should do either. We only had two choices: head inside or stay outside. Well, Leonardo-san had mentioned that he would head home right after apologizing...

It was a strange sight to see Terumi-san worry, however. She always had this image of doing her work with steadfast confidence.

Gentz-san looked even more concerned than her. He looked pitiful though he was the head of the household.

Once Leonardo-san was done with his apology, he handed over some goods.

“Even though such a thing occurred during their trip this time, I hope that you will treat my daughter kindly the next time you meet her.”

Leonardo-san said and bowed once again. Terumi-san and Gentz-san followed suit and bowed back.

“Well then, I will be taking my leave now.”

Leonardo-san said then turned to me.

“Yuna-san, thank you for all your help.”

“Leonardo-san, are you leaving tomorrow?”

“Yes. Father will be heading to the capital, so I should get back to Sheelin as quickly as possible.”

He bowed at Fina’s parents one final time and left. He would be staying the night at Cliff’s place and then depart early tomorrow morning. He seemed like he wanted to stay longer, but with Gran-san being absent from Sheelin due to the kidnapping incident, Leonardo-san was forced to return early.

“Phew...”

Terumi-san sighed the moment Leonardo-san was out of sight.

“Now this was something. I never thought a noble from Sheelin would visit our home.”

“Yeah...”

“Mother, Father, I’m sorry.”

Fina apologized.

“You have nothing to apologize for. You tried to protect your friend, right? Just try not to make us worry too much.”

They said and gently patted Fina's head, not getting angry at all.

"Thank you, Yuna-chan, for taking such good care of our daughter."

"I'm sorry, too. I had promised I would make sure nothing happened to her Fina, after all."

"Don't worry about that. We know that you care deeply for our daughter. I'm just happy you're all back home safe and sound."

Terumi-san said and pulled Fina in for a hug.

"Mother, it hurts."

"It's been a while since I last saw you, so this much should be okay."

"It's embarrassing."

What a pleasant sight. Gentz-san looked like he wanted to join in, too, but held back.

As I didn't want to bother them any longer and ruin the moment, I told them I was going to head back home.

"Before you go, why don't you join us for dinner? There's lots I want to hear about."

"You should spend this evening together as a family..."

I tried to talk my way out of it, but Terumi-san wouldn't budge.

"What are you saying? Don't worry about that, we want you to join us. Come on in."

Terumi-san grabbed my arm with one hand and Fina's hand with the other. I knew it would be meaningless to resist and let her drag me into the house.



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