1599 Delivery

The four survivors of the Antarctic Center finished their meal. As a good host, Sunny saw them off, then remained on the porch for a few moments, looking as they walked away.

However, he did not have time to waste.

By then, there were several other customers waiting to be served, so he sent Aiko to the dining hall and hid himself in the kitchen. Manifesting a second body, Sunny concentrated on preparing food.

Mornings were a busy time in the Brilliant Emporium, but the two of them were managing fine. Sunny had two bodies and could manifest as many hands as he needed, while Aiko was a perfect waitress, simply floating the dishes to the tables with her telekinesis.

After an hour or two, the breakfast crowd dwindled and gradually cleared out, leaving the interior of the Marvelous Mimic empty once again. Sunny washed his hands and leaned back on the Shadow Chair, while Aiko was counting the money they made.

With the increase in human population of the Sword Domain, it was not convenient to simply use soul shards as currency anymore. Credits, meanwhile, were a purely digital currency... so, the Great Clans had recently started minting their own coins. Each coin contained a small amount of essence, and their value was supported by the shard treasuries each clan possessed.

Sunny did not really care about the matters of economy, but Aiko was all about it, constantly pestering him to think about converting the Brilliant Emporium into a bank and making his money make money by lending it out to less affluent people in Bastion. The possibility of capitalizing on the first-mover advantage in a new world almost made her drool.

That said, the petite girl was not really serious about these fanciful dreams, since she understood that growing too big would land them in the steel embrace of Valor, as well.

In any case... Sunny spun a heavy silver coin between his fingers, studying it with a distant expression. One side of the coin had a number on it, while the other was embossed with the image of a sword piercing an anvil. He could feel a minuscule amount of soul essence contained in the silver, ensuring its authenticity.

This essence could also be directly absorbed, which was why many Awakened carried a few coins with them at all times, just in case they found themselves in dire straits.

'...The coins my Mimic makes are much more valuable.'

Granted, the Marvelous Mimic had few opportunities to consume someone here in Bastion, so there were not a lot of these coins around.

And speaking of the Marvelous Mimic...

Sunny shifted when he felt the Brilliant Emporium tremble slightly. It was as if the shapeshifting Shadow was shivering in fright.

"Boss! Boss! They're here!"

Aiko hurriedly dashed toward the kitchen and hid behind the door, peeking from behind it with a concerned expression.

Sunny sighed, then stood up and headed toward the door.

'It's time, then.'

Walking outside, he mentally prepared himself.

Out there, on the front lawn of the Brilliant Emporium... an adorable wolf pup was sitting, staring at him with shining eyes and wagging his tail excitedly.

The little wolf was undeniably cute. However, the problem was that he was also the size of a bull.

Sunny looked at the lawn, which had been torn by the wolf pup's claws, and grimaced.

"Little Ling... we talked about it. Human form, remember?"

The puppy tilted his head in confusion, his ears flopping side-to-side. Then, his body shimmered subtly.

Sunny averted his eyes.

In the next moment, there was the sound of rushing air, and a man's voice resounded from a bit further down the street:

"Ling Ling! Summon your clothes!"

A childish voice answered a moment later:

"Buuuut... daddy..."

"Right now!"

Sunny waited for a bit, then looked down.

The wolf pup was gone, and there was an equally adorable four-year-old boy standing in front of him, dressed in a simple tunic. Further down the street, a good-looking young man was pushing a sizable cart toward the Emporium, beads of sweat glistening on his forehead.

He gave Sunny a friendly smile.

"Master Sunless! Sorry if we are a bit late."

Sunny wanted to answer, but at that moment, the little boy smiled brightly and shouted:

"Uncle!"

With that, he pounced at Sunny and hugged him.

Sunny gasped, turning a bit pale, and was pushed back a couple steps. His bones groaned.

"Ah... ouch..."

The strange pair were from the Beast Farm — which was where Sunny purchased most of the fresh ingredients used in the Brilliant Emporium. They were making a delivery.

...Of course, they were also Effie's husband and child.

The huntress swore that she named her son "Ling" in honor of the leader of her first cohort, but Sunny had his doubts. In any case, Little Ling was a unique existence. He had been born in the void at the heart of Ariel's Tomb, and therefore treated as a challenger when the Nightmare was conquered.

So, Little Ling had become a Transcendent as an infant. The child Saint was now a darling of humanity, famous across both worlds.

The good-looking young man, meanwhile, was the nameless Awakened Sunny had once welcomed back from the First Nightmare. That guy was not exactly famous, but definitely infamous. Many people treated him with a peculiar mix of envy, admiration... and fearful sympathy.

After all, being married to one Saint and a father to another was not for the faint of heart!

Especially considering the fact that his wife was none other than Raised by Wolves, and that it had taken Little Ling a while to start learning how to control his Transcendent strength.

Depending on one's point of view, that guy could either be called the luckiest or the unluckiest person in the world.

‘Poor bastard...’

Little Ling was indeed getting better at controlling his strength, but that did not mean that he was good at it.

Suppressing a groan of pain, Sunny struggled to inhale and cautiously patted the adorable boy on the head.

"Little Ling... dear... uncle can't breathe..."